

# COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: An area of Concern

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## INTRODUCTION

Ever since COVID 19 has taken its toll on everyday lives worldwide, a common question being asked is when vaccine for COVID 19 will be available [1]. Although the development of vaccine is a crucial challenge [2], yet considering the pandemic which has taken millions of lives worldwide, the efforts have been made to expedite the phases of vaccine trials without compromising the quality. The recently released guidelines from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on testing of Covid-19 vaccine candidates are scientifically sound and indicate that no compromises will be made when it comes to evaluating safety and efficacy [3]. Vaccine hesitancy i.e. delays in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccine services is another concern. One study to assess the intentions of individuals to participate in a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial in France showed that vaccine hesitancy was associated with refusal for participation in the trial and decrease in COVID-19 vaccine acceptance among participants. Study concluded that vaccine hesitancy will be the major barrier to COVID-19 vaccine uptake [2].

As the vaccine development process continues, it will be important to monitor changes in people's vaccine acceptability. A study done on Israeli population regarding acceptance of a potential COVID-19 vaccine indicated that healthcare staff involved in the care of COVID-19 positive patients, and individuals considering themselves at risk of disease, were more likely to self-report acquiescence to COVID-19 vaccination if and when available [4]. Total 69% of participants were willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine in one more study conducted among adults in the United States on acceptability of a COVID-19 vaccine. Study findings also depicted that participants were more likely to be willing to get vaccinated if they thought their healthcare provider would recommend vaccination (RR = 1.73, 95% CI: 1.49-2.02) [5]. Some interesting factors such as vaccine-related attributes and political characteristics were found associated with likelihood of accepting COVID-19 vaccination in one more study conducted on US Adults [6].

Preparing the general population to accept a new vaccine may be difficult. Misinformation and wrong perceptions may again add

in vaccine hesitancy. Hence, effective strategies are needed to disseminate accurate information about COVID-19 vaccine from health authorities and scientific research to improve vaccine communication to the public and promote COVID-19 vaccine uptake [7]. To expand vaccination coverage, immunization programs should be designed to remove barriers in terms of vaccine price and vaccination convenience [8]. Nurses, as part of scientific community, must act to educate, inform, and intervene to increase COVID-19 vaccine compliance rates in the entire population.

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**Special Issue:** Care for Patients during COVID-19 Outbreak

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**Received date:** December 09, 2020; **Accepted date:** December 23, 2020; **Published date:** December 30, 2020

**Citation:** Sharma T (2020). COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: An area of Concern. *Journal of Perioperative & Critical Intensive Care Nursing* 6: S2 e120. doi:10.35248/2471-9870.20.S2.e120

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