

FACTORS INFLUENCING COVID-19 VACCINE UPTAKE DURING PREGNANCY: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY



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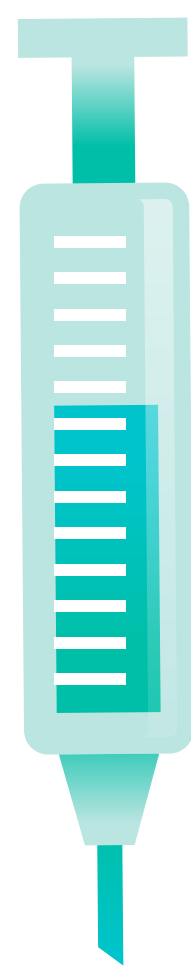
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INTRODUCTION

Pregnant women continue to have a lower uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations compared to the general population, despite being more vulnerable to serious illness and complications if infected with COVID-19. The recommendations given to pregnant women have changed over time, and combined with misinformation may prevent women from choosing to be vaccinated. This study therefore aimed to identify factors which may influence vaccine uptake.

OBJECTIVE



- Assess the level of acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination amongst pregnant women in a single centre.
- Identify factors which influence vaccine uptake, including facilitators and barriers. These may be useful when designing future strategies to promote COVID vaccine uptake in this population

METHODS

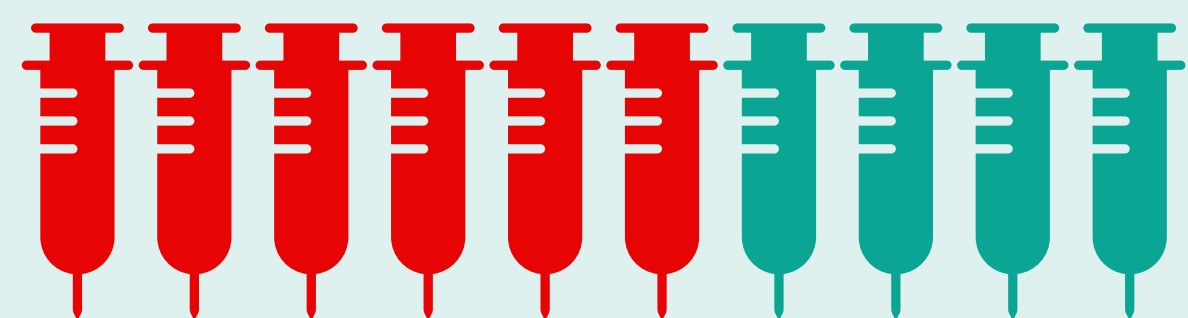
Single centre, cross-sectional online survey distributed between August and September 2021. Participants recruited during antenatal clinic visits. Main outcome measures included:

- awareness of information sources
- personal opinions on COVID-19
- vaccination decisions

Statistical analysis was performed in SPSS V.25. The influence of different factors upon vaccination decisions was explored using a binary logistic regression model. Qualitative data were analysed thematically facilitated by NVivo software.

RESULTS

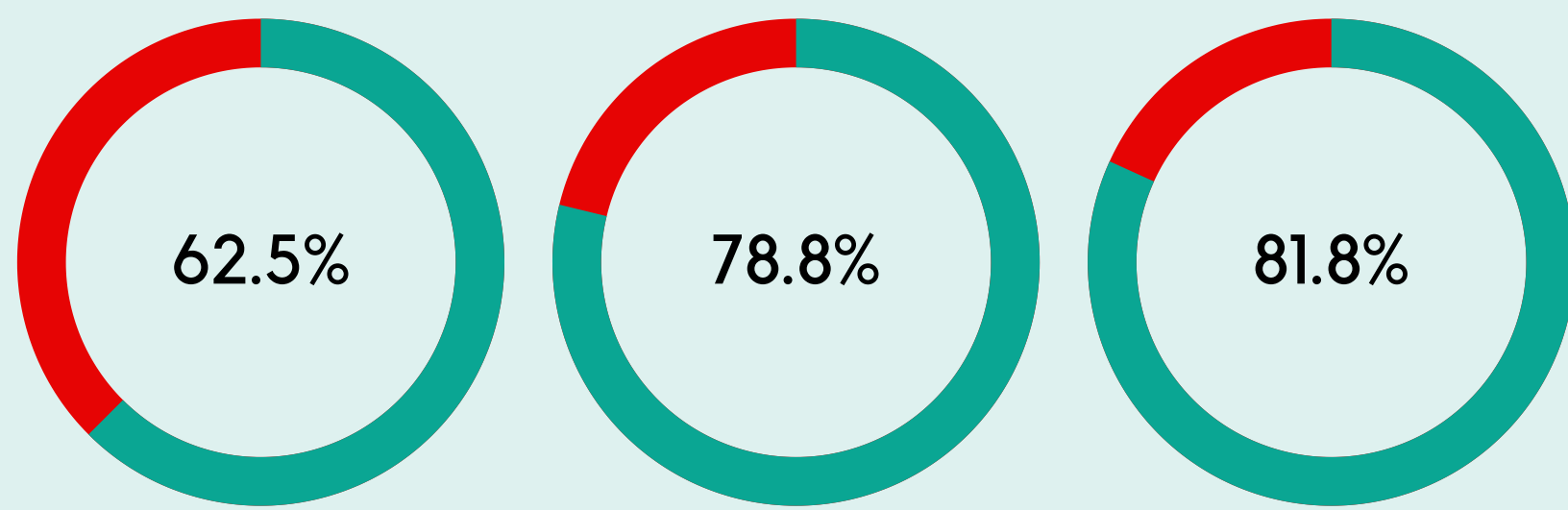
92 total eligible responses were collected.



60.9% (n=56) had declined, or would decline, a COVID-19 vaccination.

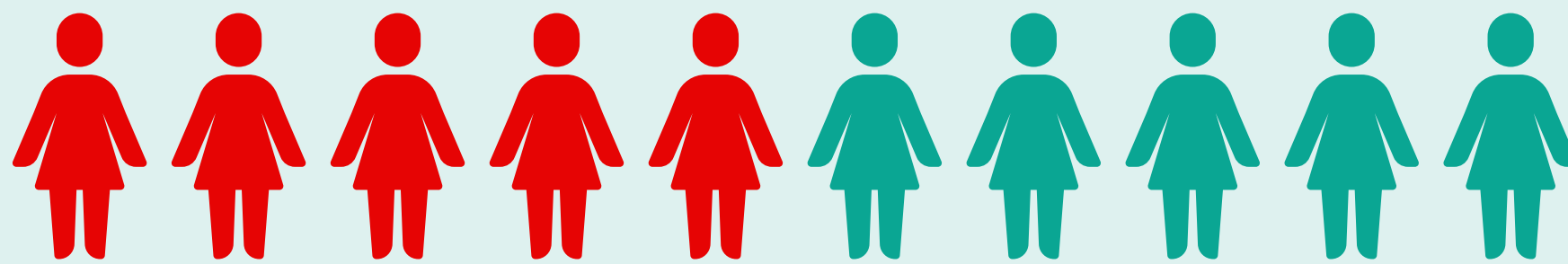
Those who reported a previous negative pregnancy experience (preterm birth, stillbirth, neonatal unit admission, miscarriage) were significantly more likely to accept a COVID-19 vaccination (OR 3.9; p<0.05, 95% CI 1.32-11.52). Freetext responses from this group reported concern over becoming seriously unwell with COVID.

Over half (53.2%) of participants agreed that discussion with a healthcare professional was important in decision making. Among healthcare professionals, GPs were reported as the least supportive of vaccination (62.5%) compared to midwives (78.8%) and obstetric consultants (81.8%)



GP's Midwives Obstetricians
% reported as supportive of vaccination in pregnancy

Participants who reported discussing COVID-19 vaccination with someone who was unsupportive were four times more likely to decline vaccination than participants who received support (OR 4.0; p<0.05, 95% CI 1.48-10.84). Half of participants reported concern over the impact of vaccination on fertility.



KEY MESSAGES

Misinformation from social media can dissuade people from choosing vaccination. However, most participants felt that discussion with a healthcare professional was more important in their decision-making process. Therefore consistent messaging is key.

There is lots of scope to improve vaccine uptake in pregnancy: Those declining vaccination are often not simply “anti-vaccination”, but have concerns that can be addressed by careful counselling. Many are concerned about fertility, allergy and effects on the fetus; all of which may be resolved through discussion and provision of evidence-based information.

CONCLUSION

There is a need for consistent messaging around vaccine uptake in pregnancy from healthcare professionals, and provision and promotion of appropriate evidence based information. Information produced for pregnancy women should focus on vaccine safety and the impact of COVID-19 infection and vaccination on the foetus. There is a need to nurture a collaborative approach to support informed decision making.