

**Department of Family Science
School of Public Health**

**Increasing Influenza
Immunization During the
COVID-19 Pandemic: The
Urgency of Now for African
Americans**



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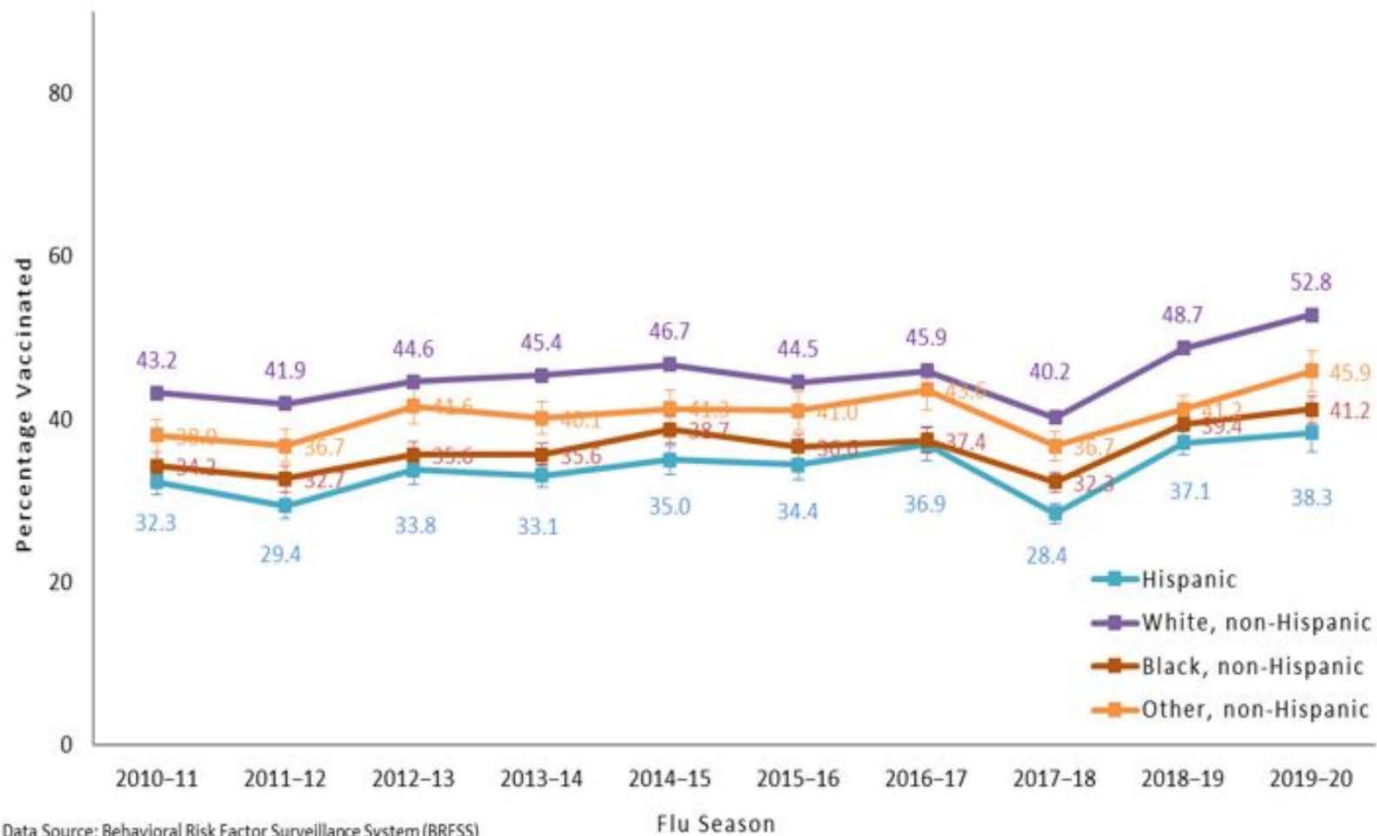


Fearing a 'Twindemic,' Health Experts Push Urgently for Flu Shots

There's no vaccine for Covid-19, but there's one for influenza. With the season's first doses now shipping, officials are struggling over how to get people to take it.

Flu Vaccine Uptake By Race/Ethnicity

Figure 6. Flu Vaccination Coverage by Racial/Ethnic Group, Adults 18 years and older, United States, 2010–2020



Data Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
 Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals around the estimates.

Why are flu vaccine disparities so important?

Significant racial and ethnic disparities in chronic conditions place too many at high risk for complications.

High risk African Americans of all ages vaccinated at lower rates than Whites (Quinn et al, 2017)

Previous research during H1N1 found that minorities are at greater risk due to inability to reduce exposure to the virus (Quinn et al, 2011 and Kumar, Quinn et al, 2012).

What factors interact to affect vaccine decision-making?



Photo credit: Quinn, 2017

Risk Perception

- Perceived disease risk was significant predictor of vaccine uptake
- African Americans had higher perceived risk of vaccine side effects and believed side effects were more serious
- Higher disease risk, higher uptake; however, when perceived risk of vaccine side effects increased, uptake decreased

Impact Of Racial Factors

- Higher perceived racial fairness associated with more trust and higher vaccine uptake
- Higher racial consciousness associated with lower trust in vaccine and process, higher perceived risk of side effects, less knowledge, greater use of naturalism, belief in conspiracies, greater vaccine hesitancy
- For AA, higher perception of discrimination, higher perceived side effect risk and lower uptake

Trust in the Vaccine and Vaccine Process

- AA lower trust in all organizations but rank order is same as whites: doctors, CDC, FDA and drug companies last
- Higher trust in the vaccine & vaccine process associated with higher vaccine uptake



Predictors of Trust

- Perceived risk (disease & vaccine side effects), perceived effectiveness, importance of the vaccine & subjective norms were predictors of trust in the vaccine and vaccine process for African Americans.
- Trust in government motives is lower.
- Deciding to trust the vaccine is an active decision for African Americans.

Flu Vaccine Hesitancy and Confidence

- Trust in flu vaccine was positively associated with confidence & convenience and negatively associated with complacency & hesitancy.
- Adults with higher confidence in flu vaccine are more likely to get the flu vaccine this season & in the past five years.

Home Remedy Use and Vaccination

- Higher proportion of African Americans reported family history of home remedy use.
- As frequency of use of home remedies increased, odds of getting the flu vaccine decreased and perception of vaccine risk increased

Importance Of Social Norms

- Believing that people close to you want you to be vaccinated was a significant predictor of vaccine uptake.
- Among African Americans who were vaccinated every year or most years, believing “it is my moral obligation to other people to get a flu vaccine” was also a significant predictor.

How can we increase trust and confidence?

**How can we increase uptake of the flu
vaccine?**

Public Health Agencies

Strengthen trust and confidence in the flu vaccine by explicitly addressing:

- ✓ Knowledge about influenza, the vaccine, the vaccine process and recommendations;
- ✓ Perceived risk of vaccine side effects and perceived disease risk;
- ✓ Identifying the benefits of the vaccine, particularly this year;
- ✓ Acknowledge and minimize barriers like cost, convenience, and concerns about safety of vaccination sites during COVID-19.

Role of Communities and Families

- Work with community organizations & their social media to promote vaccination to protect the broader community as a norm.
- Change social norms by talking about the importance of flu vaccine as a means of protecting others with friends & family.
- Engage community influencers with clear accurate information about the vaccine, risks, benefits, and more.
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If you live with or care for someone at high risk for serious complications from seasonal influenza, you should get a seasonal flu vaccine. Groups at high risk include kids and adults with chronic medical conditions like **asthma** and **diabetes**.

My Little Boy Has Asthma.
We'll **BOTH** Get Our Flu Vaccines.

 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
For more information, visit <http://www.flu.gov> or <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

Role Of Health Care Professionals

- Work with pharmacy chains, hospital systems, and other organizations to get clinics into communities.

- *Be a role model & take the vaccine.*

- Recommend *and* offer vaccine in same visit.



Source: CDC

A Framework for Communication

Proposed Gist Communication Framework

Patient-provider communication technique based on Fuzzy-Trace Theory* [10, 11]

Verbatim*
Establishes credibility & expertise

Explicit Link
Connects verbatim to gist

Gist*
Aids in comprehension & recall



Examples:

"And the reason that's important is..."

"What that means to you is..."

"So the thing to remember is..."

"Bottom line... what I tell patients is..."

"We know that the flu vaccine is approved annually and safe with only minor side effects. The reason that is important is that with your Type II diabetes, you are more likely to have serious complications if you get the flu. I strongly recommend you take the vaccine and I can give it to you now."

Quinn, 2017

Broniatowski et al, 2016

The Opportunity with Social Media

- Maintain a visible social media presence that addresses key factors such as disease risk, vaccine side effects
- Stay positive about the flu vaccine and its benefits
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- Avoid responding to anti-vaccine proponents
- Reinforce subjective and moral norms, particularly within families and communities

The Urgency of Now



Photo credit: Quinn, 2014

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