

Attitudes and beliefs towards COVID-19 and Influenza vaccination in users of a community pharmacy

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Background: One of the most important public health measures for controlling infectious diseases, such as influenza and COVID-19, is undoubtedly vaccination. However, vaccines are not always accepted by everyone. Vaccine hesitancy depends on a number of factors and can vary from vaccine to vaccine [1,2]. **Objective:** The aim of this study was to assess beliefs and attitudes towards vaccination against COVID-19 and influenza among users of a community pharmacy. **Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out in a community pharmacy in Alentejo, Portugal, with 43 individuals who agreed to answer a questionnaire adapted from the “COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Scale (C19-VHS)” [3] for both diseases. Sociodemographic data was collected and the questions in the questionnaire were divided into 2 factors (Factor 1- Confidence and Factor 2- Risks). The data was analysed using IBM SPSS statistics. **Results:** The confidence (Factor 1) of individuals who received both vaccines showed high average values for both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine. As for the perception of risk (Factor 2), individuals who only received the flu vaccine were more concerned about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine than the other study groups. Although there is a low perception of risk and concern about adverse reactions to vaccines, this is higher for the COVID-19 vaccine than for the flu vaccine. Individuals showed more confidence in the flu vaccine and a low perception of the risk associated with the drug, compared to the COVID-19 vaccine. **Conclusion:** We can conclude that beliefs and attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine are more negative and generate less confidence and adherence in this vaccine compared to the flu vaccine. The need for education campaigns regarding the COVID-19 vaccine should be considered in order to improve knowledge and demystify some issues that lead to greater vaccine hesitancy.

Keywords: “COVID-19 vaccine”, “Flu vaccine”, “Influenza”, “Vaccine Hesitancy”.

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