

Postgraduate Trainee Attitudes Towards COVID-19 Vaccination and Patient Communication

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Objectives

- Healthcare providers from a wide range of specialties have been challenged to integrate COVID-19 vaccination conversations into routine practice.
- Graduate medical trainees are frequently charged with being the first line for this communication.
- We sought to identify trainee attitudes and experiences discussing COVID-19 vaccination with patients.

Methods

- An anonymous survey was distributed to Emory University graduate medical trainees via the GME Office email newsletter weekly between December 23, 2021, and February 9, 2022.

Results

Attitudes to COVID-19 Vaccination	Overall N = 116	History of COVID-19 N = 23	No History of COVID-19 N = 93	p-value
I am (or was) hesitant about receiving the first doses of a vaccine against COVID-19.				
Strongly Disagree	77 (66%)	16 (70%)	61 (66%)	0.042
Disagree	19 (16%)	1 (4%)	18 (19%)	
Neutral	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	
Agree	13 (11%)	3 (13%)	10 (11%)	
Strongly Agree	4 (3%)	3 (13%)	1 (1%)	
COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting people from COVID-19, especially severe illness and death.				
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<0.001
Disagree	2 (2%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	
Neutral	2 (2%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	
Agree	5 (4%)	2 (9%)	3 (3%)	
Strongly Agree	105 (92%)	16 (73%)	89 (97%)	
Missing	2	1	1	
All eligible patients should be vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and others.				
Strongly Disagree	1 (1%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0.001
Disagree	2 (2%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	
Neutral	1 (1%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	
Agree	9 (8%)	3 (13%)	6 (7%)	
Strongly Agree	103 (89%)	16 (70%)	87 (94%)	
I am comfortable encouraging my patients their first doses of a vaccine against COVID-19.				
Strongly Disagree	1 (1%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0.009
Disagree	6 (5%)	3 (13%)	3 (3%)	
Neutral	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Agree	27 (23%)	8 (35%)	19 (20%)	
Strongly Agree	82 (71%)	11 (48%)	71 (76%)	
I encourage all eligible patients to be vaccinated against COVID-19.				
Strongly Disagree	1 (1%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0.028
Disagree	5 (4%)	2 (9%)	3 (3%)	
Neutral	8 (7%)	3 (14%)	5 (5%)	
Agree	40 (35%)	9 (41%)	31 (33%)	
Strongly Agree	61 (53%)	7 (32%)	54 (58%)	
Missing	1	1	0	

Conclusions

- Vaccination remains the most effective way to reduce risk of severe illness from COVID-19. However, graduate medical trainees perceive barriers to discussing vaccination with patients, most frequently citing lack of time and burnout.
- Personal experience with COVID-19 affects clinical practice and discussions about vaccination. It should not be assumed that being a physician in and of itself results in COVID attitudes that differ widely from those of the population.
- Addressing barriers to promoting vaccination will be essential to population health as COVID-19 shifts from a pandemic to an endemic burden.

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