

COVID-19 vaccine uptake - what motivates & what hesitates?

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Vaccination against COVID-19 can help prevent serious complications and death. The World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Groups of Experts (SAGE) collated few evidences that vaccine hesitancy was due to socio-psychological factors like decreased trust on the safety or the effectiveness of the vaccines. In Malaysia, the main challenge was to ensure the broadest possible acceptance of COVID-19 vaccinations. This study aimed to assess the association between complete vaccination status with health factors and perception towards COVID-19 vaccine uptake amongst people living in Seberang Perai, Penang. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study among 410 adults aged ≥ 18 years old was carried out using convenience sampling technique in September 2021. Validated items related to vaccine perceptions were adapted from previous literature. Baseline vaccination data were obtained from the vaccination centre at Hospital Seberang Jaya. Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted using SPSS version 22.0. **Results:** The mean age of the respondents was 31 (standard deviation (SD) ± 10) years. A total of 317 respondents were women. More than half of them, 219 (53.7%) were tertiary educated. Total of 147 respondents completed vaccination and there was a significant difference between gender and age, $p < 0.001$ and $p = 0.013$, respectively. There was also a significant difference between vaccination status and perceptions on COVID-19 vaccines to be safe and effective (OR: 4.8, 95% CI: 1.2, 18.2, $p = 0.013$). **Conclusion:** There were no associations between vaccination and health status, while those perceived COVID-19 vaccine to be safe and effective were more likely to be vaccinated as compared to those who did not.