

Researchers identify factors associated with COVID-19 vaccination acceptance among cancer patients

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Cancer patients are at higher risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19 infection due to their disease and therapies that may weaken the immune

system. The development of COVID-19 vaccines has greatly reduced mortality associated with COVID-19 infection; however, some people are hesitant to be vaccinated. While many studies have addressed vaccine hesitancy in the general population, few studies have analyzed why cancer patients may be reluctant to receive the vaccination series. In a new study published online ahead of print in the journal *Vaccine*, Moffitt Cancer Center researchers identify factors associated with high and low COVID-19 vaccine acceptance among cancer patients.

Vaccine hesitancy is an ongoing public health issue for infectious diseases, including COVID-19. There are several reasons why people may be reluctant to be vaccinated, including health behaviors, access to vaccines, age and beliefs and attitudes. The researchers wanted to assess the attitudes, beliefs and sociodemographic factors associated with acceptance of COVID-19 vaccinations among patients with cancer. They included 5,814 patients with invasive cancer who received care at Moffitt and were surveyed between June 2020 and July 2021. Survey responders were divided into two groups based on their willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccine: high accepters who had already received it or would get it when available and low accepters who were waiting for a doctor to recommend it, waiting until more people received it or were not likely to get vaccinated.

Survey results revealed that most cancer patients (86.8%) were high accepters of COVID-19 vaccines. Patients who were high accepters were more confident in the effectiveness and safety of the vaccine than low accepters. Additionally, higher accepters were more likely to be older individuals, believed COVID-19 infection posed a severe risk, practiced more risk mitigation behaviors, like wearing a mask in public, and had a history of receiving the flu shot. Alternatively, cancer patients who were less likely to accept COVID-19 vaccination were more likely to be living with more than one other person and were more socioeconomically disadvantaged.

The researchers hope that their findings will help identify specific cancer patient populations to educate about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines.

"Our findings suggest that similar to the general population, targeted interventions to improve vaccine acceptance in [cancer patients](#) should focus on younger individuals, those living with others and those who are more socioeconomic disadvantaged," said study author Cassandra A. Hathaway, MPH, CPH, a member of the Department of Cancer Epidemiology at Moffitt. "Specific multilevel interventions should focus on issues related to concerns about vaccine effectiveness, safety/side effects and lack of trust in any COVID-19 vaccine."

More information: Cassandra A. Hathaway et al, Individual-level factors associated with COVID-19 vaccine acceptance among U.S. patients with cancer, *Vaccine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.vaccine.2022.09.063](#)

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