

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COVID-19 VACCINE PERCEPTIONS IN UNDER RESOURCED, HIV-SEROPOSITIVE, BLACK AND LATINX INDIVIDUALS WITH CARDIOVASCULAR RISKS

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Background: Black and Latinx individuals with chronic health conditions are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 morbidity and mortality. Mistrust based on a history of fraud and medical deception on the part of the scientific establishment has deterred BIPOC individuals from vaccination. To mitigate COVID-19 disparities, public health efforts must address concerns raised by communities of color about COVID-19 vaccines.

Aims: This paper examines perceptions of COVID-19 vaccination among under-resourced Black and Latino patients, in the context of health empowerment and decision-making.

Methods: We interviewed 30 HIV-seropositive Black and Latinx patients with cardiovascular risks enrolled in an ongoing NHLBI-funded trial by telephone about their attitudes and experiences with COVID-19. Patients were asked about their willingness to participate in a clinical trial and the reasoning behind their decision.

Results: Nineteen patients indicated willingness to participate in a clinical trial, while 10 said they would decline (1 was unsure). Many described mistrust of the vaccine and the clinical trial process, including fears about safety, wanting additional data, and concerns related to systematic racism and mistreatment by the medical community. Patients also described concerns related to their health status, including fears of worsening of comorbid conditions and potential drug interactions. Those who indicated willingness to participate in clinical trials described altruistic motivations and the importance of the vaccine for their community.

Discussion: Healthcare professionals, together with trusted community leaders, must tailor public health messages to under-resourced, immunocompromised Black and Latinx individuals. Messages should continue to address vaccine knowledge, safety, and efficacy, as well as past experiences of discrimination in the healthcare system. New messages directed at vulnerable subpopulations should address specific concerns. Messages should build on altruistic motivations, capitalizing on the idea of vaccine uptake as a way to help successfully manage personal health, the health of the community, and save lives.

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Recall specific COVID-19 related vaccine concerns described by Black and Latinx individuals living with HIV and cardiovascular risks.

2. Identify past experiences of discrimination in the healthcare system as a deterrent to COVID-19 vaccine uptake among under-resourced immunocompromised Black and Latinx individuals.