



Survey results on the beliefs of the vulnerable population regarding the Covid-19 vaccination

Introduction

Hellenic Red Cross, in the terms of Community, Engagement and Accountability (CEA), conducted a survey to investigate the perceptions of the beneficiary population towards Covid-19 vaccination. The survey results which are presented in this case study, was conducted between the 13th October and 5th of November 2021 and was complementary and comparative to a previous survey, which was conducted between the 4th and 21th of April 2021. The methodology that was followed was through a questionnaire and interviews took place with the use of Kobotool and the participants were recipients of the HRC programs and services, such as the Health Stations of Athens, Ano Liosia and Kallithea, the Mobile Health Units of Attica, Malakassa, Corinth, Serres, Ritsona and Lesvos, the ACCREF Service, the Multifunctional Centres of Athens and Thessaloniki.

Additionally, beneficiaries from the Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors in Athens (Structures A, B and C), Volos and Kalavryta also participated in the present survey, due to the decision of the Ministry of Health to include citizens under 18 years old in the vaccination campaign (population that was not included in the original survey of April 2021).

Objectives

The survey aimed:

- To measure the attitude of the migrant population towards the vaccine on Covid-19 and the reasons for their possible refusal to be vaccinated
- To investigate if the information resources about the access to the vaccination procedure were adequate and check their preferences on the source they choose in order to be informed
- To investigate on rumors that may affect negatively their participation to the vaccination
- To measure the percentage of the migrant population that got vaccinated
- To compare the results with the first survey that was conducted in April 2021 and track possible changes in the migrants behaviors and beliefs

Community, Engagement and Accountability

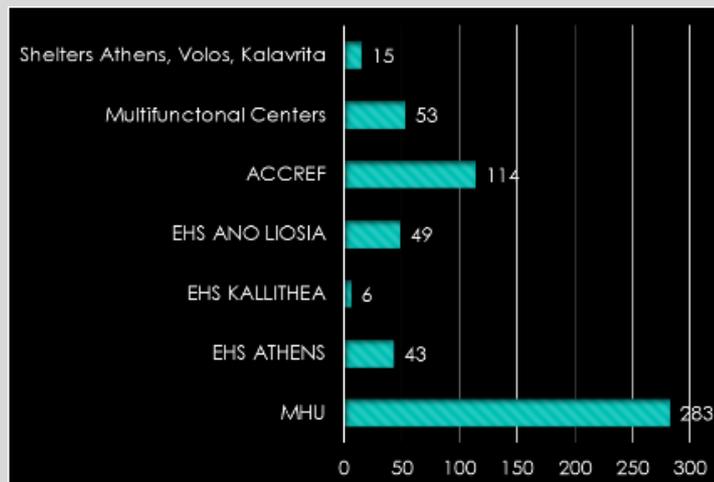
“Communication, Engagement and Accountability (CEA), through specialized technical tools and communication methods, contributes to the receipt of feedback from the community in order to actively involve the population served in the design and implementation of the programmes and actions of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In addition, the CEA approach sets the basis for cooperation between the population served and the HRC staff, with the ultimate aim of changing undesirable social behaviours and adopting new healthy social behaviour patterns. At the same time, the possibility of continuous interaction and communication with the members of the community is given, thus promoting open dialogue on issues that concern them, participating and influencing decisions that concern the members themselves, proposing positive changes in the programs and actions provided by the HRC.”



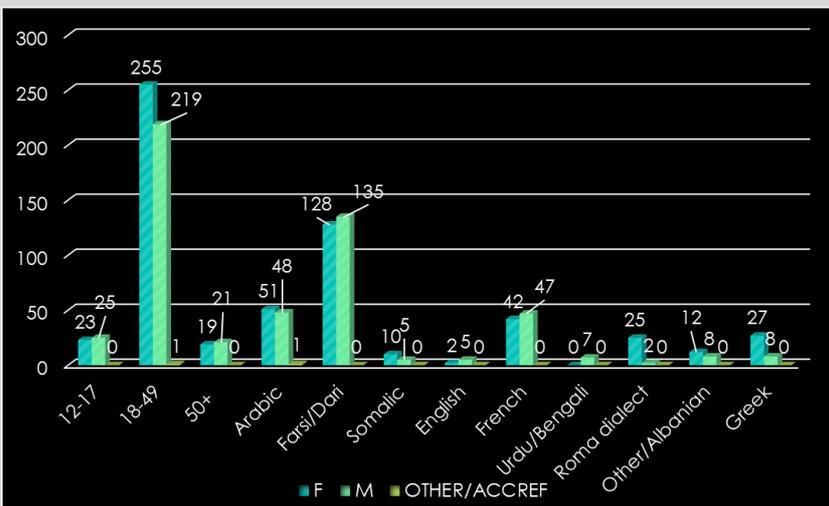
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Number of participants

A total of 563 beneficiaries participated in the survey. The majority (283) (came from the Mobile Health Units, Attiki, Malakassa, Korinthos, Serres, Ritsona and Lesvos), while many participants (114) also came from the ACCREF Service, followed by the Multifunctional Centres of Athens and Thessaloniki with 53 participants, the EHS (Educational Health Station) of Ano Liosia with 49 participants and the EHS of Athens with 43 participants. The 5 Shelters in Athens (Structure A, B, C), Volos and Kalavryta participated with 15 beneficiaries and the EHS of Kallithea with 6.



Demographic data



Participation for both genders was more or less equally, with women being slightly more than men. More specifically, 295 women and 267 men participated in the survey, while one ACCREF beneficiary declared that he/she was of a different gender.

Most participants (475) were in the age group of 18-49 years old, 48 were minors 12-17 years old and 40 were over 50 years old.

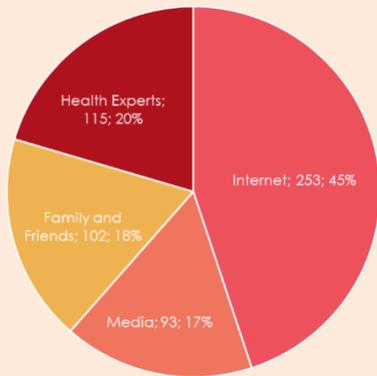
Finally, in terms of the language, most participants (263) were Farsi-speaking, 100 were Arabic-speaking, 89 spoke French, 35 Greek, 27 were Roma, 20 spoke Albanian, 15 Somali, 7 English and only 7 Urdu.



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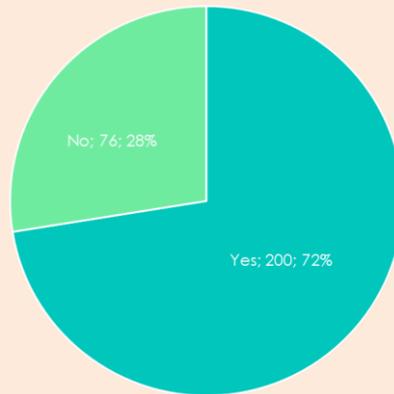
Data Analysis

1) Where do you get information about the pandemic and the vaccination process against Covid-19?



1) Most participants (253) use the internet as the main source of information. Of the 563 participants, 115 consult a health professional, 102 trust their family or friends and the remaining 93 get their information from the media (T.V, radio).

2) Do you know how to register for the vaccination process?

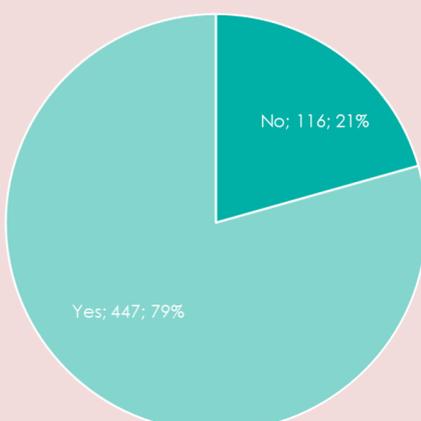


2) The majority of participants (423) reported that they were aware of the registration process to get vaccinated. However, a significant number of participants (139) was still unaware of this procedure. Out of them, 39 mentioned that they were not interested in being informed, while out of the remaining 100 participants, half said that information was not available in their language and half for some other reason (not specified).

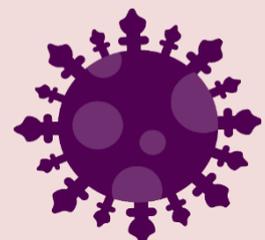
2β) Why you don't know how to register for the vaccination process?



3) Do you consider the vaccine a powerful tool to fight the pandemic?



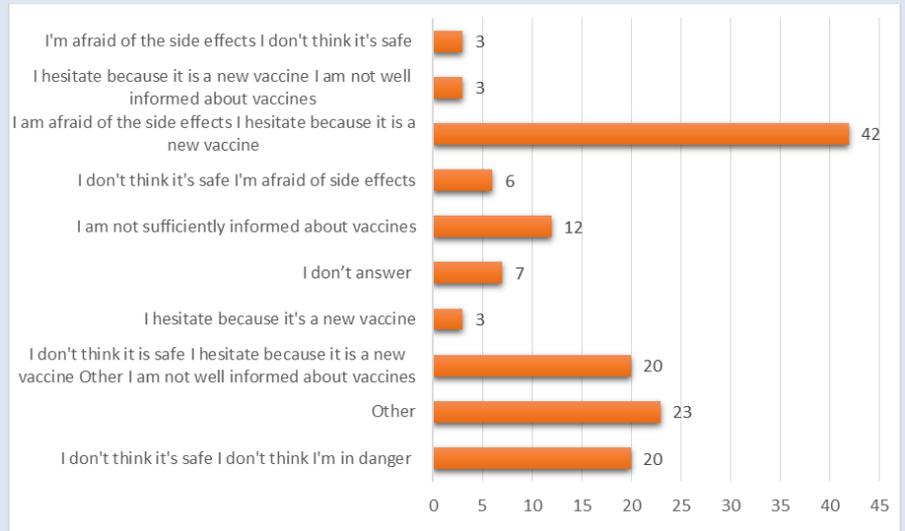
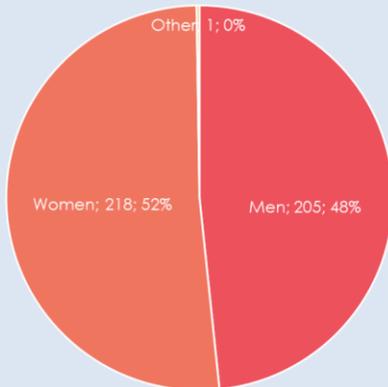
3) Out of the 563 beneficiaries who participated in the survey, most (447) said that the vaccine is a reliable tool to deal with the pandemic. However, 116 reported that they were not convinced about the reliability of the vaccine.





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4) Have you been vaccinated or do you plan to be vaccinated in the near future?



It is quite positive that most of the 563 participants, 424 have been vaccinated against Covid-19. In more detail, as shown in the chart, 218 women, 205 men and 1 other reported having had the Covid-19 vaccine.

The remaining 139 said they do not vaccinate for the following reasons:

- 42 said they feared the side effects as it is a new vaccine
- 20 said they were reluctant to get vaccinated as they did not believe the vaccine was safe
- 20 reported that they do not think they are at risk of getting Covid-19 and that the vaccine is not safe
- 23 for some other reason
- 12 said they had not been sufficiently informed about vaccines
- 9 said they did not think it was safe and were afraid of side effects
- 7 did not want to say why
- 6 said they were hesitant as it is a new vaccine and 3 of them said they were not sufficiently informed

5) Regarding rumors, most (227) said they had heard a rumor about the vaccine, while slightly fewer (217) said they had not heard anything. 118 participants did not know or did not want to answer this question.

Below are the most common mentioned rumors, according to respondents:

5) Have you heard any rumors about the Covid-19 vaccine?





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Rumors about the Covid-19 vaccine:

1. The vaccine causes death.

3. About the composition of the vaccine, e. g. I heard that in another country the vaccine is only salt water.

5. It is not checked.

2. It has serious side effects, such as problems with blood vessels, fertility problems in women, disabilities, heart attacks and coronary heart disease.

4. It does not protect but has been built for profitability.

6. There are demonstrations against vaccination.



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Comparison of results between the two surveys

Looking at the data from both surveys (April and November 2021), it is clear that the **main source of information** about the disease and the vaccination process is **social media and the internet**.

Regarding the **reliability of the vaccine** in the response to the pandemic, the perceptions of participants remains broadly the same in both surveys. More specifically, in the April 2021 survey, 55% of respondents considered the vaccine as a reliable mean of treating Covid-19, 20% considered it unreliable and the remaining 25% did not want/did not know the answer. Given that the second survey did not include the option "Don't know / Don't answer", the results are encouraging with 79% now **considering the vaccine reliable** and the remaining 21% unreliable.

The next question was formed differently in the two questionnaires, mainly due to the time period each survey was conducted. Specifically, in the first survey, participants were asked **if they would like to receive the vaccine**, and in the second survey if they have been vaccinated or plan to be vaccinated. This different framing is due to the fact that in the second survey (October-November 2021) the vaccination process had progressed significantly with the largest percentage of the country's citizens to have been vaccinated. However, in both questions it seems that the majority of participants **has a positive attitude** towards the vaccine. More specifically, **in the first survey 55% of citizens** said they **wanted to be vaccinated**, while **in the second survey 75%** said they **had already been vaccinated**. The main reason for refusing the vaccine in both phases of the study was the belief that the vaccine causes serious side effects.

Conclusions – Next steps

At the end of the survey, a coordination meeting was held between the HRC staff that participated in the survey, in order to discuss potential challenges that appeared during the survey process, the final results and to assess and define the next steps and actions need to be taken upon. Here come the main conclusions:

- In the questions where the answer was **"Other"**, **the interviewees should have been given the opportunity to specify their answer** so that it was not left unclear. It was also suggested to have **an open question for comments** and observations from either the interviewer or the interviewee side
- It was recorded that during the interviews at the Lesvos Reception and Identification Centre, several interviewees mentioned **specific websites, such as the BBC**, as the main source of information
- Considering the high percentage of interviewees who mentioned that the internet and social media are their main source of information, it is suggested that in future research these sources should be investigated in a more depth in order to measure **their validity and reliability**
- It was proposed to create **key messages** (announcements with targeted information) in order provide timely and life-saving information to the population about the Covid-19 vaccination
- It was proposed to create a simplified and **easy-to-read one-page booklet** describing the steps of the vaccination process
- The vast majority of the responders **was very willing and cooperative** in participating to the survey. Also, there was spotted **a difference in the way the recipients expressed themselves** during the survey according to the population group they belonged (e. g. the minors in the UMS's responded with more familiarity and in a more humorous way)
- The survey suggests that **the most common rumors that the vaccine is deadly and causes serious side effects**, are likely to affect the population participation in the vaccination campaign.