



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Nursing

A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO IDENTIFY THE ATTITUDE OF HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL TOWARDS COVID-19 VACCINE AND ITS ADMINISTRATION.

KEY WORDS: COVID-19, vaccine, Focus group discussion, Attitude, health care personnel

Prof. Dr. Amita Paul

HOD Community Health Nursing Department, Bombay Hospital college of Nursing, Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

Health professional's intention to use and to recommend the vaccine to their patients depends on their knowledge and attitudes about vaccines. A qualitative study was conducted with a goal to study in depth regarding attitude of health care personnel towards COVID-19 vaccine and its administration. Total 28 Participants were recruited via purposive sampling. Focus group interview was conducted on the participants who extended up to 30-45 minutes. In focus group majority 9 (32.14%) of participants was from the age group of 26-30 years. 28(78.57%) of them were females. Total 5 themes were generated which are views about COVID-19 vaccine, attitude and perception, COVID-19 misinformation and vaccine hesitancy, Concerns, health benefits. Vaccinating healthcare personnel protects healthcare. The study concluded that Health care personnel have mixed perceptions regarding COVID-19 vaccine. Channeling correct messages may improve people's willingness to get vaccinated.

Methods: Eight focus group discussions were conducted. Participants were recruited via purposive sampling. Discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Key themes were extracted using thematic analysis method.

Results: In focus group there were males and females, with a mean age of Sub-themes identified were attitude, perception, worries and issues, vaccine hesitancy, health benefits and concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccine, leading to the main theme, i.e., views about the COVID-19 vaccine.

There were 19 males and 24 females, with a mean age of 36 ± 11 years. Sub-themes identified were knowledge, attitude, perception and concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccine, leading to the main theme, i.e., views about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Conclusion: Health care personnel have mixed perceptions regarding COVID-19 vaccine. Channeling correct messages may improve people's willingness to get vaccinated.

INTRODUCTION:-

The unprecedented COVID-19 disease spread has infected millions, causing deaths of hundreds of thousands. One of the strategies to curb its spread was the development of COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine was launched in India on 16th January 2021 for healthcare and frontline workers in Phase 1. The healthcare and frontline workers were initially not found to be very accepting of the vaccine and were hesitant to receive the vaccine due to several reasons. Currently, the phase-2 vaccination drive includes senior citizens over 60 years of age and persons between 45 and 59 years with comorbid conditions.

The success of any immunization drive depends on its coverage and acceptance rate but there might be various concerns among people regarding the vaccine. In order to have a wide coverage of the population by vaccination and shun hesitancy towards the vaccine, it is critical to comprehend people's views regarding the vaccine. Therefore, this study aims to identify the attitude of health care personnel towards COVID-19 vaccine and its administration.

Acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine will play a major role in combating the pandemic. Health care personnel are among the first group to receive vaccination, so it is important to consider their attitudes about COVID-19 vaccination to better address barriers to widespread vaccination acceptance.

OBJECTIVE:-

To understand health care personnel attitudes about vaccine safety, efficacy, and acceptability in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including acceptance of a novel corona virus vaccine.

METHODS:-

An exploratory descriptive study was carried out using focus group discussion (FGD) after seeking approval from the higher authority. Participants were recruited via purposive sampling. Discussions were recorded and transcribed

verbatim. Key themes were extracted using thematic analysis method.

A diverse sample was selected using the principle of maximum diversity on the basis of different socio-demographic parameters such as age, gender, marital status, religion, education status, working area, years of working experience and source of information. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the participants. Bombay hospital health care personnel above 18 years, who could speak and understand Hindi and/or English were enrolled in the discussion. For a deeper and better understanding of participants experience and to explore the data subsequent questions like (What do you mean? Why do you think so? Please explain little more) were asked based on the preliminary responses. The researcher always asked to give an example for the better extraction of information from study participants. Interview session was extended for approximately 30-45 minutes. Audio data is collected during interview was reviewed many times for an accurate data transcription. Triangulation and member checking was done to check validity of the participant's response. Transcript interpretation and coding was done with ATLAS.ti.8. Theme was generated on the basis of codes.

RESULT:-

Socio-demographic characteristics:-

In focus group majority 9 (32.14%) of participants was from the age group of 26-30 years. 28(78.57%) of them were females. In regard with religion 15 (53.57%) were Hindu. 14 (50%) of them are having UG qualification, only 16 (57.29%) of them are married. 11(39.28%) participant working as a staff nurse 14(50%) of the participants received information from mass media. In concern with year of working experience most of them were between 1-5 years 10 (35.71%). The analysis of the qualitative data was based on research questions coding was done using ATLAS.ti, 8 software and 5 themes were generated which are Views about COVID-19 vaccine, Attitude and Perception, COVID-19 Misinformation and Vaccine hesitancy, Concerns about the safety of future COVID-19 vaccines, Health benefits.

1. Views about the COVID-19 vaccine

When enquired about the knowledge regarding COVID-19 vaccination the participant responds mixed views regarding acceptance of the vaccine. Some accepting readily while others being skeptical. Willing/Unwilling to recommend it to their family and friends. One among the group quoted that "I heard about the common side effects of vaccine in some individual like mild fever, chills, vomiting and pain etc". Another participant replied that "I have mistrust in the safety and efficacy of the vaccine".

2. Attitude and Perception: - There was a general consensus among health care personnel that vaccination offered a "light at the end of the tunnel". They argued that vaccination was the only viable exit strategy, because they felt that infection prevention and control strategies which relied heavily on the behaviour of the general public had not been able to effectively control the spread of disease. Health care personnel's attitudes towards vaccination are different. The entire Participant has their different attitude and perception regarding COVID 19 vaccine. Concerns regarding the rapid development and approval of COVID vaccine and regarding the unforeseen future effects of the vaccine on the comorbid and immunocompromised patients. Regarding the duration of protection from the vaccine about availability of the vaccine in the entire nation. One of the participants quoted that " I concerned about the piracy/authenticity of the vaccine". General perception about vaccines were assessed by statements - "I do not believe vaccines work"; "I do not believe vaccines are safe"; "I do not get vaccinated for reasons of personal freedom/choice". One sample expressed the "Concerned about the politics that might affect the vaccination drive." other participants commented that "Prevention is better than Cure" so according to me each and every person should get vaccinated because we all have lost someone of our lovedones due to this pandemic. Another participant told "Vaccination is better than virus so I choose vaccination." Some Health Care Personnel's believed they had a moral responsibility to advocate vaccination and they reported to play a very active role in encouraging their patients to get vaccinated by "directing them, signposting them to links, phoning up patients who have questions about the vaccine" with the aim of helping them to make informed decisions about vaccination.

Health care personnel also commented that by reducing the transmission of the virus, vaccination could minimize the potential of the virus to mutate into more dangerous variants. Many Health care personnel felt that there was sufficient evidence available to demonstrate the short-term safety of the COVID-19 vaccines.

3. Covid-19 Misinformation and Vaccine Hesitancy:- when enquired about the vaccine hesitancy participants have very mixed feelings about COVID-19 vaccine, and they are dominated by anxiety, worry and nervousness they are hopeful that a safe, effective vaccine will be produced. However, they think the vaccine has been rushed and that has eroded their confidence. One participant said "I will wait and see how it goes with others." A number of people have said they will discuss with their family members and make a family decision about what to do. One among the group quoted that "there is concern that politics driving the process making it harder and harder to know who to trust or reliable scientific information about the vaccine". 1 in 6th health care personnel expresses reluctance to get vaccinated, primarily due to concerns about the lack of information regarding the vaccine effectiveness and safety.

4. Concerns about the Safety of future COVID-19 vaccines:- The concerns contributing to negative attitudes related to vaccine hesitancy, preference to natural immunity misinformation regarding the vaccine, lack of perceived

safety, fear of having side-effects, fear of faulty/fake vaccine, government conspiracies etc. The gap in Information, Education and Communication for the acceptance of the vaccine. Mixed views, some willing to promote it while others being skeptical. One responded said that " I have concern about this vaccine because misinformation spread from social media about the vaccine and limited direction given by the government Another participant replied that "Safety and efficacy of the vaccine for elderly and comorbid individuals. Initiation of the process of vaccination for other family members especially pregnant women, children and elderly; rumors spread on social media about the safety and efficacy, use for children and elderly, price of the vaccine".

5. Health benefits: - Vaccinating healthcare personnel protects healthcare capacity.

A significant number of the members replied that when healthcare personnel get sick with COVID-19, they are not able to work and provide key services for patients or clients. One participant quoted "it has less harm, so I also advised others to take COVID-19 Vaccine." One sample replied that "COVID-19 vaccination is fruitful to our health we are so lucky to receive covishield vaccine". Whereas other participants commented that "Even after we get vaccinated, we still have to wear our masks and you still have to physically distance,"

CONCLUSION:-

Despite overall confidence in vaccines, a majority of Health Care personnel's expressed concerns over a novel corona virus vaccine. A large proportion plan to delay vaccine uptake due to concerns about expedited development, emerging scientific discoveries, and the political climate. Forthcoming vaccination campaigns must address these unique points of corona virus vaccine hesitancy in order to achieve adequate vaccine coverage.

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