

**AAHD RESEARCH IN BRIEF
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1 2021**

Understanding Why Persons with Disabilities Received the COVID-19 Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines protect both individuals and others from illness (CDC, 2021). The 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) reported many persons with disabilities wanted the vaccine but had not received it (Ryerson, 2021). An American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) survey of adults with disabilities found 70% of respondents were or would be vaccinated (Drum & Ditsch, 2021). Understanding *why* persons with disabilities choose to be vaccinated can assist with messaging for future pandemics (Kickbusch et al., 2021).

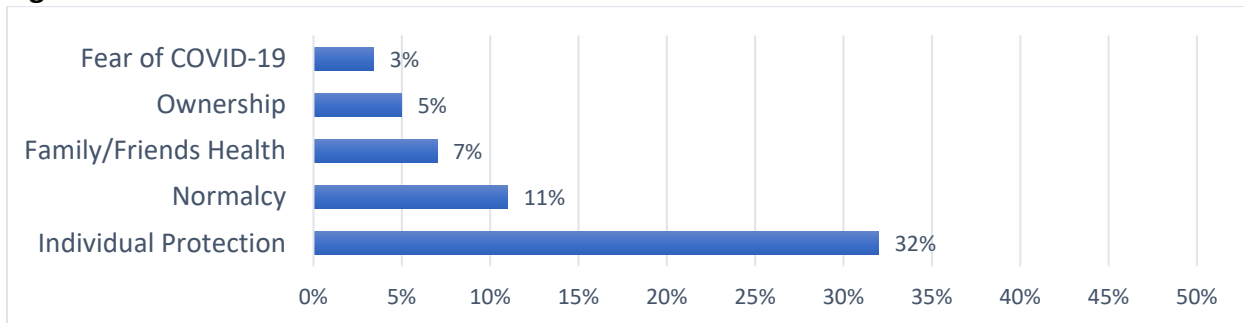
Research Approach

AAHD’s COVID-19 and Disability Survey was available from March 12th to April 5th, 2021. The final sample included 4,131 respondents, including 38% that were already vaccinated, 34% planning to be vaccinated, 17% not sure, and 10% who did not want the COVID-19 vaccination.

Main Findings

General and disability-specific responses to open-ended questions about why persons with disabilities chose to be vaccinated were analyzed (see Figures 1 and 2).

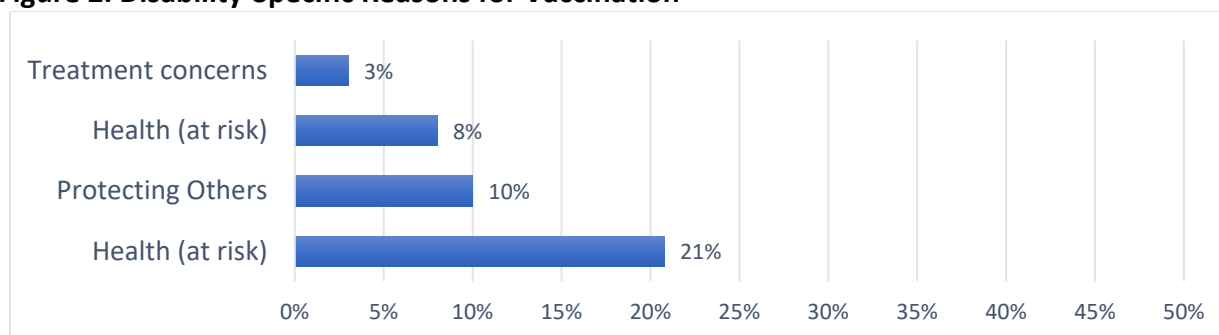
Figure 1. General Reasons Individuals with Disabilities Received COVID-19 Vaccination



General Reasons Why Individuals with Disabilities Received a COVID-19 Vaccination

1. 32% of responses related to protecting themselves (“... many Americans are not ...using best practices with face coverings and the washing of hands”).
2. 11% of responses were about wanting aspects of pre-pandemic life (“...so that I’ll be able to see friends and family again and have community participation after being isolated....”).
3. 7% of responses were about wanting to protect their loved ones (“I want to be here for my grandchildren and great-grand’s life”).
4. 5% of responses related to wanting to contribute to society by getting vaccinated (“... I want to protect myself and any other persons.... We must all look out for each other”).
5. 3% of responses were related to fear of COVID-19 (“I want to be less anxious about the coronavirus because I have been really anxious about the coronavirus for over a year”).

Figure 2. Disability-Specific Reasons for Vaccination



Disability-Specific Reasons for Individuals with Disabilities to Receive a COVID-19 Vaccination

1. 21% of responses focused on health risk(s) (*“Due to my many health issues, getting vaccinated may help my other issues not get any worse”*).
2. 10% of responses related to protecting caregivers, service providers, or others they work with (*“To safely allow caregivers and service providers in my home”*).
3. 8% of responses were related to staying healthy (*“Being vaccinated will make it possible for me to catch up on visits for routine medical care”*).
4. 3% of responses were classified as concerns with treatment being an individual with a disability (*“Worried others might not value my life over another”*).

Limitations

Limitations of this report include the homogenous convenience sample and when the survey was completed (March 12th- April 5th, 2021). Data may not reflect more recent beliefs.

Conclusion

The results provide insight into the motivations for COVID-19 vaccination. Most respondents noted that individual protection, health risks, and wanting to go back to “normal” as important factors for vaccination. Public health professionals should use these findings to test messaging to persons with disabilities who remain unsure about the COVID-19 vaccine. Public health professionals and disability community organizations should consider replicating these motivational messages in the future, as needed.

Full results of AAHD Survey on Disability and Vaccine Hesitancy are available at:

<https://aahd.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/COVID-19VaccineandDisabilitySurvey.pdf>

References

CDC. (2021, August 16). *Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>

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Suggested Citation: Lee, M.S., Ditsch, J., Carlin, R. & Drum, C.E. (2021). Understanding Why Persons with Disabilities Received the COVID-19 Vaccination. *AAHD Issue Brief Vol. 2(1)*. Rockville, MD: American Association on Health and Disability.