

OHNEP COVID-19: Promoting Vaccine Confidence #1

Case Study

- ◇ **Sam age 68** is a single, white, obese male with poorly controlled Type 2 Diabetes. He has been diagnosed with periodontal disease but has not been treated for this. He is on SSI and Medicare/Medicaid with no dental benefit. He is here for his diabetic appointment. As his nurse practitioner, you recommend he get the COVID-19 vaccine. He tells you he does not want to get the vaccine.

The WHO has declared vaccine hesitancy a major threat to global health. Vaccine hesitancy is being fueled by social media.

***Read:** Dror, A.A., Eisenbach, N., Taiber, S. Morozov, N.G., Mizrahi, M., Zigran, A., ... & Sela, E. (2020) Vaccine hesitancy: the next challenge in the fight against COVID-19. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, 35, 775–779 (2020). doi: 10.1007/s10654-020-00671-y.*

***Read:** Puri, N., Coomes, E.A., Haghbayan, H., & Gunaratne, J. (2020) Social media and vaccine hesitancy: new updates for the era of COVID-19 and globalized infectious diseases. *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics*, 16(11), 2586-2593. doi: 10.1080/21645515.2020.1780846.*

◇ **How do you address his vaccine hesitancy?**

Find out what makes the patient feel this way:

Nurse or Nurse Practitioner (RN/NP): I'm so glad you're here for your diabetic check-up. We just got the COVID-19 vaccine and I can give it to you today.

Sam: I don't want that!

RN/NP: Can you tell me what makes you feel that way?

Sam: It is all a conspiracy from China to implant the virus in everyone. It's the 5G that's spreading the virus and that's in the vaccine now too.

RN/NP: Where did you find this information?

Sam: It's all over my Twitter account. Haven't you seen it? It's everywhere.

RN/NP: There is a lot of inaccurate information being spread on social media. I can look at it with you to see.

Healthcare providers are among the most trusted information sources.

◇ **Correct this misinformation.**

Sam: Why would I take something which would make me sick?

RN/NP: The vaccine does not contain the virus. It only has a protein which will help your body to make an antibody to fight the infection if you are exposed to the virus. It will not give you the virus.

Coincident with the rapid developments of COVID-19 vaccines globally, concerns about the safety of such a vaccine could contribute to vaccine hesitancy.

◇ **Is the vaccine safe?**

Sam: The vaccine was made so fast, it can't be safe.

RN/NP: Although development moved rapidly, you can be assured that there is excellent safety data on both vaccines. Because of the pandemic, massive amounts of money were invested for vaccine development, and recruitment for clinical trials resulted in unprecedented large numbers of volunteers which allowed it to proceed efficiently.

The vaccine has some side effects which are usually very mild and include fatigue and muscle aches. Some people may experience a fever. Usually this is over in a day or so.

◇ **Discuss the population benefit.**

RN/NP: The vaccine does not give you COVID-19, although you may have some reaction. This is much better than getting the disease. It is also much better than spreading the disease to vulnerable people like your elderly mother, or neighbors.

Those who accept flu vaccine are more likely to accept COVID vaccine.

The most significant positive predictor for acceptance of a potential COVID-19 vaccine is *current* influenza vaccination.

◇ **Ask about the influenza vaccine.**

RN/NP: Have you received the flu vaccine this year?

Sam: No, I never take the flu vaccine. I am strong.

Why does he *need* to get the vaccine?

Research found that a person's own health care provider is the most trusted source for information on the COVID-19 vaccine.

◇ **Explain the importance of getting the vaccine.**

RN/NP: Sam, this is a very serious disease and it has killed many strong people, but it is especially dangerous for anyone with diabetes and for anyone who is overweight.

These 2 conditions make it harder for you to fight this disease. Many people who have these problems are still getting very sick and many die from COVID. Many people who get COVID have effects that last a long time, like heart or lung problems. I can help you get an appointment, or you can text 438-829 and enter your zip code to see where you can get an appointment nearby.

What is your management plan for Sam?