

THE VACCINE HESITANCY

SURVEY (VHS)

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Vaccine Hesitancy Survey (VHS) is an operational research that INTERSOS undertook in eight different countries (Burkina Faso, Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Chad and Central African Republic) where its projects are based. The aim is to evaluate the possible barriers against Covid-19 vaccination and if these barriers can be lifted through Risk Communication and Community Engagements activities on the ground, while fine-tuning messages and tools already in place.

Analyzing the results of the VHS, the aim is to obtain an overview of our beneficiaries, discovering which are their thoughts about Covid-19 vaccination, while understanding whether the awareness activities put in place

have a positive impact on them, and how they can be modified in order to tackle the given objective.

This research does not aim at holding statistical relevance, it is meant to be a snapshot of the target population, who have access to services provided by INTERSOS. All the areas involved have in common being difficult to reach and with ongoing emergencies of different nature, and where the Covid-19 vaccination campaign has struggled to reach particular segments of the population.

These premises allow the report not only to produce a detailed monographic analysis of the research for each individual country, but also to compare the results and define general trends that include all participating countries.



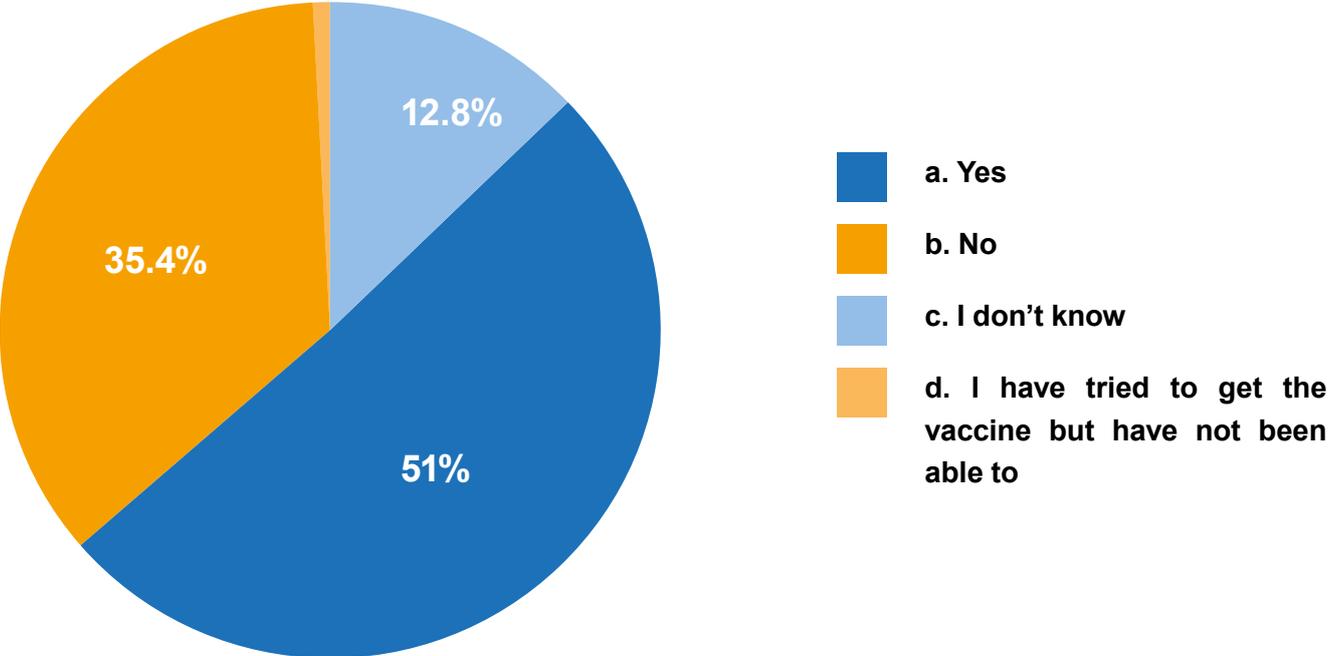
Figure 1: Participating countries.

Respondents 74  1,924



Key findings:

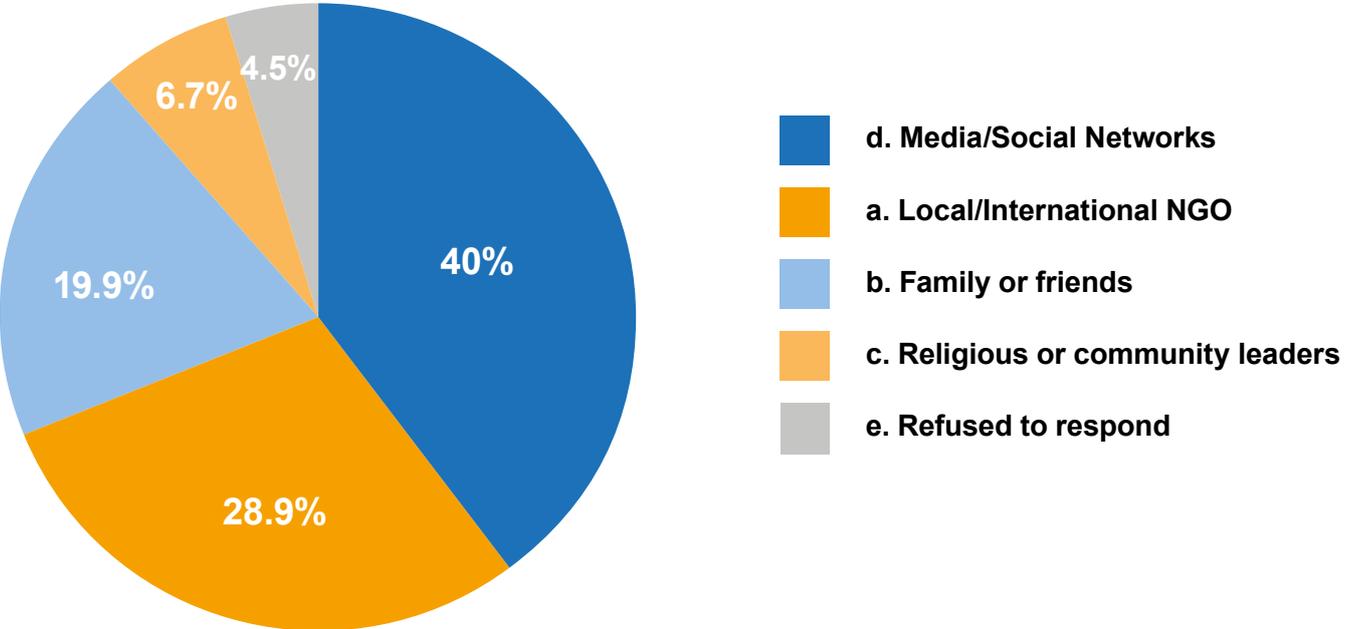
- Out of 5,332 participants interviewed, 2,620 declared not to be vaccinated at the time of the survey.
 - 51% would get vaccinated if the Covid-19 vaccine would be available to them.
 - 35.4% would have not taken the vaccine.
 - 12,8% were not sure about their choice.
- Gender, age range and level of education did not influence the willingness of the respondents in getting vaccinated.
- Focusing on the main source of information for Covid-19 vaccine among the respondents.
 - in the countries where the majority were in favor of vaccination, the percentage of those indicating “Local and International NGOs” as one of the main sources of information was higher compared with those countries where the majority was not keen on vaccination.
- Analyzing the reasons behind the participants’ choice to get vaccinated or not,
 - 66,2% of the population in favor of vaccination believe the vaccine is the most effective way to prevent them from getting Covid-19.
 - 59,8% of the population against vaccination are afraid the vaccine could harm them, mainly because they do not trust the safety of the vaccine.



Data on the willingness to get vaccinated among the unvaccinated respondents.

INTERSOS implements its projects in difficult to reach areas, where social, health, food and educational emergencies are ongoing and the Covid-19 vaccination campaign struggled to reach particular segments of the population; these similar characteristics allowed the comparison of the data collected in the eight countries in which the VHS has been undertaken, and results led INTERSOS to focus on two main aspects.

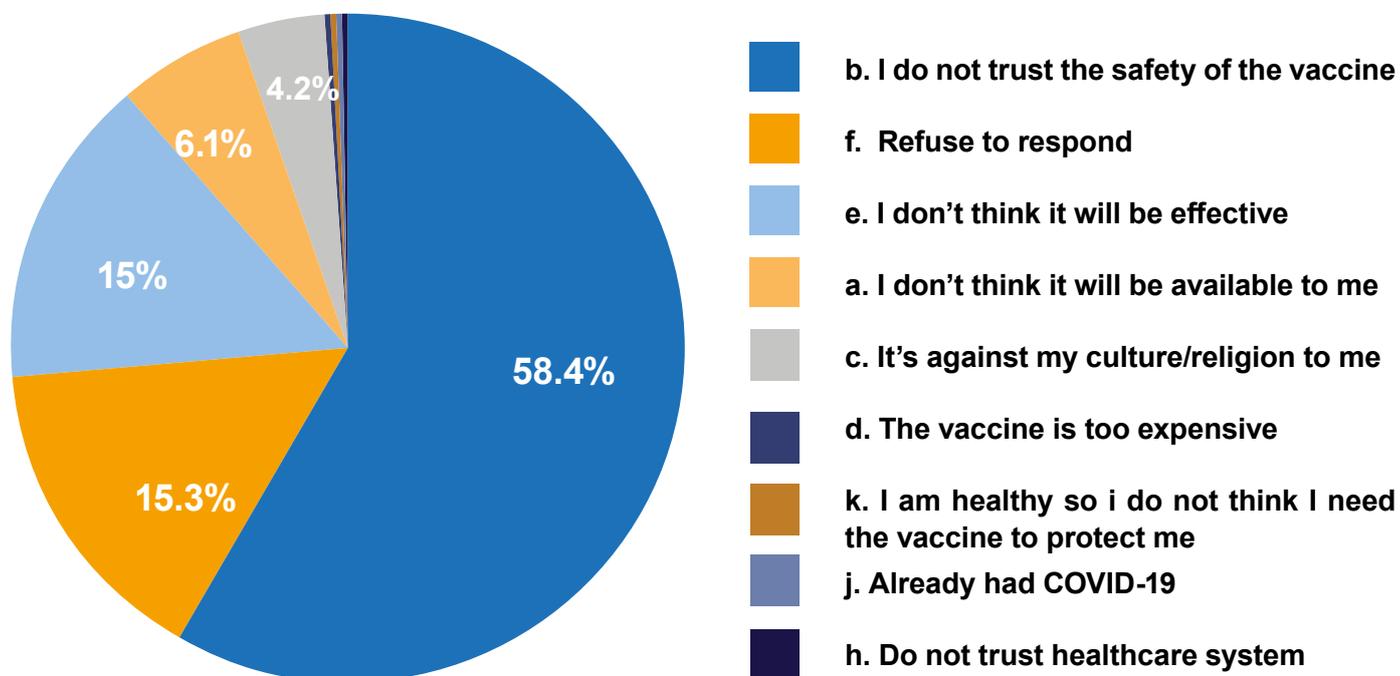
- 1. The importance for the humanitarian actors to keep implementing, together with the communities, activities of awareness on the vaccination campaign. The data showed how a more aware and informed population is prone to get vaccinated and how the presence of local and international NGOs can make a difference in accompanying the population towards a conscious choice.
- 2. The importance of keeping monitored the obstacles to the vaccination, the reasons behind the choice of the beneficiaries, to be able to work on the misinformation, spreading correct and quality information, involving key community figures.



Main sources of information of the unvaccinated group who are willing to get vaccinated.

As INTERSOS is aware that dynamics can change over time it is considering implementing a second phase of the VHS project, to be able to provide deeper information and analysis on the topic.

The actual survey can constitute a baseline for further operational research especially in the countries where INTERSOS is undertaking a full package project and therefore RCCE and IEC actions constitute an extremely important part of the work.



Obstacles to the vaccination.



Recommendations

In light of the results that emerged from the Vaccine Hesitancy Survey analysis, INTERSOS recommends to:

- Keep implementing RCCE and IEC activities for and together with the target population. Communication activities contribute to properly informed the target population;
- Timely plan shipments to allow a correct work-plan for RCCE and IEC activities; timing plays a key role during the vaccination campaign and community engagement is linked to the deployment of the vaccines on the ground;
- Constantly monitor the barriers to vaccination, in order to refine the message and activities to achieve the set objectives; level of misinformation, economic conditions, security issues and others might have an impact and affect the campaign and its perception;
- Working with pivotal actors in the field, such as community and religious leaders, contribute spreading the message;
- Maintain the level of investment in the field: RCCE and IEC activities do not have to diminish in quantity and quality as community engagement needs to constantly support the campaign and, if necessary, to adapt to the changing context. Donors have to keep constant the level of funding for these activities;
- Covid-19 vaccine public health strategies should be grounded in ethical values as outlined in the WHO vaccination ethical framework;
- COVAX implementation should not be a standalone programme but an integrated part of all the interventions in the target communities;





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