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ATTITUDES AND HESITANCY FROM COVID-19 VACCINES AMONG BASRAH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STAFF AT BAB AL-ZUBAIR CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

Background: As part of the global enthusiasm for vaccine Covid-19, the reluctance to vaccinate has received widespread attention from the media, the scientific community. Vaccine hesitancy poses serious challenges for achieving coverage for population immunity.

Aims: To explore the level of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and determine the factors and barriers that may affect vaccination decision-making.

Methods: A cross-sectional study involving 200 participants from university of Basrah, age of the participants was 18- 58 years old, the study start from November 2021 till April 2022, a Closed-end questions questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection. Analysis was made by using SPSS version 26.

Results: The study showed that (84%) of the respondents had taken the Corona vaccine. (73%) of them had prefer Pfizer vaccine. (61 %) of the participants confidence in the company producing the vaccine. (82.5 %) of the participants were prefer taking the vaccine based on medical research. There was significant fear from taking the vaccines and their side effects. The decision for taking the vaccines were significantly affect by social media.

KEYWORDS: Attitudes, Hesitancy, COVID-19 Vaccines Among Students, Staff at Bab Al-Zubair campus.

INTRODUCTION

In China, the Wuhan city of Hubei province reported a considerable number with the exponential increase of new cases with symptoms of fever, cough, and breathlessness. These symptoms ranged from none to very severe life-threatening ⁽¹⁾.

Later, the reason for these symptoms was linked to the Corona virus on February 11, 2020. WHO named it has COVID-19 caused by a Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2 ⁽²⁾. COVID-19 spreads between individuals by respiratory droplets and/or physical contact. The symptoms of most cases extended from being asymptomatic to mild illness with fewer than 20% experiencing severe or life-threatening complications. Medical co morbidities such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular and immunodeficiency diseases increase the severity of the illness ⁽³⁾. The COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq has

caused major alarm to the country's fragile health infrastructure. Iraq reported its first case of COVID-19 on 21 February 2020⁽⁴⁾. To try to control the rapid spread of pandemic, Iraqi health authorities implemented a lockdown involving some public sectors⁽⁵⁾. yet, failure to control the situation had led to a total lockdown as well as enforcing strict preventative measures including social distancing, face masks and banning social gatherings⁽⁶⁾. Infection and mortality rates hit their peaks in July and August, peaking to 12185 reported cases on 27 July 2021⁽⁷⁾. The rise in cases encouraged experts to adopt various treatment protocols, though with limited success. More convenient and efficient measures to halt or possibly end COVID-19 pandemic were therefore sought, particularly development of a vaccines. Thus, huge efforts by global pharmaceutical companies were directed towards creating efficient and safe vaccines to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The urgency of the situation called for immediate initiation of vaccination protocols all over the world, including Iraq.⁽⁸⁾ Iraq received its first COVID-19 vaccines at the end of March 2021.⁽⁹⁾ The containment of the ongoing community spread of COVID-19 is only possible with adequate vaccines coverage to develop herd immunity within the community. Immunization is one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions to prevent infectious diseases. The vaccines against COVID-19 are of great importance to avoid disease morbidity and mortality⁽¹⁰⁾. Herd immunity will require vaccination of an estimated 60% to 80% of the population⁽¹¹⁾.

The rapid development of effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines has been noticeable. However, reluctance to vaccinate against COVID-19 could be a major obstacle to global efforts to contain it pandemic and reduce its health, social and economic consequences. Previous work indicated that the Middle East has one of the lowest acceptance rates for the COVID-19 vaccine has been attributed to conspiracy views, low vaccination rates which led to a negative attitude towards vaccination⁽¹²⁾. Vaccines hesitation is a long-standing problem that poses a serious threat to global health⁽¹³⁾. Found that while game addiction leads to negative academic performance, moderate engagement in gaming can lead to improved performance in an academic setting. This is of great significance to adolescents, as using effective social interactions is essential for behavioral, emotional adaption and successful functioning. Children and adolescent socialization ability improve their communication skills and makes them more receptive to social influence, and grow better with good communication skills⁽¹⁴⁾.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at Bab Al-Zubair Campus-University of Basrah, 200 participants were included Students and Staff (males and females) to recognize their fear from the Covid-19 Vaccine taking. A Closed-ended questions questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection. It consists of three parts, the first part of questionnaire consists of 7 items related to Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample and include: age, gender, marital status, educational levels, residency, economic status and smoking. The second part consists of 12 questions that are concerned the clinical features of the sample regarding Covid-19. The third part consists of 17 questions related to the fear from Covid-19 vaccine. Standardized 2 - points Liker scale including: YES and NO, was used for the purpose of the data analysis, the already performed questionnaire forma was distributed to 200

participants, they read the forma and answer them, the forma then collected by the researchers, each forma was scored according to the mean of scores. Analysis was made by using SPSS (Statistical package for Social Sciences) version 26, data was expressed in (frequency and percentage). The level of significance was measured by using mean of scores.

RESULTS

Table 1: The frequent and percentage and mean of score regarding Positive Reaction toward COVID-19 vaccines.

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean score	of	Significance
1- Did you take the Corona virus vaccine?					
Yes	168	84%	2.84		S
No	32	16%			
2-Which of the following vaccine do you prefer?					
American - British Pfizer vaccine					
Yes	146	73%	2.19		S
British AstraZeneca vaccine					
Yes	18	9%	0.27		NS
Sinopharm (Chinese) vaccine					
Yes	36	18%	0.54		NS
3-Do you have enough information about side effects of the vaccine?					
Yes	104	52%	2.52		S
No	96	48%			
4-Do you have confidence in the government that imports the vaccine to your country?					
Yes	44	22%	2.22		S
No	156	78%			
5-Do you have confidence in the company producing the vaccine?					
Yes	122	61%	2.61		S
No	78	39%			
6-Does increasing the number of people vaccinated against the Corona virus increase your desire to take the vaccine?					
Yes	134	67%	2.67		S
No	66	33%			
7-Do you prefer taking the vaccine based on medical research?					
Yes	165	82.5%	2.825		S
No	35	17.5%			

8-Do you prefer to take the vaccine when you know that the protection period against the virus is for a long time?				
Yes	174	87%	2.87	S
No	26	13.0%		
9-Do you encourage your family and friends to take the vaccine?				
Yes	154	77%	2.77	S
No	46	23%		
10-Does the vaccine reduce the symptoms of Corona and not infection with it?				
Yes	167	83.5%	2.835	S
No	33	16.5%		
11-Do you think that the vaccine contributes to the return of life to normal as it was before the pandemic?				
Yes	178	89%	2.89	S
No	22	11%		

The table 1 showed 84 % of the participants had taken the vaccine while 16 % did not. 73 % of the participant was preferred American - British Pfizer vaccine, 9% were preferred British AstraZeneca vaccine and 18% were preferred Sinopharm vaccine. 52 % had information about side effect of the vaccine while 48 % did not have enough information. Unfortunately, there were low confidence (22 %) in the government that imports the vaccine to their country. 61 % of the participants confidence in the company producing the vaccine. 67 % of the participants think that there were increasing the number of people vaccinated against the Corona virus increase their desire to take the vaccine. 82.5 % of the participants were preferred taking the vaccine based on medical research.

Table 2: The frequent and percentage and mean of score regarding Negative Reaction toward COVID-19 vaccines.

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean of score	Significance
1-Are you afraid and worried from taking Covid-19 Vaccine?				
Yes	139	69.5%	2.695	S
No	61	30.5%		
2-Do you have a fear of the side effects of the vaccine?				
Yes	102	51%	2.51	S
No	98	49%		
3-Does the frequent circulating of news about vaccine counterfeiting on social media affect your decision to take the vaccine?				

Yes	71	35.5%	2.355	S
No	129	64.5%		
4-Is natural immunity better than acquired immunity from a vaccine?				
Yes	120	60%	2.63	S
No	80	40.0%		
5-Do you support that the vaccine affects the person infertility?				
Yes	7	3.5%	2.035	S
No	193	96.5%		
6-Do you think that the rapid development in the production of Covid-19 vaccines has a negative impact on your acceptance of the vaccine??				
Yes	138	69%	2.69	S
No	62	31.0%		

The table 2 showed that there was significant fear from taking the vaccines and their side effects. 35.5% of the respondents to the vaccines were significantly affected by social media. 60% of the respondents think that natural immunity is better than acquired one, there was significant finding regarding this subject. Unfortunately, 3.5% of the respondents think that the vaccine affects male fertility, which is wrong, believed, so we found a significant association regarding vaccine in relation to fertility. Also, 69% of the respondents to the rapid development of the vaccines affected the desire toward taking the vaccine.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority were vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus and the majority preferred American - British Pfizer vaccine. The most of common reasons to refuse to take vaccine was rapid development in the production of it. There were significant association with all positive items except for the items regarding the use of British AstraZeneca vaccine and Sinopharm (Chinese) vaccine as preferable vaccine were not significant because most of the respondents prefer American - British Pfizer vaccine. There were significant association between the negative reaction to taking the vaccine and the rapid development of the vaccines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Raising health awareness about the vaccine to prevent Covid-19 outbreaks by various media. Increasing the role of health and education institutions to reassure the public that the vaccine is effective and safe. The need for further ongoing studies on vaccines and their importance to prevent the spread and elimination of Corona pandemic

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