



COVID-19 Among African American Females

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Purpose

The purpose of the study is to assess different attitudes of African American women 18 years and older regarding information about COVID-19 and vaccines. These attitudes are important, in particular, as there is a history of unethical human experimentation that has occurred in the past in order to eradicate certain diseases. As a result, this history has left African Americans with trepidation regarding vaccines, and have influenced their opinions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

Demographic

The target demographic for this project was African American women 18 years or older who attend Middle Tennessee State University or reside in the Rutherford county area from any socioeconomic background. If an individual did not meet the criteria they were not excluded unless they were not 18 years of age.

Methods

Listening Sessions were held for some women of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.; both undergraduate and graduate members with age varieties from 19 years up to over 50 years old. Once it was established that all participants were at least 18 years or older, the “sessions” were conducted via Zoom. To obtain a substantial number of individuals to take part in this work, three “sessions” were conducted for a total of fifty-two (52) individuals.

Additionally, Bahalocs Hair styling service was a channel to obtain more responses through a survey system called Survio to document their responses. There were 12 relevant questions asked and some yielded a “Yes” or “No” answer or a complete sentence.

Outcomes

This method of collecting data was fairly effective enough to collect about 43 responses total although only 44.3% of the 97 people who started the survey actually completed it.

- 51% of women have not had a flu vaccine. Reasons listed – Not enforced in family, wants body to fight it off, parents against it, a risk, someone had Guillain Barre Syndrome, adverse effects, never had the Flu.
- 10% of participants had children, and 30% noted that their parents did not get the shot.
- 60% of participants worry about short and long term effects, others mentioned advocating for it.
- 41% gets information about COVID-19 from social media and the remainder from News outlets such as CNN and MSNBC.
- 1 month -1 year was mentioned as the time to accept the vaccine. Some stated not taking it ever.
- 50% said they knew Rutherford Health Dept. does free COVID testing and its location, 50% didn't.
- 84% of individuals knew someone with COVID-19.
- 88% would wear a mask despite a mandate.
- 98% of individuals believed in social distancing.
- 58% Wear masks around family.
- 88% are more appreciating of social activities as a result of COVID-19.

Student Lessons Learned

I learned that not many black women that I surveyed are optimistic about the science behind COVID-19 vaccine and many are very hesitant to take the vaccine due to family experiences.

I learned that that many participants have a slight anxiety associated with the side effects that may or may not present as a side-effect.

I also learned that many other participants are hopeful that within at least a month to a year they will be open to the idea of receiving the vaccine after it is distributed.

Community Partner Acknowledgements

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- ⊙ Eta Psi Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc.
- ⊙ Pi Nu Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Inc.
- ⊙ Bahalocs Hairstyle Service.
- ⊙ TN-MMC HBCU Wellness Project

COVID-19 Listening Sessions Questions

1. Who has never had the flu vaccine? And if not, why not?
2. How many of you are parents? Has your child received a flu vaccine in the past? If not, why not? Did your parents get flu shots?
3. What would you like to know about the new COVID-19 vaccine before you consider getting it?
4. Where do you receive your news and information? What type of media outlet?
5. Once a COVID-19 vaccine is released, how long would it take for you to sign up? Same question for your children. What factors would you consider?
6. Did you know that the Rutherford County Health Department offers free COVID-19 testing?
7. Do you know where the Rutherford County Health Department is located?
8. Do you know anyone who has been affected by COVID-19?
9. If there was not a mandate, would you continue to wear your face mask?
10. Do you believe that social distancing has been effective in slowing the spread of COVID-19?
11. Do you wear your mask around friends and family?
12. Do you believe COVID-19 has made you more appreciative of participating in social activities and gatherings?