

Health care professionals; regular Covid-19 booster dose vaccination hesitancy and associated factors: A Scoping Review

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective To assess the extent of hesitancy towards COVID-19 booster doses among HCPs and identify the associated factors.

Background The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on healthcare systems worldwide, with healthcare professionals (HCPs) playing a crucial role in combating the virus. COVID-19 vaccines have been proven effective in reducing the spread and severity of the disease. However, there is a concerning issue of vaccine hesitancy, particularly among HCPs. Despite being among the first to receive the initial vaccine doses, many HCPs are hesitant to receive booster shots. This hesitancy is worrying because the opinions of HCPs strongly influence public attitudes towards vaccines. Multiple studies have reported various

hesitancy rates ranging, influenced by concerns about vaccine safety, necessity, and effectiveness. It is crucial to understand and address this hesitancy as it not only affects the health of HCPs but also impacts the confidence of the general population in vaccines, which are vital for controlling the spread of the pandemic.

Rationale Vaccine hesitancy, defined as the reluctance or refusal to get vaccinated despite the availability of vaccines, is becoming a growing concern among healthcare professionals when it comes to COVID-19 booster shots. Despite the critical role that HCPs play in preventing and managing the spread of COVID-19, many of them are hesitant to receive booster doses. This is worrying because booster shots are crucial for maintaining immunity, especially with the emergence of new variants. Studies have shown that hesitancy is influenced by factors such as

concerns about vaccine safety, the perceived necessity of boosters, and the effectiveness of available vaccines. Additionally, socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, professional role, and previous COVID-19 infections, also play significant roles in the decision-making process. The reluctance of HCPs to get booster shots could have serious implications for public health, as their vaccination behavior influences the broader public's trust and acceptance of vaccines. It is essential to address this issue to ensure the ongoing success of vaccination campaigns and the broader fight against COVID-19.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis The review conducted a comprehensive search across two electronic databases, PubMed and Scopus. The search terms used were "COVID-19," "vaccine hesitancy," "healthcare professionals," and "booster vaccination," combined in various ways. Only peer-reviewed articles in English, focusing on healthcare professionals' hesitancy towards booster vaccinations, were considered. The search covered the period from January 2022 to August 2024. The initial search yielded thousands of potential studies, which were carefully screened based on pre-set inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Eligibility criteria The participants in this review were healthcare professionals (HCPs) eligible for COVID-19 booster doses. The focus was on vaccine hesitancy, specifically factors contributing to hesitancy in accepting booster doses. The studies included in the review were published in English after January 2022 and explored booster dose hesitancy among HCPs in different countries and healthcare settings. Non-peer-reviewed articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and studies involving non-HCP populations were excluded.

Source of evidence screening and selection The selection process began with a thorough screening of titles and abstracts to identify studies that met the inclusion criteria. Two reviewers independently conducted the screening process to ensure accuracy and minimize bias. Full-text reviews were performed on eligible studies. In cases where there was disagreement between the reviewers, a third reviewer was consulted to reach a consensus. A PRISMA flow diagram was used to document each stage of the selection process, enhancing transparency and reproducibility.

Data management Data from the selected studies were extracted using a standardized form.

Two reviewers independently extracted key information, such as study design, participant demographics, sample size, and vaccine hesitancy rates. Any discrepancies between the reviewers were resolved through discussion. The extracted data were then organized and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to COVID-19 booster hesitancy among HCPs. The findings were categorized into sub-themes, providing a structured and detailed summary of the factors contributing to vaccine hesitancy.

Language restriction Only english.

Country(ies) involved Greece.

Keywords Vaccination Hesitancy; Booster dose; Healthcare professionals; Covid-19; Reasons; Factors; Review.

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