The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Vaccine Knowledge on Vaccine Hesitancy in Adolescents

English, Claire (School: Mentor High School)

This research study addresses the issue of vaccine hesitancy in adolescents. The research questions of this study include: To what extent does an adolescent's experience with COVID-19 influence their vaccine hesitancy, if an adolescent routinely gets influenza vaccinations will they have a lower vaccine hesitancy, will an individual's vaccine hesitancy impact their willingness to receive a vaccination for COVID-19, and to what extent does an individual's knowledge of vaccines impact their vaccine hesitancy? To obtain participants for this study a random sample of students enrolled in science classes at Mentor High School were selected. The students completed a 4 part survey which included sample demographics, COVID-19 experience, and routine flu vaccinations questions; knowledge of vaccines questions; the Vaccine Hesitancy Scale; and questions regarding the refusal of vaccines. The study cannot conclude that individuals who know someone who has had COVID or know someone who has died of COVID will be less vaccine hesitant. However, the study is able to conclude with 95% confidence that individuals who receive the flu vaccine routinely will be less vaccine hesitant. Moreover, it is concluded with greater than 99% confidence that an individual who is more knowledgeable about vaccines or willing to receive a vaccination for COVID-19 will be less vaccine hesitant. The issue of vaccine hesitancy is not only important to address because of the effectiveness of vaccinations, but it is also critical to reduce vaccine hesitancy during the current pandemic, where vaccinations could stop the spread of COVID-19 and ultimately save lives.

Awards Won: