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Assessment of COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy among Health Care Workers in a Tertiary Hospital in Enugu State, Nigeria: A Descriptive Hospital-based Cross-sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) vaccine hesitancy is a major threat to global health. The role of health care workers (HCWs) as a trusted sources of health information has a potentially powerful influence on client vaccination decisions, thus their acceptance of COVID-19 vaccine may correlate with their willingness to recommend the vaccine to the general population. This study aimed to assess the awareness, knowledge and acceptance level of the COVID-19 vaccine among HCWs at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Enugu, Nigeria, during the third wave of the pandemic.

Methods: A cross-sectional study using a self-administered questionnaire from July 15, 2021 to August 14, 2021 among 289 HCWs in UNTH. Data was collected about socio-demographic characteristics, respondent's knowledge of COVID-19, risk perception of COVID-19 and willingness to receive COVID-19 vaccine. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences and descriptive statistical analyses were conducted using the Chi-square test at a 95% confidence interval.

Results: Complete responses were retrieved from a total of 289 participants. Of these, 114(39.4%) were males and 175(60.6%) were females with 49.5% of the respondents aged 26 – 35 years. 49.8% of participants were willing to take the vaccine, 39.7% rejected, and 15.6% were indecisive. The commonest reasons for hesitancy were concerns of effectiveness, unforeseen adverse effects, and safety. The highest rejection was by the ward assistants (66.7%) while the highest acceptance was among the Pharmacists (75.6%).

Conclusions: A significant number of HCWs were hesitant to COVID-19 vaccine for various reasons. Targeted enlightenment strategies to improve vaccine acceptance amongst HCWs is vital for implementing effective vaccination programs.

Key Words: COVID-19, vaccine, hesitancy, health care worker, Enugu, Nigeria