

Higher vaccine hesitancy persists among Black Canadians

June 23 2021

Building Trust in Covid-19 Vaccines Within the Black Community

There's a history here

- For Black communities, injustices like unfair research and low access to medical care have damaged trust in healthcare.
- Black communities have been hit hard by Covid-19 because of ongoing racism.
- We all need to continue building trust and confidence in Covid-19 vaccines and the health care system.



Progress is being made

- Thousands of Black participants were in the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine trials.^{1,2}
- Black communities have contributed to vaccine confidence by leading successful vaccine clinics within religious groups and community centres.
- Black scientists are participating in the vaccine rollout across Canada.
- A Black scientist named Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett co-developed the Moderna vaccine. ↘

Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, Vaccine Scientist

Dr. Corbett is one of many Black scientists involved in vaccine research. She was one of the scientists who developed the Moderna vaccine. She reminds us of the incredible contributions of Black scientists – both in the past and the present.

“ I could never sleep at night if I developed anything – if any product of my science came out – and it did not equally benefit the people that look like me. Period. ”

A speaker at many events, Dr. Corbett delivers science in a digestible fashion - and often vocalizes her encouragement of vaccinations on Twitter. ↘



KizzyPhD @KizzyPhD · 1 Apr

Thank YOU, for making the informed choice to get vaccinated!



Making clinics more inclusive

Uniformed police in clinics	✗	Plain-clothed security guards	✓
Mostly white clinic staff	✗	Diverse multi-cultural staff	✓
Mass centralized vaccine clinics	✗	Easy to access vaccines close to home	✓
Sombre, tense atmosphere	✗	Positive atmosphere with music	✓
Pre-registration required	✗	Barrier-free walk-in clinics	✓

¹<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa2035389>

²<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa2034577>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/641396-2>

<https://twitter.com/KizzyPhD/status/13775077789236674591-00338-y>

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Developed by Moses Tetui, PhD; Trevor Charles, PhD; Kelly Grindrod, PharmD. Designed by Adrian Poon, BA.

Despite groups designated as visible minorities being at an increased risk of infection and mortality from COVID-19, higher vaccine hesitancy persists among Black Canadians when compared to the general public.

Some of the reasons put forward by members of the Black community as to why they're hesitant to be vaccinated are lack of confidence in the safety of the vaccine and concerns about its risks and side effects.

A team of researchers from the University of Waterloo including microbiology professor Trevor Charles, pharmacy professor Kelly Grindrod, and health-systems researcher Moses Tetui, seek to allay some of those fears.

Are the COVID vaccine side effects the same for Black people compared to those who are not Black?

Yes, there is no evidence that the [side-effects](#) from COVID-19 vaccines are different for any ethnic or racialized group. For all the vaccines approved in Canada, most people experience a sore arm for a few days after the vaccine. Around half of people experience tiredness and a headache, and less than half have body aches, chills or feel feverish. These are all normal and expected side effects and are common with many other vaccines as well. They are signs that the immune system is learning how to recognize COVID.

For all these vaccines, these side effects will happen within a day or two of getting the vaccine and will disappear by the third or fourth day for most people. While there is a small chance that there will be a serious side effect, these are rare. Rare but serious [side effects](#) might be something like an allergic reaction. It's always a great idea to speak with

a health professional about any serious allergies or other [health conditions](#) or concerns you may have before you receive any vaccine.

Are vaccines developed with considerations given to how they might affect Black people different from other races?

Yes, around 10 percent of the Pfizer and Moderna trial populations identified as Black. The studies demonstrated that there were no differences in efficacy or safety in any racialized or ethnic group. It is also important to note that there is no known evidence that would suggest that vaccines affect people differently based on racial differences. In the past, Black and Indigenous communities were used to test vaccines in what has widely been criticized and categorized as unethical today. The Moderna [vaccine](#) was co-developed by a Black immunologist named Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett.

Is the wait-and-see approach adopted by some members of the Black community before receiving their first dose putting them at greater risk?

Yes, vaccination is the best protection against severe disease arising from COVID-19 infection. Systemic racism means Black communities are more likely to live in crowded housing conditions or to work in higher-risk environments. When some members of the Black community decide "to wait and see" it can further increase the risk of COVID within the community. Often, people use a "wait and see" approach when they have certain questions or concerns about the vaccines. A better approach would be to discuss those concerns with a trusted health care provider or community leader. It's important to note that the wait and see approach could have a similar risk for any racial or ethnic group depending on

their risk of exposure.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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