

Letter to the Editor

A survey study on the approach of pregnant women to COVID-19 vaccine in Turkey

Sacıntı et al. Approaching COVID-19 vaccine of pregnant women

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To the Editor,

It is obvious that pregnant women and babies have suffered damage throughout the pandemic (1). Hence, immunization becomes essentially important in pregnant women. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that all eligible individuals over the age of 12 years, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, receive a COVID-19 vaccine or series of vaccines (2). Although evidence on the safety of COVID-19 vaccinations in pregnancy is limited, high-quality findings demonstrate its reliability increasing day by day (3). Nevertheless, despite all available knowledge and the emphasis of the research, the concerns and rejection of the vaccination by pregnant women is a critical issue that should be addressed.

Herein, we conducted a survey to assess whether pregnant women would trust the vaccine or not, even though human and/or animal experiments proved the safety and efficiency. The survey was conducted face-to-face with the pregnant women who were admitted to our obstetrics outpatient clinic between February and April 2021. Five hundred and eight pregnant women accepted to participate in the survey.

Among all, 50.8% of pregnant women do not want to be vaccinated during pregnancy. Even if animal experiments have proved the vaccine's safety, 90% of these unwilling women still do not want to be vaccinated. Only 3.8% of these women change their opinions positively. However, if the reliability of the vaccine is proven in human subject research, 24.8% of them would reconsider their refusal to be vaccinated. The biggest concern of women regarding the vaccination is that they are pregnant. If these women had not been pregnant, only 37% would have refused vaccination. The primary concerns of the participants were preterm birth (29.2%) and miscarriage (26.2%). The thought that there would be harm to the fetus was observed at a low rate. When pregnant women begin breastfeeding, the rate of refusal to be vaccinated reduces to 20.3%. In addition, 45.3% of the participants believe vaccines will not be successful. If Turkey produces its own vaccine, the rate of participants who accept vaccination rises to 57.7%.

Inadequate data, health policies, and agendas create distrust in pregnant women against vaccines. The two most common concerns of pregnant women are premature birth and miscarriage. It is clear that additional studies, especially those conducted during the early stages of pregnancy, including the preconception period and long-term follow-up, are significantly necessary. Producing a vaccine improves pregnant women's confidence in countries where nationalism is prominent owing to sociopolitical positions, such as Turkey.

Declaration of interest

The authors of this article report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the paper.

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