

UAMS Researchers Find Hesitant Adopters of Initial COVID-19 Vaccines Less Likely to Return for Booster Doses

Hesitant adopters of the COVID-19 vaccine are less likely to get a booster shot, despite getting an earlier dose or doses, according to a recent study by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Office of Community Health & Research.

Researchers examined booster uptake among hesitant adopter Arkansans who had previously received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and found that many did not return for the subsequent booster shot. Compared to study participants who expressed no vaccine hesitancy during their initial vaccination, hesitant adopters' odds of receiving a booster shot decreased between 67% and 88% based on the level of hesitancy experienced. Hesitant adopters were defined as individuals who were hesitant about getting the vaccine but received the initial dose or doses.

Researchers argue that vaccine hesitancy isn't always absent when a person decides to become vaccinated, but rather, vaccinated individuals are often able to overcome that hesitancy to receive their shot. That hesitancy may remain following their initial vaccination and could reduce their likelihood of returning for second or third shots. Another recent study by UAMS Community Health & Research found that more than half of vaccinated Arkansans received the shot while experiencing some degree of vaccine hesitancy.

“If we assume people who receive a COVID-19 vaccine do so with no hesitancy, we miss a critical opportunity to address any concerns or to increase their odds of coming back for subsequent doses,” said Don Willis, Ph.D., an assistant professor at UAMS Community Health & Research and lead researcher on the study. “This study provides a clear example of why distinguishing the behavior of vaccination from the feeling of hesitancy isn't just a theoretically important point, but one with significant practical and clinical importance.”

This study ([*COVID-19 Booster Uptake: Are Hesitant Adopters Less Likely to Get a Booster Shot than Nonhesitant Adopters?*](#)) and other studies by the research team also found that recommendations from health care providers are one of the most important things to encourage hesitant adopters to receive their first does and subsequent doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention announced the release of a new booster shot from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna last month.