

Why some Latino communities fear the COVID-19 vaccine, and what can be done to help

November 7 2022



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, some people in medically underserved Latino communities avoided getting vaccinated due to fears of side

effects, mistrust of health officials and vaccine manufacturers and discrimination from health care workers, according to a new study from Rice University.

These findings are reported in "Vaccination for COVID-19 among historically underserved Latino communities in the United States: Perspectives of community health workers," which focuses on communities near the U.S.-Mexico border. The article appears in the latest edition of *Frontiers in Public Health*.

Lead researcher Luz Garcini, an assistant professor of psychological sciences at Rice, points out a disparity reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even though COVID-19 vaccination rates are higher among Latinos (65% have had at least one dose) than whites (54%), U.S. Latinos are 1.5 times more likely to be infected and 2.3 times more likely to be hospitalized when compared to whites.

"Given this information, we really wanted to get to the bottom of what is keeping individuals in these communities from taking the vaccine," she says.

Garcini and her fellow authors used online surveys and focus groups to gather information from 64 community health workers and promoters. They found that about 44% said patients believed vaccines can have harmful side effects, and approximately 28% said patients feared illness or death as a result of taking the vaccine.

- Patients also cited the following reasons for not taking the vaccine:
- Discrimination or stigmatization from [health care professionals](#) administering the vaccine.
- Fear of exploitation or manipulation by the government or health authorities.

- Fear of having [personal information](#) mishandled and/or undocumented status disclosed.
- Limited information about vaccines or logistical hurdles to access.

Garcini said targeted, culturally sensitive efforts are needed to reduce the risk of infection in these communities.

The study was coauthored by Arlynn Ambriz, Alejandro Vázquez, Cristina Abraham, Vyas Sarabu, Ciciya Abraham, Autumn Lucas-Marinelli, Sarah Lill and Joel Tsevat.

More information: Luz M. Garcini et al, Vaccination for COVID-19 among historically underserved Latino communities in the United States: Perspectives of community health workers, *Frontiers in Public Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2022.969370](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.969370)

Provided by Rice University

Citation: Why some Latino communities fear the COVID-19 vaccine, and what can be done to help (2022, November 7) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-11-latino-covid-vaccine.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.