

Awareness and Acceptance of Anticipated Pediatric COVID19 Vaccination in Rural South India

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To assess the awareness and acceptance of anticipated COVID19 pediatric vaccination among parents in rural south India.

Method: Objective Questionnaire based online cross-sectional study in Out-patient department, school WhatsApp groups and the community between 1-July 2021 to 15-July 2021. Sample size 873. *Inclusion criteria:* Parents of children less than 18 years of age willing to participate in the study. *Exclusion criteria:* Parents not willing to participate in the study.

Results: 64.6% parents accepted pediatric COVID19 vaccination; 96.4% felt it beneficial to vaccinate children prior to re-opening of school. 96.68% were positive that vaccination in children shall play a pivotal role in the projected third wave. 35.39% were hesitant and wanted to delay vaccinating their children and 14.14% do not believe in vaccine efficacy. 14.53% parents were weary of giving vaccine to their children due to personal experience of adverse effects they had suffered, and 22.45% parents refused vaccination due to hearsay adverse effects. 17.6% parents felt that post COVID19 infection, children don't need vaccination. 38.95% of parents were concerned about interaction of COVID19 vaccine with other vaccines of immunization schedule, 19.36% felt that children don't need specific COVID19 vaccine since the regular immunization schedule prevents COVID19 infection.

Conclusion: Parents of rural India are aware of the pandemic and its lasting impact in our society but its effect on children is still beyond their comprehension. Most parents are willing and accept pediatric COVID19 vaccination, however vaccine hesitancy and misconceptions are significant entities that can derail full coverage of children.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pediatric Covid-19, Pediatric Covid-19 vaccination, Rural, India

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