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COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in a Medically-Challenged Context: A Cross-Sectional Study of Drivers, Dangers and Corrective Measures for Vaccine Hesitancy and Potential Penalties for Declining Vaccination among Adults in South-Eastern Nigeria

COVID-19 Hésitation Vaccinale dans un Contexte Médicalement Difficile : Une Étude Transversale des Facteurs, des Dangers et des Mesures Correctives de l'Hésitation à se Faire Vacciner et des Pénalités Potentielles en cas de Refus de Vaccination chez les Adultes du Sud-Est du Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy is a global public health problem. It is a complex and context-specific phenomenon that varies within and across nations. Despite COVID-19 vaccine programmes in Nigeria, there are possibilities that vaccine uptake and coverage among adult citizens will suffer setbacks amidst various interventions by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

AIM: The study aimed to determine the drivers, dangers, and corrective measures for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and potential penalties for declining vaccination among adults in South-eastern Nigeria.

METHODS: A descriptive study was carried out from March to April, 2021 on a cross section of 400 adults in South-eastern Nigeria. Data collection was done using a structured, pretested, and interviewer-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire elicited information on drivers, dangers and corrective measures for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and potential penalties for declining vaccination.

RESULTS: The study participants were aged 18–86 (51±14.2) years. There were 227(56.8%) females. The most common driver of refusal of COVID-19 vaccination was the safety of COVID-19 vaccines(100.0%). The most perceived dangers of refusing the COVID-19 vaccine were the risks of contracting COVID-19 infection(100.0%) and dying from its complications(100.0%). The most common corrective measure for refusal of the COVID-19 vaccine was public health information and education on vaccine safety(100.0%). The predominant potential penalty for declining the COVID-19 vaccine was restricting access to air travel (100.0%).

CONCLUSION: This study has shown that the most common driver of vaccine hesitancy was vaccine safety while the most commonly perceived dangers were risks of contracting COVID-19 infection and dying from its complications. The most common corrective measure for refusal of the COVID-19 vaccine was public health information and education on vaccine safety. The most preeminent penalty for declining the COVID-19 vaccine was restricting access to air travel. There is a need to address these context-specific drivers and dangers that promote vaccine hesitancy. Public health information and education strategies to reduce vaccine hesitancy should be the focus of intervention to improve uptake of COVID-19 vaccination and safeguard the health of Nigerians. **WAJM 2022; 39(9): 889–895.**

Keywords: COVID-19 Vaccine, Dangers, Drivers, Hesitancy, Nigeria, Penalties.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: L'hésitation à se faire vacciner contre le COVID-19 est un problème de santé publique mondial. Il s'agit d'un phénomène complexe et spécifique au contexte qui varie au sein d'une même nation et d'une nation à l'autre. Malgré les programmes de vaccination contre le COVID-19 au Nigeria, il est possible que l'adoption et la couverture vaccinale chez les adultes subissent des revers malgré les diverses interventions du gouvernement fédéral du Nigeria.

OBJECTIF: L'étude visait à déterminer les moteurs, les dangers et les mesures correctives de l'hésitation à se faire vacciner contre le COVID-19 et les sanctions potentielles en cas de refus de vaccination chez les adultes du sud-est du Nigeria.

MÉTHODES: Une étude descriptive a été menée de mars à avril 2021 sur un échantillon de 400 adultes du sud-est du Nigeria. La collecte des données a été effectuée à l'aide d'un questionnaire structuré, testé au préalable et administré par un enquêteur. Le questionnaire a permis d'obtenir des informations sur les facteurs, les dangers et les mesures correctives de l'hésitation à se faire vacciner par le COVID-19 et les sanctions potentielles en cas de refus de la vaccination.

RÉSULTATS: Les participants à l'étude étaient âgés de 18 à 86 ans (51±14,2). Il y avait 227 (56,8 %) femmes. Le motif le plus courant de refus de la vaccination par le COVID-19 était l'innocuité des vaccins COVID-19 (100,0 %). Les dangers les plus perçus du refus du vaccin COVID-19 étaient les risques de contracter une infection au COVID-19 (100,0%) et de mourir de ses complications (100,0%). La mesure corrective la plus courante pour le refus du vaccin COVID-19 était l'information et l'éducation en matière de santé publique sur la sécurité du vaccin (100,0%). La pénalité potentielle prédominante pour le refus du vaccin COVID-19 était la restriction de l'accès aux voyages aériens (100,0 %).

CONCLUSION: Cette étude a montré que le facteur le plus courant de l'hésitation à se faire vacciner était la sécurité du vaccin, tandis que les dangers les plus couramment perçus étaient les risques de contracter l'infection au COVID-19 et de mourir de ses complications. La mesure corrective la plus courante pour le refus du vaccin COVID-19 était l'information et l'éducation de la santé publique sur la sécurité du vaccin. La sanction la plus prééminente pour le refus du vaccin COVID-19 était la restriction de l'accès aux voyages aériens. Il est nécessaire de s'attaquer à ces facteurs et dangers spécifiques au contexte qui favorisent l'hésitation à se faire vacciner. Les stratégies d'information et d'éducation en matière de santé publique visant à réduire l'hésitation à se faire vacciner devraient être au centre de l'intervention afin d'améliorer l'adoption de la vaccination par le COVID-19 et de préserver la santé des Nigériens. **WAJM 2022; 39(9): 889–895.**

Mots clés: Vaccin COVID-19, Dangers, Facteurs d'incitation, Hésitation, Nigeria, Pénalités.

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