

COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Among Texas Hispanics

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INTRODUCTION

There are still populations of individuals in the United States that are hesitant or refuse to get the COVID-19 vaccine. CDC data shows that the Hispanic population is 1.7 times more likely to contract COVID-19 than their non-Hispanic white peers (Zamarripa & Roque, 2021). The Hispanic population is 4.1 times more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19 and 2.8 times more likely to die from COVID-19 (Zamarripa & Roque, 2021). As of October 4, 2021, the CDC reported that out of 61% of people who identified their race/ethnicity, only 17% Hispanics reported receiving at least one dose of the vaccine.

U.S. rural areas are seeing more detrimental consequences from the virus. "In Texas, 95 percent of the rural counties with a large Hispanic population have had more than 150 COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 residents, compared with 86 percent of all other Texas rural communities" (Bradford et al., 2021, p. 3).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, to figure out what are the barriers to getting the COVID-19 vaccination. Second, determine the target population's intentions. Third, create a data-driven vaccination information campaign to implement in rural Texas in hopes of curbing COVID-19 related deaths in the Hispanic community.

TAMACC is a statewide nonprofit umbrella organization for 15,000 Hispanic chambers and business organizations that promotes Hispanic business communities in Texas through business leadership, economic opportunities and legislative advocacy. Together with TAMACC, this project will seek to provide answers on how best to package and disseminate information to the Hispanic communities in rural Texas to increase the COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and intake rate.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) guided the study. The TPB has been useful at predicting behavioral intention and behavior regarding many health topics such as getting mammograms, exercising, eating healthy, etc (McEachan et al., 2011).

To determine the reasons behind the vaccine hesitancy, a vaccine hesitancy scale used by Danabal et. al. (2021) in rural communities in India was adopted (Table 1.)

METHOD

- IRB approval secured
- Unvaccinated
- Recruited Texas Hispanics, 18+ years via Qualtrics panel
- 63 -item questionnaire
- Data collected for 2 weeks during Feb-March, 2022
- Analyzed via SPSS

Table 1: Sample Theory of Planned Behavior and Vaccine Hesitancy Survey Questionnaire Items

1. My family (e.g., parents, children, brothers, sisters) would approve of me getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
2. My friends would approve of me getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
3. Overall, I have little control over getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
4. The COVID-19 vaccine causes infertility in women
5. I cannot get the COVID-19 vaccine without health insurance
6. I believe that COVID-19 is NOT a real disease.

Note: Responses use a seven-point Likert-type scale where 1 = "Strongly agree" and 7 = "Strongly Disagree" Consequently, the higher the mean score the greater the agreement and frequency.

RESULTS

The following are significant findings from survey results of unvaccinated Hispanic Texans.

Findings

1. Intention in getting the vaccine among survey respondents in the future was low. Among those respondents, women (M=4.01, SD=1.17) were significantly more likely to disagree with getting the vaccine than men (M=3.62, SD=1.42), $t(243)=-2.245$, $p<.005$.
2. There is a correlation between higher levels of education and stronger hesitancy in getting the vaccine.
3. In analyzing obstacles for getting the COVID-19 vaccine, data showed that those that access cable television and Facebook as sources of news and information consistently indicated the presence of more obstacles.

"Of the 255 respondents, 49% strongly disagreed that they planned to get the COVID-19 Vaccine by December 2022."

Demographics

Gender	Female	70%
	Male	30%
Highest Level of Education	Some high-school	14%
	High school graduate	40%
	Some college	29%
	College graduate	15%
	Attended or completed graduate school	2%
Race	Black, African-American	3%
	White	61%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	5%
	Asian / Asian-American	1%
	Other (Please specify)	29%
	N=247	



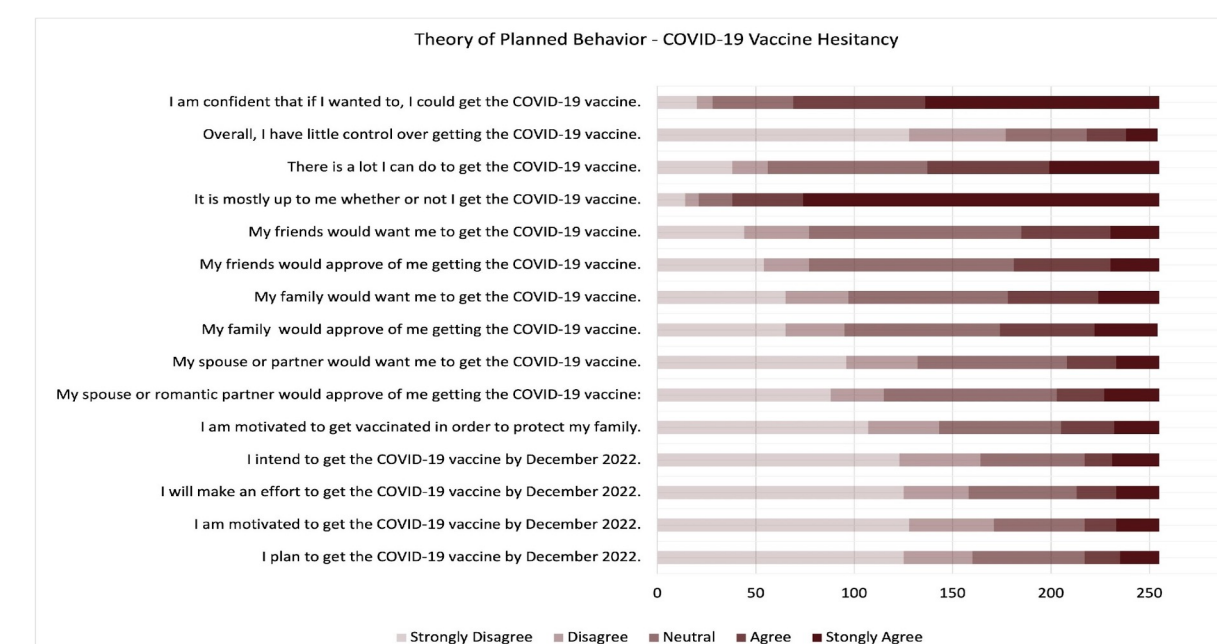
Word Cloud depicting three words the survey respondents answered in relation to their feelings on the Coronavirus.

The top six words listed included fake (11), scared (11), bad (10), control (10), death (10), unknown (10).

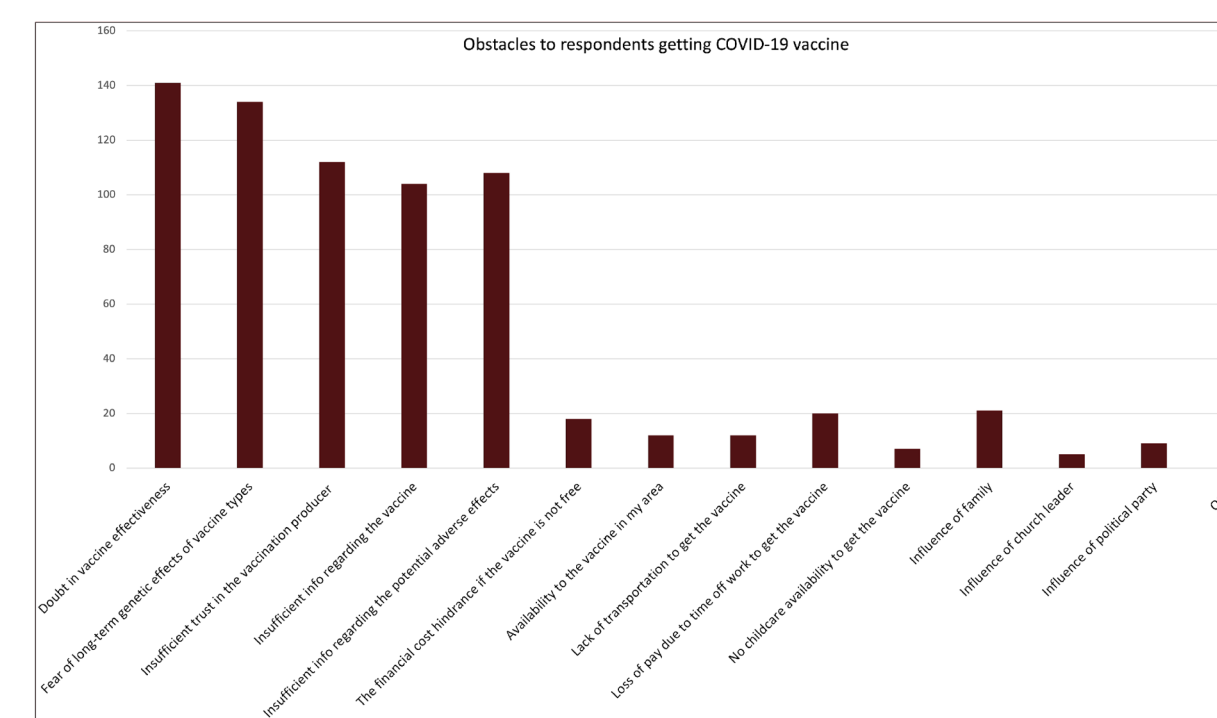


Word Cloud depicting three words the survey respondents answered in relation to their feelings on the COVID-19 Vaccine.

The top six words listed included death (37), sick (30), pandemic (24), mask (14), virus (14), bad (13).



Respondents showed a strong hesitancy to get vaccine in the future. Data showed that respondents were confident they could obtain the vaccine if they wanted to.



Data showed that trust in the vaccine effectiveness, trust in the vaccine provider, and insufficient information led to the largest obstacles to respondents obtaining the vaccine in the future.

DISCUSSION

Recommendations

Moving forward with unvaccinated Hispanic Texans we recommend that TAMACC look to inspire trust and expertise in the knowledge of the coronavirus and the COVID-19 vaccine. This can be done through utilizing traditional methods of earned media on cable TV news stations and providing relevant and timely information on online platforms especially social media (Facebook).

The information provided should be transparent and authentic. The messaging should stay positive and informative to combat misinformation and fear of both the vaccine and virus.

Previous data has shown that the Hispanic community is usually motivated to get vaccinated to protect their families. This study's results showed the opposite with 56% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this sentiment.

TAMACC should continue to look at late adopters of vaccines to determine the best types of messages to use to motivate the public to get vaccinated.

Future campaigns should focus on building trust via storytelling, providing experts in the field and communicating with the audience in a comprehensive campaign.

CONCLUSION

Texas Hispanics do not trust information on the COVID-19 Vaccine and have no intention on getting it any time soon. Building trust key.

Sponsors

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