

# COVID-19 Vaccine Intention and Influences in Vulnerable Populations

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## INTRODUCTION

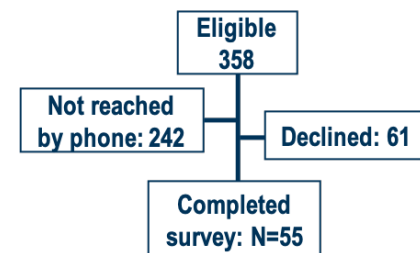
- COVID-19 pandemic accentuated existing racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities with significantly higher infection rates and mortality rates among Black and Hispanic individuals<sup>1</sup>
- Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership Mobile/Athens Free Clinic (AFC) in collaboration with the Georgia Department of Public Health and Athens-Clarke County provided free mobile COVID-19 PCR testing to vulnerable populations
- Widespread COVID-19 vaccination is necessary to end the pandemic, but vaccine hesitancy is a challenge<sup>2</sup>
- Limited information on COVID-19 vaccine intention and influences is available, particularly in underserved populations<sup>3-4</sup>
- Study objectives: 1) to determine proportion of adults served by the AFC who intend to get COVID-19 vaccine; 2) to identify factors influencing these intentions

## METHODS

- Eligibility criteria: adults with working phone numbers who tested negative for COVID-19 through AFC (6/1/20-7/9/20)
- Data collection: telephone survey
- Outcome measures: COVID-19 vaccine intentions (yes, no, maybe); patients who responded “yes” to get vaccinated selected reasons why they would, and those who responded “no” or “maybe” expressed concerns (free response) regarding vaccination
- Textual data on vaccine concerns analyzed to identify emergent themes

## RESULTS

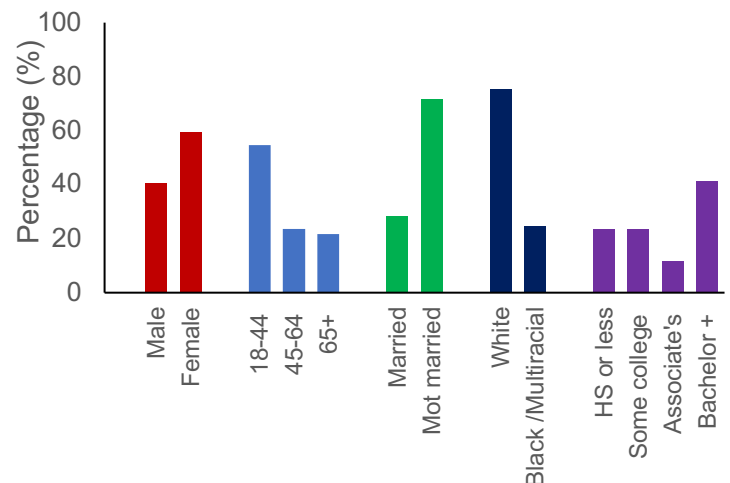
### Telephone survey response:



- 32% of adults were reached by telephone
- 47% of those adults completed the survey

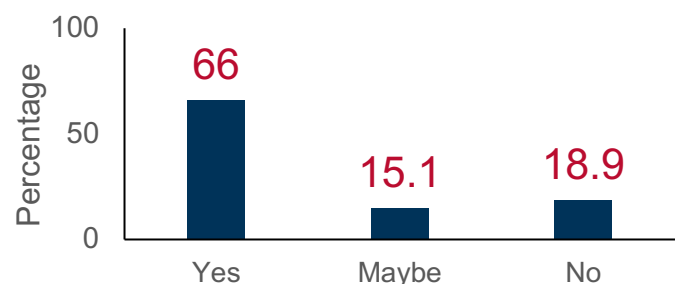
### Respondent Demographic Characteristics:

- 60% females
- 55% 18-44 years old
- 72% not married
- 76% white
- 41% with Bachelor +



### Intention to Accept COVID-19 Vaccination:

- “If a safe and effective FDA-approved vaccine for COVID-19 becomes easily available to you at low or no cost in the next 1-2 years, would you get vaccinated?”
- Majority (66%) adults reported “yes”



## **RESULTS, continued**

### **Top Reasons Cited for Vaccination:**

| Reason cited  | N (%)    |
|---|----------|
| I believe vaccines are important for my health  | 33 (100) |
| I believe vaccines are important for the health of others in my community                                       | 33 (100) |
| Vaccination would make me more comfortable going to work or looking for work                                    | 30 (91)  |
| Vaccination would make me more comfortable going out into the community   | 28 (85)  |
| I think close family members are at high risk of complications from the coronavirus, and I want to protect them | 26 (79)  |

### **Emergent Themes of Concerns:**

| Themes               | Examples/statements from patients  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Safety</b>        | "I'd ask my doctor"<br>"How effective will it be? What if there is a minor error in making it and it causes symptoms?" |
| <b>Effectiveness</b> | "If they can't prevent the flu, what makes people think they can prevent COVID-19"                                     |
| <b>Side Effects</b>  | "Depends on the side effects"<br>Wants to see the long-term effect of vaccines   |
| <b>Rumors</b>        | "Lots of rumors go around" so she is skeptical about it.   |

## **CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

- Majority of the sample intended to get vaccinated, but 34% unsure or do not intend to vaccinate
- Concerns need to be addressed via community messaging to increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake, especially in vulnerable populations
- Helping physicians and other healthcare providers feel comfortable discussing vaccine safety and efficacy will be important
- Since completion of this project, we have been able to provide COVID-19 vaccination to the same communities where free testing was completed
- Other adult and child vaccinations could be offered through similar means in the future

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