

In Rome hospital, unvaccinated patients fill coronavirus beds

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In one Rome hospital, the vast majority of COVID-19 patients in intensive care are unvaccinated—and many are urging Italian anti-vaxxers to get the jab.

A 41-year-old patient at the ICC Casalpallocco COVID [hospital](#), who gave his name as Francesco, said he was opposed to the [vaccine](#) but that if he could go back, he would get jabbed.

"The vaccine doesn't inspire confidence but unfortunately we've got to do it, because in any case it's the only thing that can help at this precise stage of the pandemic," he told AFP.

At the hospital, there are currently 19 patients in the [intensive care](#) unit (ICU) for coronavirus, of whom 17 are unvaccinated, according to medical director Roberto Mezzanotte.

"Almost 90 to 95 percent in our ICU are non-vaccinated," he told AFP.

In September, an analysis by the hospital found that 69 percent of its coronavirus patients were not vaccinated.

"Patients in the ICU for the most part are not vaccinated. And these are the most at risk, those whose condition worsens more readily and need intubation and assisted breathing," Mezzanotte said.

Scared of COVID

Breathing oxygen through a mask, another patient, Salvatore, said he was a big supporter of vaccines but had not yet had his coronavirus jab before he felt gravely ill.

"In the space of a few hours, I went from being a person full of vitality to an empty sack, deprived of force," the 55-year-old said.

He said he had little patience for violent protesters who took to the streets of Rome last weekend against Italy's coronavirus health pass.

"When I see these demonstrations against the Green Pass, they don't understand, they don't realise," said Salvatore.

From this Friday, the pass—showing proof of vaccination, a negative test or recent recovery from COVID-19—will be required for all employees, in public and private workplaces.

The announcement of the measure helped push up vaccination rates in Italy, one of the European countries hardest hit by the pandemic, but provoked anger.

More than 85 percent of over 12s have now received at least one shot.

Mezzanotte said the reasons vary for why the patients chose not to be vaccinated, but primary among them is "fear that the vaccine is harmful".

"It's strange... they're not scared of COVID but they're scared of the vaccine," he said.

Other Italian hospitals are seeing the same high percentages of non-vaccinated COVID patients, he said.

"Currently we have only one instrument to prohibit the pandemic from continuing and it's vaccination."

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