

UAMS News Bureau

Office of Communications & Marketing
4301 West Markham # 890
Little Rock, AR 72205-7199

uamshealth.com/news



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Media Contacts:

Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

David Wise, 479-713-8679
Wireless phone: 501-259-1628
dwise@uams.edu

UAMS Researchers Find COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Prevalent Even Among Vaccinated

FAYETTEVILLE — Researchers with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Office of Community Health and Research recently published four articles on a study they conducted that found that many adults in Arkansas receiving the COVID-19 vaccine are doing so despite experiencing some doubts about the shot.

The researchers determined – through a survey of 1,475 people at drive-thru clinics and community vaccination events between April 22 and July 6, 2021 – that 60% of adult recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine in Arkansas experienced at least some level of vaccine hesitancy. However, influence from family members and a desire to protect themselves against the coronavirus led to them overcoming those doubts and getting the vaccine. In addition to family and friends, hesitant adopters of the COVID-19 vaccine also reported that they were most likely to turn to a health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for trusted information about the vaccine.

“Personal testimonies from people who received the vaccine can be incredibly powerful,” said Rachel Purvis, Ph.D., an assistant professor and researcher in the Office of Community Health and Research. “Although some hesitant adopters said they didn’t trust any sources of information about the vaccine, we found that most do trust their doctor and their family.”

Vaccine hesitancy was designated by the World Health Organization as one of the top 10 threats to global health in 2019, prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As of Feb. 21, 2022, more than 900,000 people in the United States have died of COVID-19. Nationwide, nearly 80% of people five years of age and older have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination.

“It’s important to understand that many people may be hesitant and still choose to get vaccinated,” said Don Willis, Ph.D., another researcher and assistant professor in the Office of Community Health and Research. “This should be encouraging for health care providers. The fact that hesitancy is common among the vaccinated is also an important reminder that having questions and concerns is normal, and we hope knowing this will encourage those who are hesitant to ask any questions they may have.”

COVID-19 infections continue to increase at a rapid rate in Arkansas. As of Feb. 21, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) has reported more than 10,000 deaths from COVID-19. Less than 55% of the state's eligible population is fully immunized. According to the ADH, more than 80% of the state's COVID-19 hospitalizations since last February are among unvaccinated patients.

Other Key Study Findings:

- Thirty-one percent of respondents reported they were a little hesitant about receiving a COVID-19 vaccine; 19% said they were somewhat hesitant; and 10% said they were very hesitant.
- Black/African American respondents were more likely to report higher levels of vaccine hesitancy, with 76% of those surveyed reporting some level of hesitancy. Twenty-eight percent said they were very hesitant.
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander respondents were less likely to report higher levels of vaccine hesitancy than white respondents, possibly due to [significant outreach and education efforts implemented in Arkansas](#).

The study also found a connection between vaccine hesitancy and health literacy, which the CDC defines as “the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.” As respondents’ health literacy increased, their hesitancy toward vaccines decreased, the researchers found.

The four research articles related to this study can be read in their entirety by clicking the links below.

[Hesitant but vaccinated assessing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among the recently vaccinated](#)

[Facilitators to vaccination among hesitant adopters](#)

[Motivations to vaccinate among hesitant adopters of the COVID-19 vaccine](#)

[Trusted sources of COVID-19 vaccine information among hesitant adopters in the United States](#)

For information about COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, visit nwa.uams.edu/covid.

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surgery, diabetes, hip replacement, knee replacement and stroke. *Forbes* magazine ranked UAMS as seventh in the nation on its Best Employers for Diversity list. UAMS also ranked in the top 30% nationwide on *Forbes*' Best Employers for Women list and was the only Arkansas employer included. UAMS has 3,047 students, 873 medical residents and fellows, and six dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

The UAMS Northwest Regional Campus includes 288 medical, pharmacy, nursing and health professions students, 64 medical and pharmacy residents, two sports medicine fellows, and 1,000 community-based faculty. The campus has nine clinics including a student-led clinic and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Faculty conduct research to reduce health disparities. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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