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ANALYSIS OF VACCINE HESITANCY AND REFUSAL

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Relevance. Vaccinations have been claimed to be the most successful inventions in the public health sphere, decreasing the risks and complications of a disease, as well as eradicating some life-threatening diseases, such as polio and small pox in many parts of the world. However, a downward trend of vaccine coverage in many countries has been recorded over the past 10 years, consequently followed by an increase in the number of “zero-dose” children posing a challenge to medical workers as well as the general population of an increase in outbreak of preventable diseases.

Aim: To research peoples opinions towards vaccination

Materials and methods. The retrospective study analyzed medical surveys answered by 230 patients, and data from research papers from Medscape and PubMed on popularly stated causes for vaccine hesitancy.

Results and their discussion. A total of 230 patients took the survey consisting of 32,2% female and 67,8% male and a split of age groups as 32,6% over the age of 60, 30,4% aged 46-60, 14,8% aged 36-45, 11,3% of 26-35-year-olds and 10,9% of 25 and under.

After analyzing results of the surveys, the following conclusions can be drawn:

58,2% stated to have a positive attitude to vaccination while 28,3% felt neutral about it and 13,5% have a negative attitude towards it.

The main factors responsible for influencing peoples opinion on vaccinations are doctors recommendations (57,8%), experiences of the past (44,3%), statistics and scientific material (23,5%) and fear of possible risks (17, %)

The main concerns regarding vaccinations were stated as fear of serious risks/complications as well as long-term negative consequences (89,1%), low quality and lack of research of vaccines (25,6%) and lack of information about the benefits (14,8%)

64,3% believe that the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks and 12,7% voted for the opposite.

When asked if there was a change in attitude towards vaccinations post the COVID-19 pandemic, 44,3% stated that their opinion did not change, 24,8% stated their confidence in vaccines increased while 11,3% experienced a decline in confidence in vaccines.

2 paradoxes were observed:

in more than half of the people, an increase in confidence in vaccine was not observed despite them voting that the pros outweigh the cons of vaccines.

Although individuals relate to vaccines in a positive manner, they claim that they are not likely to get vaccinated themselves.

Conclusions. It is imperative to take active measures to combat the main causes for vaccine refusal, such as lack of confidence in doctors, concerns associated with the risks on their health and lack of sufficient accurate and reliable information by increasing qualification of healthcare providers, accessibility of vaccines, ensuring effective delivery of complete information(risks and benefits) about vaccines to foster trust between the doctor and the patient and adding recommendations in the protocol to make vaccines compulsory in order to restore immunity and reverse the declining trends.