



ABSTRACTS: VOLUME 3, SPECIAL ISSUE

ABSTRACT

Covid-19 Vaccine Hesitancy among Palestinians

Lama Diriyeh¹, Yazan Hussien¹, Reem Ladadwa².

¹ *American School of Palestine, Palestine.*

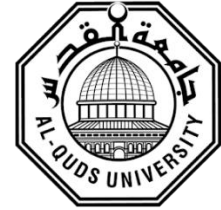
² *Al-Nayzak Organization, Horizons Academy, Palestine.*

Published in May 2022

Background: In the context of COVID-19 global pandemic, vaccines are one of the effective measures to control the effects of the virus. Vaccine Hesitancy is one of the underlying issues facing vaccinations and refers to “a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability.” It can stem from many factors such as marginalization and social exclusion, negative experiences at health services, or misinformation about vaccines circulated on unregulated social media platforms. This issue is complex and depends on economic and socio-cultural factors and shapes our health and clinical situation and should thus be further studied and examined.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to assist SARS-CoV-2 vaccine hesitancy in the Palestinian community and explore its demographic and socio-cultural associations.

Methods: Data was collected using an online survey in both English and Arabic, and distributed online among schools students and parents. Descriptive analysis and linear regression were utilized to analyze the collected data.



Results: 350 questionnaires were collected (69% were over 18 years old). In this category, most were between 30-49 years old and identified as middle class with an average monthly income of 4001-12000 NIS. 85% described their residence as urban, while 13% as rural. 67% had at least a Bachelor's degree, and 28% had a Master's degree.

The entire sample believed in the existence of Covid-19 virus, and were vaccinated. However, only 65% supported taking the vaccine, whereas 15% did not, and 20% had a neutral opinion. Of the reasons cited for not agreeing with the vaccination policy, 60% said that the vaccines haven't been studied enough; and 52% said that vaccines may have side effects that haven't been announced yet; 46% said that vaccinated individuals may get infected after taking the vaccine; 36% said that the danger of taking a vaccine exceeds the danger of getting infected with Coronavirus Covid-19.

For the vaccine preference, 55% of the sample preferred an American vaccine, whereas 9% preferred a Russian vaccine, and 26% had no preference. Moreover, 76% of the sample believed that vaccines are a political rather than a medical issue, whereas only 2% believed it was medical, and 22% had a neutral opinion.

Conclusion: Linear regression revealed a positive correlation between taking the vaccine and residence ($R=0.869$) and marital status ($R=0.571$). As expected, believing that vaccines are a political issue was negatively correlated with taking the vaccine ($R=0.578$). Surprisingly, education level was not correlated with taking the vaccine ($R=0.390$). Our findings suggest that despite a widely vaccinated sample, a large percentage believes in a political aspect of the vaccine. The data also suggests that a much smaller percentage agrees with vaccinating individuals under 18 years old, than vaccinating older individuals.

Research Keywords: Covid-19, Vaccines, Hesitancy, Palestinian.