

Report for Putnam County COVID-19 Survey of Residents Not Yet Vaccinated

Putnam County Department of Health

Similar to other jurisdictions in New York State and the United States as a whole, Putnam County experienced declining registrations for vaccination clinics in the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaign starting in the second half of April 2021. In order to assess local attitudes and barriers to COVID-19 vaccination in the non-vaccinated population, the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) launched a self-administered online community survey. Survey participation was promoted through the Department’s website and social media platforms, as well as cross promotion by local community partners, and a news release to local media outlets. The survey was available in both Spanish and English and was open from April 28, 2021 through May 6, 2021.

The following report contains summary charts and statistics produced directly from the survey software (© 2021 Alchemer) and additional demographic and cross tab analysis performed outside of Alchemer with data exports in Excel.

Survey Response and Eligibility

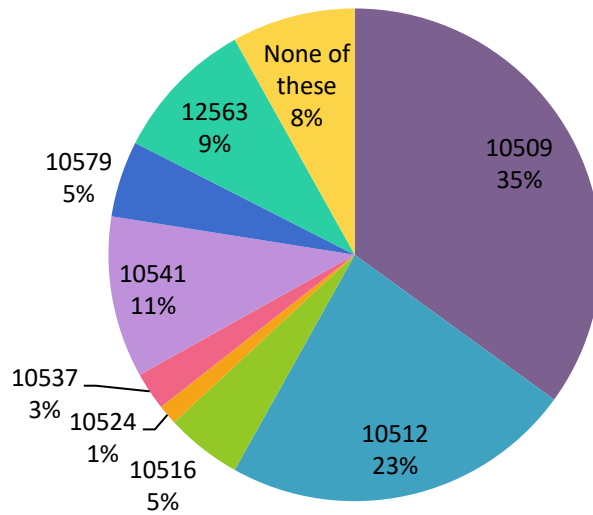
Eligibility was determined by the first question in the survey: “Have you received a COVID-19 vaccine?” All respondents who answered “Yes” to this question were excluded. Responses were also screened by age (only individuals age 16 years and over were eligible for vaccination at the time of survey administration), but there were no respondents under age 16. Response totals will vary by question because response was not required for all questions.

English Version		Spanish Version		English and Spanish Combined
Total Responses	Total Responses After Exclusion	Total Responses	Total Responses After Exclusion	Total Responses after Exclusion
308	175	14	4	179

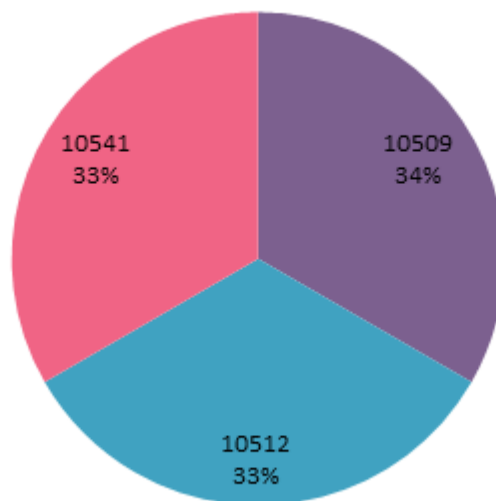
Demographics

Respondents were asked the following series of demographic questions and distribution was assessed for representativeness of the county as a whole.

What is your zip code?



¿Cuál es su código postal?



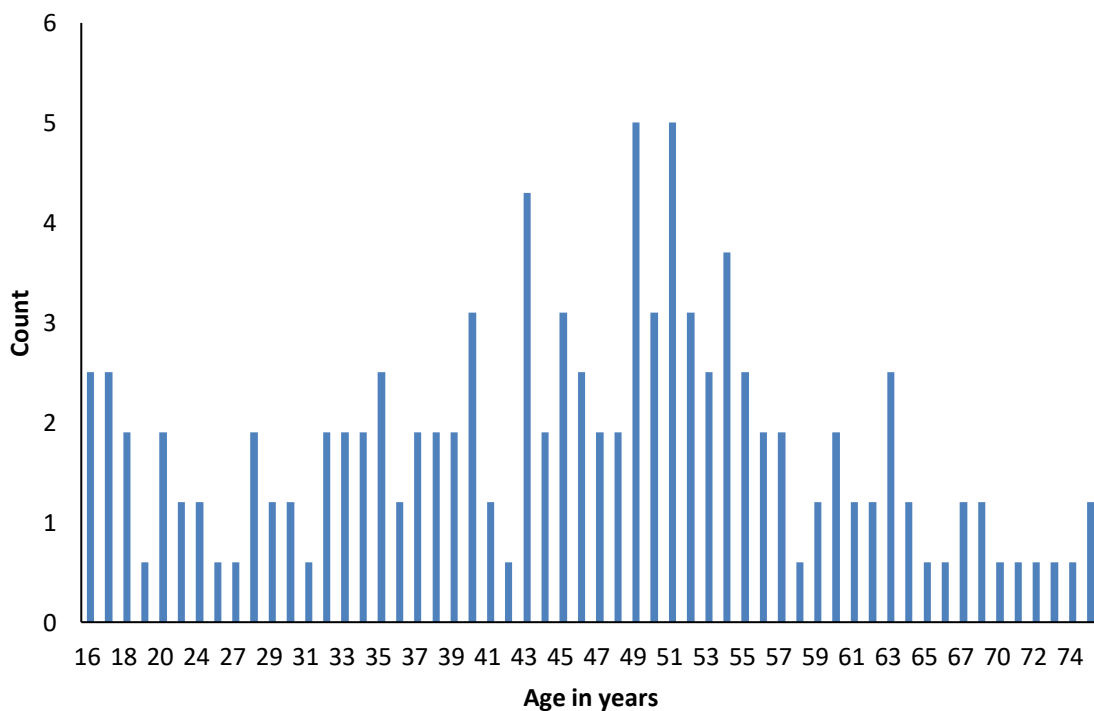
Respondent distribution by zip code compared to overall Putnam County population distribution by zip code

zip code	County		English Respondents		English and Spanish Respondents	
	15+ Popn*	% 15+ popn	# responses	% responses	# responses	% responses
10509	16,115	19.30	56	35.00	57	34.97
10512	20,864	24.98	37	23.13	38	23.31
10516	4,356	5.22	8	5.00	8	4.91
10524	3,791	4.54	2	1.25	2	1.23
10537	2,157	2.58	4	2.50	4	2.45
10541	21,850	26.16	17	10.63	18	11.04
10579	6962	8.34	8	5.00	8	4.91
12563	7421	8.89	15	9.38	15	9.20
None of these	0	0.00	13	8.13	13	7.98
Total	83,516	100.00	160	100.00	163	100.00

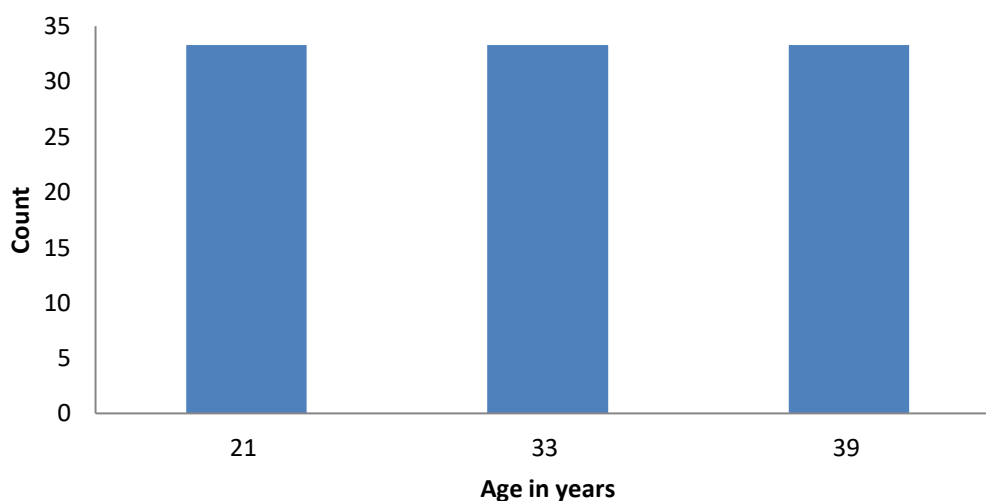
*American Community Survey 2019 population estimates

Residents of the 10509 zip code (Brewster) were over-represented in the survey while representatives of the 10524 (Philipstown), 10541 (Mahopac) and 10579 zip codes (Putnam Valley) were under-represented.

What is your age in years?



Cuántos años tienes?



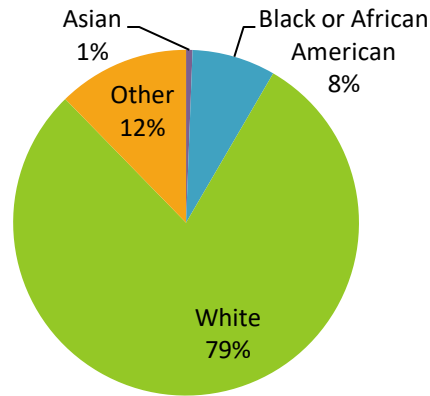
Respondent distribution by age compared to overall Putnam County population distribution by age

Age	County		English Respondents		English and Spanish Respondents	
	15+ Popn*	% 15+ popn	# responses	% responses	# responses	% responses
15 to 19 years	5464	6.56	12	7.45	12	7.32
20 to 24 years	5652	6.78	7	4.35	8	4.88
25 to 29 years	6346	7.62	7	4.35	7	4.27
30 to 34 years	6112	7.34	12	7.45	13	7.93
35 to 39 years	5113	6.14	12	7.45	13	7.93
40 to 44 years	6535	7.84	18	11.18	18	10.98
45 to 49 years	7126	8.55	26	16.15	26	15.85
50 to 54 years	7348	8.82	28	17.39	28	17.07
55 to 59 years	8836	10.60	13	8.07	13	7.93
60 to 64 years	7509	9.01	13	8.07	13	7.93
65 to 69 years	5982	7.18	6	3.73	6	3.66
70 to 74 years	4056	5.72	5	3.11	5	3.05
75 to 79 years	3351	4.03	2	1.24	2	1.22
80 to 84 years	2235	2.68	0	0.00	0	0.00
85 years and over	1661	1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	83326	100	161	100.00	164	100.00

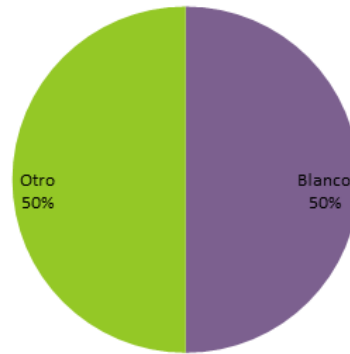
*American Community Survey 2019 population estimates

Middle aged individuals age 35-54 years were over-represented, while younger (age 20-29) and older (55-85+) age groups were relatively under-represented in the survey.

What is your race?



¿Cuál es su raza (¿cómo se identifica usted?)



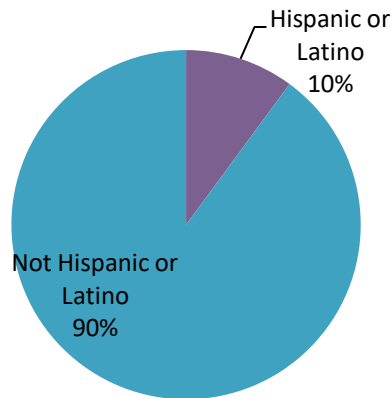
Respondent distribution by race compared to overall Putnam County population distribution by race

Race	County		English Respondents		English and Spanish Respondents	
	15+ Popn*	% 15+ popn	# responses	% responses	# responses	% responses
White	73,366	91.9	124	80.52	125	80.13
Black	3211	3.9	12	7.79	12	7.69
Asian	1881	2.3	1	0.65	1	0.64
Other	1672	2	17	11.04	18	11.54
Total	80,130	100.1	154	100.00	156	100.00

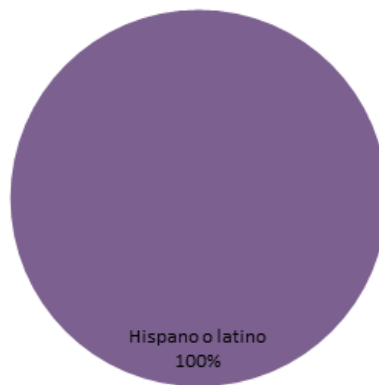
*American Community Survey 2019 population estimates

Black and Other races were over-represented in survey respondents, while White and Asian races were under-represented in the survey respondents as compared to proportions in the county as a whole.

What is your ethnicity?



¿Cuál es su origen étnico?



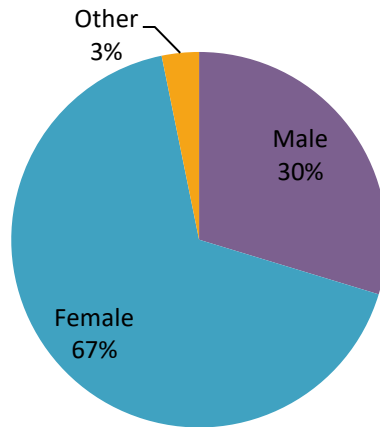
Respondent distribution by ethnicity compared to overall Putnam County population distribution by ethnicity

Ethnicity	County		English Respondents		English and Spanish Respondents	
	15+ Popn*	% 15+ popn	# responses	% responses	# responses	% responses
Hispanic	12,269	14.8	15	10.14	19	12.5
Not Hispanic	70,861	85.2	133	89.86	133	87.5
	83,130	100	148	100.00	152	100

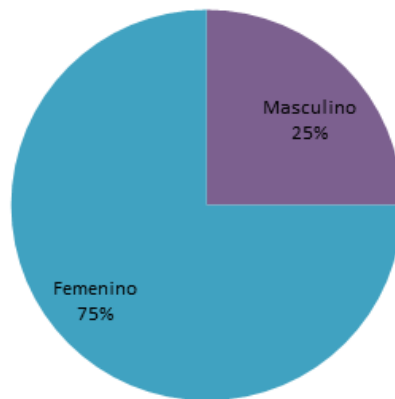
*American Community Survey 2019 population estimates

Distribution by ethnicity in survey respondents was similar to the distribution in the county as a whole.

What is your gender?



¿Cuál es su género?



Respondent distribution by gender compared to overall Putnam County population distribution by gender

Gender	County		English Respondents		English and Spanish Respondents	
	15+ Popn*	% 15+ popn	# responses	% responses	# responses	% responses
Male	41593	49.92	46	29.68	47	29.56
Female	41733	50.08	104	67.10	107	67.30
Other	0	0.00	5	3.23	5	3.14
	83326	100.00	155	100.00	159	100.00

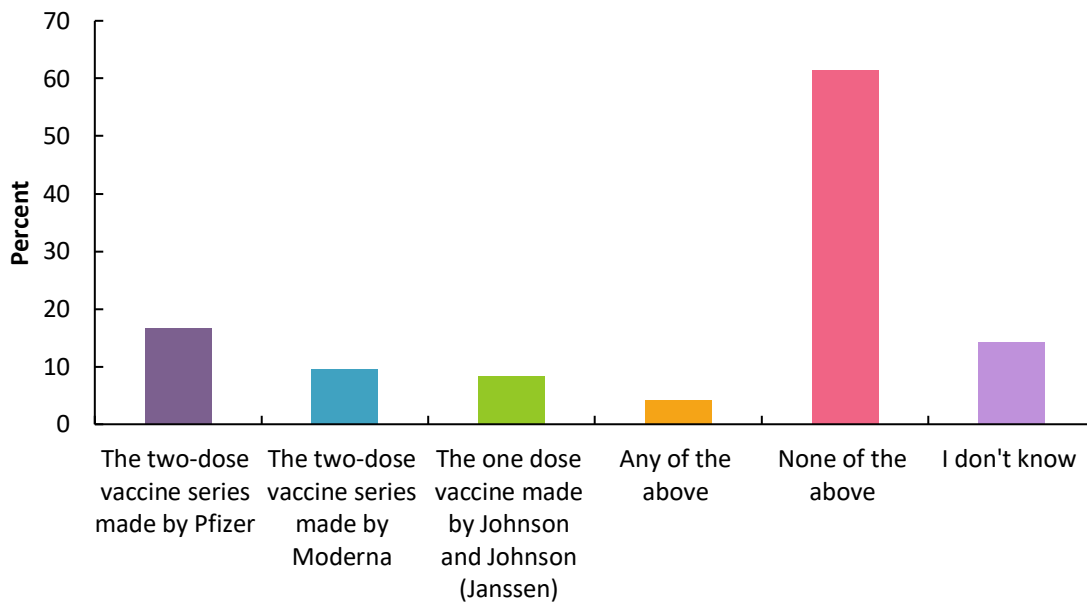
*American Community Survey 2019 population estimates

Survey respondents are highly over-representative of females and under-representative of males as compared to the distribution of gender in the county as a whole.

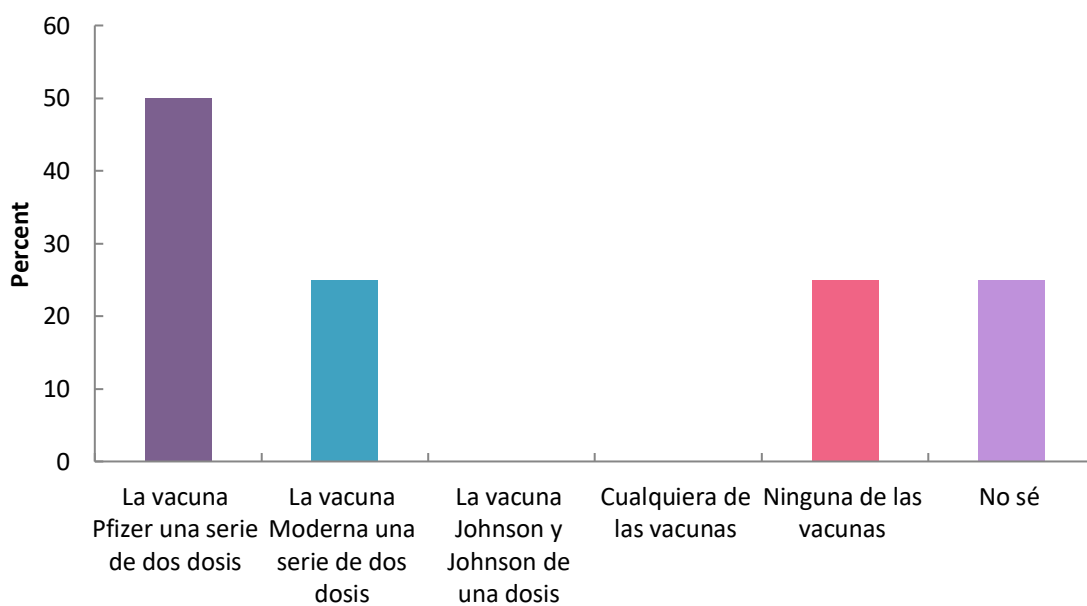
Attitudes and Barriers to COVID-19 Vaccination

Respondents were asked the following series of questions to assess their willingness to take available vaccines, reasons for not having already been vaccinated, and preferred routes of communication for vaccination information.

If offered to you, which of the following COVID-19 vaccines would you be willing to take?



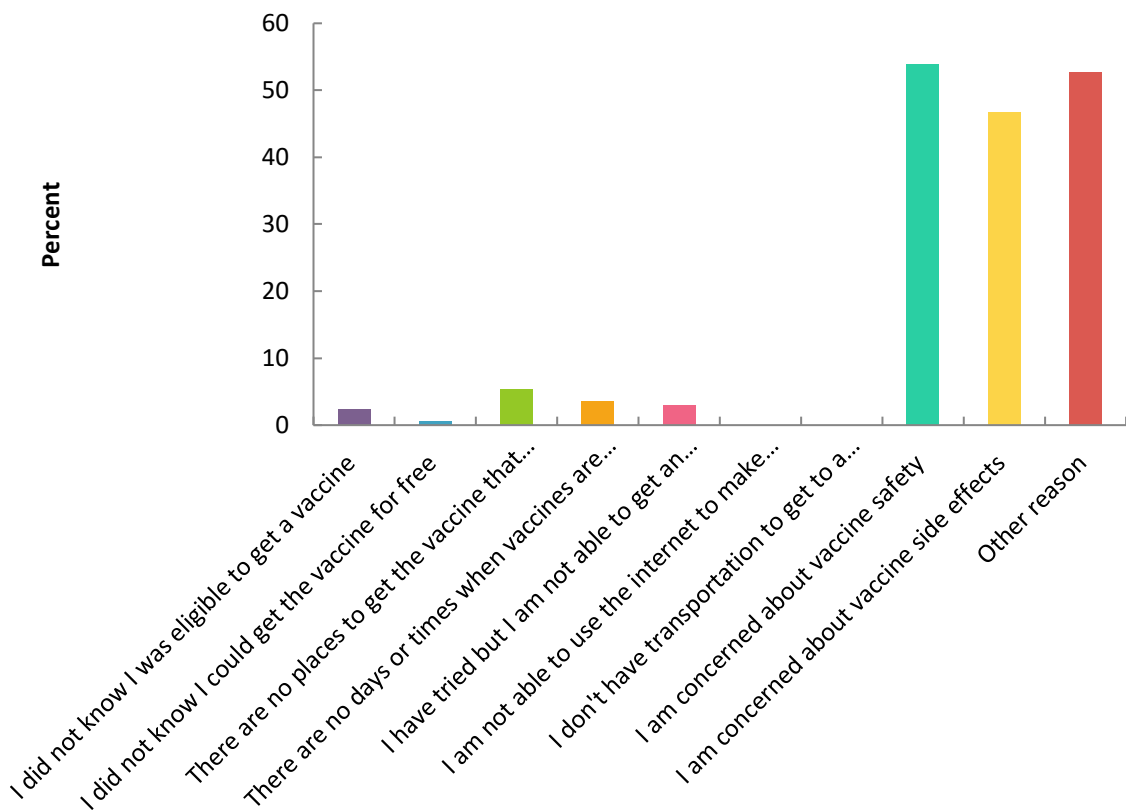
¿Cual de las siguientes vacunas contra el COVID-19 quisiera recibir?



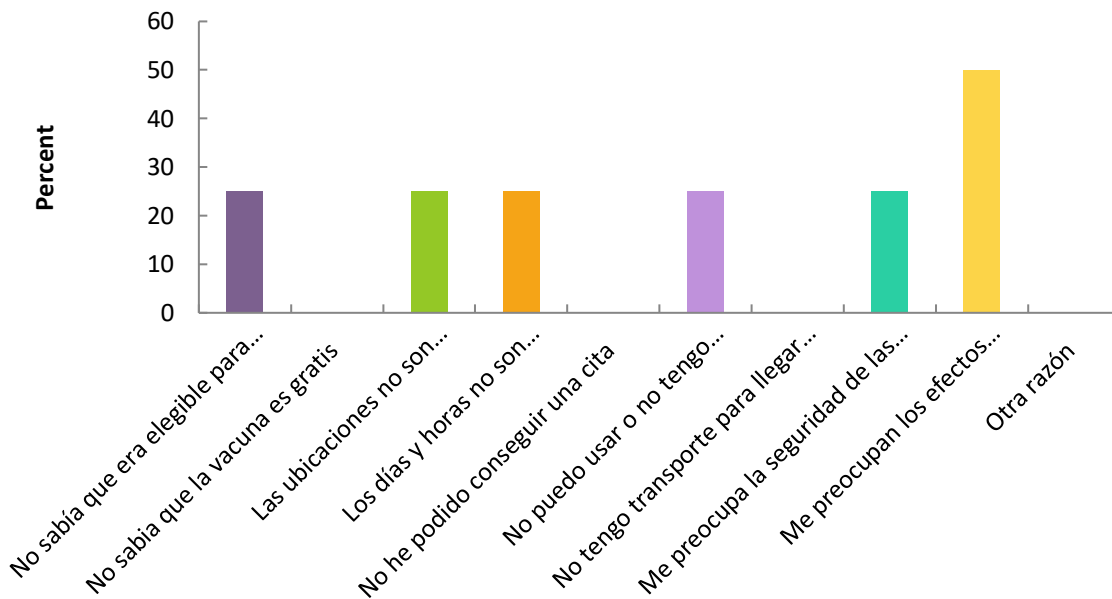
There were 193 total responses to this question across both surveys (4 Spanish, 189 English). Pfizer had the highest level of potential acceptance amongst respondents at only 14.5% (28 total responses). A clear majority of 53.9% (104 responses) respondents stated unwillingness to take any vaccine.

To look for differences compared to the overall survey population, a crosstab analysis by zip code, race, ethnicity, gender and age was completed for responses of unwilling to take any vaccine. Numbers within demographic groups are small, and so inferences should be made with caution, however, it should be noted that a high proportion, 14/21 or 66.7%, of respondents from the 10541 zip code and 9/12 or 75% of Black respondents stated unwillingness to take any vaccine. Several groups with very low numbers of overall responses (10516, 10524, 10537, and 10579 zip codes; Asian race) also had a higher proportion of responses of unwillingness to take any vaccine, however counts in these categories are too low to make inferences.

I have not received my COVID-19 vaccine yet because... (check all that apply)



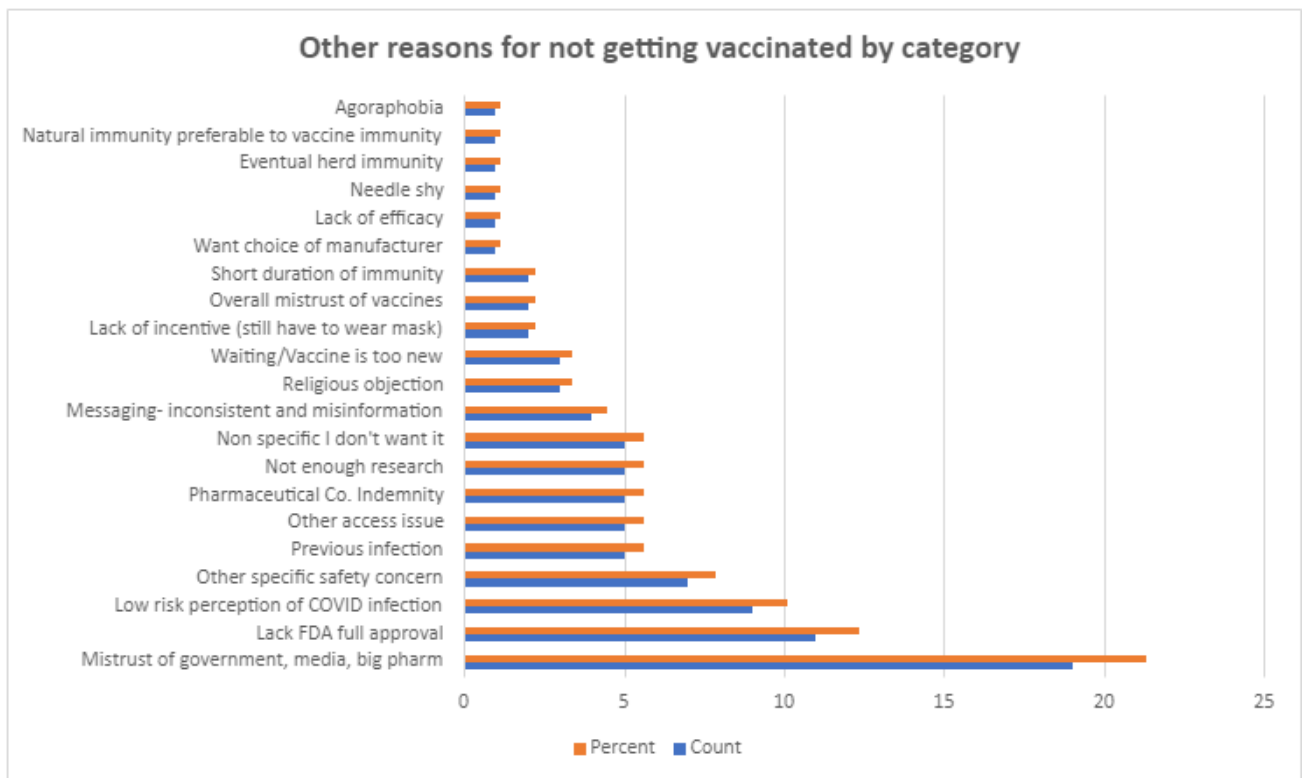
Todavía no he recibido mi vacuna COVID-19 por que.... (marque todas las que correspondan)



There were a total of 169 respondents (165 English, 4 Spanish) and 284 responses across both surveys. Proportions are the number of responses per option divided by the total number of respondents. The most common reasons cited for not having yet received a COVID-19 vaccine were concern about safety (53.8%) and concern about side effects (46.7%). A Very low proportion of respondents stated barriers to accessing vaccine as the reason for not having been vaccinated.

To look for differences compared to the overall survey population a crosstab analysis by zip code, race, ethnicity, gender and age was completed for responses of concern about safety and concern about side effects. A higher proportion of White respondents cited concern about safety and side effects (74/124 or 59.7% and 60/124 or 48.4% respectively). A similar higher proportion of Non-Hispanic respondents also cited concern about safety and side effects (81/133 or 60.9% and 64/133 or 48.1% respectively). Male respondents cited a higher level of concern about side effects (26/47 or 55.3%). In zip codes, 10512 also had a higher proportion citing concern about safety and side effects (27/37 or 73% and 23/37 or 62.2% respectively) and 10509 had a higher proportion of concern about side effects (28/56 or 50%). Several zip codes with very low numbers of overall responses (10524, 10537, and 10579) also had a higher proportion of these responses, however counts in these categories are too low to make inferences.

A high proportion (52.7%) of respondents wrote in other free text responses. Some of these responses contained more than one reason for not getting vaccinated. Reasons included in free text responses were grouped by category and are displayed in the chart below. The highest proportion of respondents providing free text reasons for not getting vaccinated (21.3%) expressed distrust in the government, the media, pharmaceutical companies, or a combination of all three. Two of these respondents specifically mentioned government experimentation on black people. Other specific safety concerns included pregnancy (1), breastfeeding (1), Guillain Bare Syndrome (1), reactions to prior vaccinations (1), allergies (1), rheumatoid arthritis, and reports of blood clots related to vaccination (1).

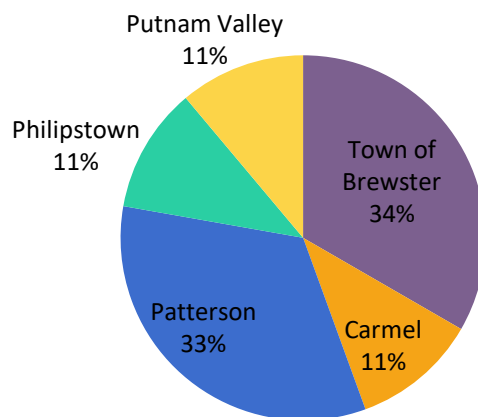


Barriers to Vaccination

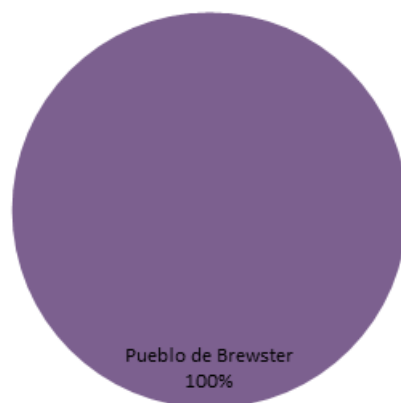
Respondents who cited barriers as reasons for not being vaccinated in the previous question were offered barrier specific questions to learn more about how these barriers should best be addressed.

Respondents who answered “there are no places to get the vaccine that are convenient for me” were asked:

What town would be most convenient for you to get a vaccine?



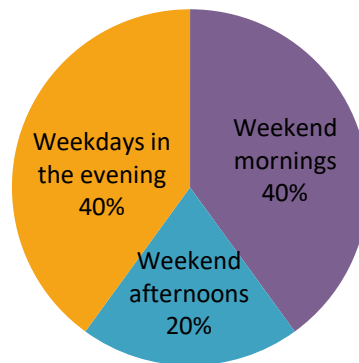
¿Que pueblo sería más convenientes para usted reciba la vacuna?



There were a total of 10 respondents (9 English, 1 Spanish) that cited lack of convenient location as a reason for non-vaccination. It should be noted that PCDOH maintains a regular vaccination site in the Town of Brewster, the location most commonly chosen as preferred by respondents citing location inconvenience as reason for non-vaccination.

Respondents who answered “there are no days and times when vaccines are offered that are convenient for me” were asked:

What days and times are most convenient for you to get a vaccine?



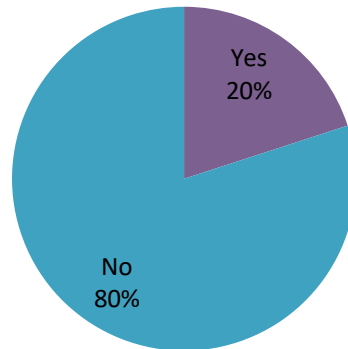
¿Cuáles días y horas serian convenientes para que usted reciba la vacuna?



There were a total of 6 respondents (5 English, 1 Spanish) that cited lack of convenient days and times as a reason for non-vaccination.

In order to determine if lack of access to the Pfizer vaccine (the only vaccine authorized for use in individuals 16-17 years of age) respondents who answered “ I have tried but am unable to get an appointment” were asked:

Are you 16 or 17 years old and only able to make an appointment to receive a Pfizer vaccine?



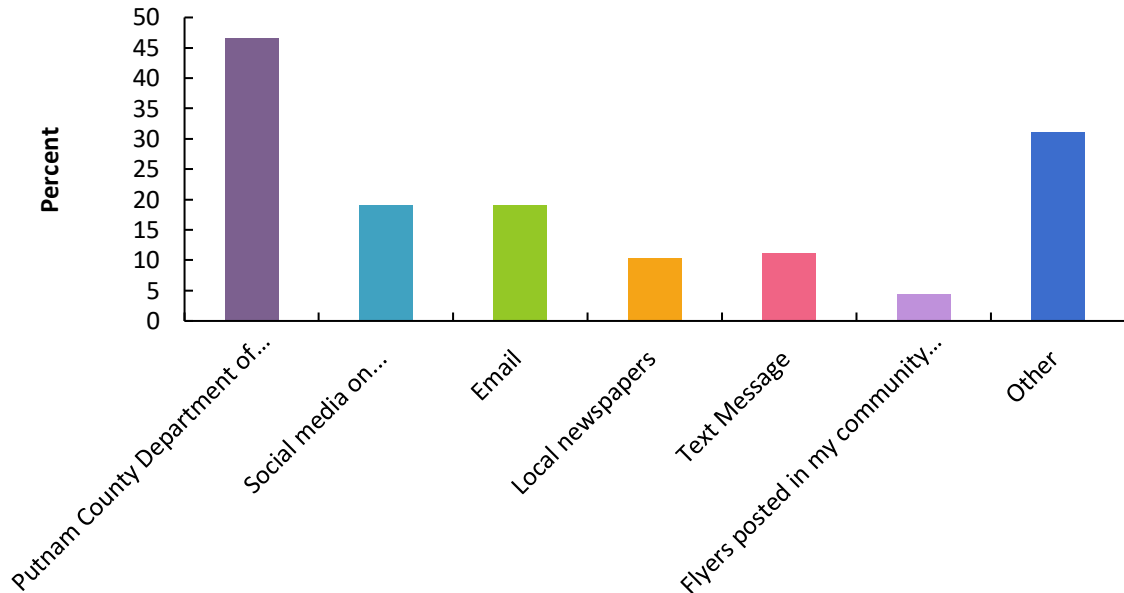
There were a total of 5 respondents (5 English, 0 Spanish) that cited inability to get an appointment as reason for non-vaccination. Only one of these affirmed that they were 16 or 17 years old and unable to find an appointment for Pfizer vaccine.

The Spanish survey also asked respondents who answered that they were not able or did not have access to the internet to register for an appointment if they would be able to register if the form were available in Spanish. There was only one respondent giving this answer who affirmed that they would be able to register if the form were available in Spanish.

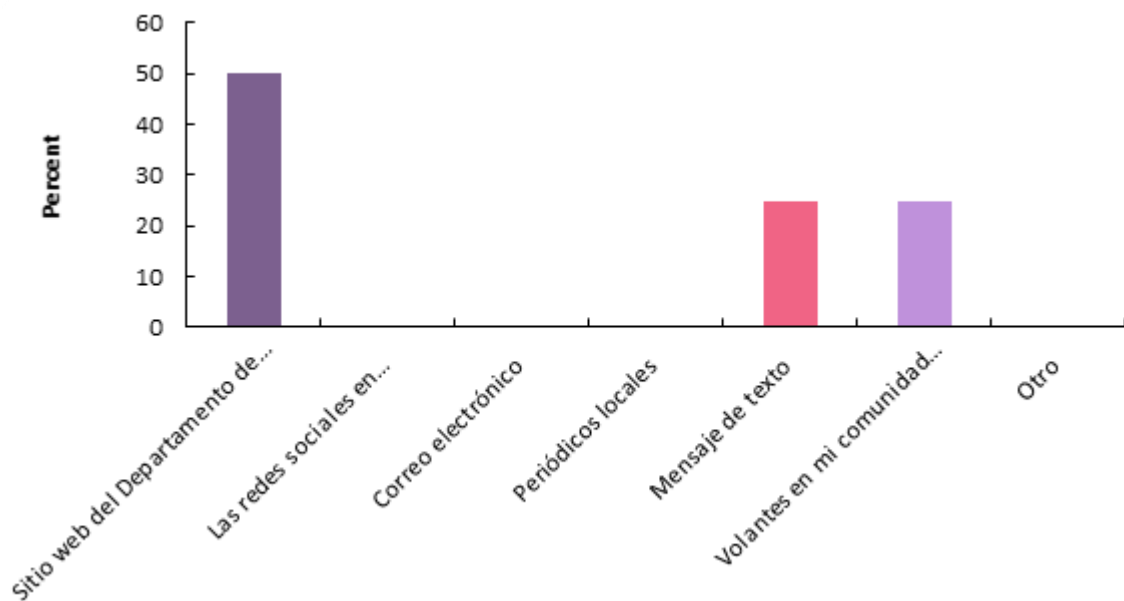
Sources of Information

In order to assess the modalities likely to be most successful in communicating with the not-vaccinated population, the survey asked the following question:

How would you like to find out about future vaccine clinics? (check all that apply)



Comole gustaría recibir más información sobre otras clínicas de vacunas en el futuro ? (Marque todas las que correspondan)



There were a total of 120 responses (116 English, 4 Spanish) with a clear preference for communication via the PCDOH website. Of the 5 individuals who wrote in a social media communication preference 4 mentioned Facebook and 2 mentioned Instagram. A high proportion of English survey respondents (36/116 or 31%) provided free text responses in the “other” category. Fifteen of these individuals used this opportunity to further express displeasure and/or disinterest in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Two individuals specifically mentioned that they felt taxpayer dollars should not be spent to promote vaccination. Three individuals mentioned a preference for getting information from their own doctors. Two individuals stated a preference for information on television.

Discussion

The results of the survey show that the vast majority of respondents are not vaccinated for COVID-19 by choice rather than due to barriers to access to the vaccine. However, failure of the survey to detect significant issues with access to vaccination should not be taken as proof that barriers do not exist. There are a number of limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of this finding:

- As there was no incentive provided for survey participation, there is likely a strong response bias towards unvaccinated individuals with strong feelings about COVID-19 vaccination. Individuals with strong pro-vaccination feelings are more likely to be motivated to overcome barriers to get vaccinated, and thus less likely to remain unvaccinated. Conversely, individuals who do not have strong feelings about vaccination are less likely to be motivated to complete the survey, and also less motivated to overcome barriers to vaccination. Thus, there is a strong likelihood that the survey failed to capture individuals who have not been vaccinated due to barriers to accessing vaccine.
- The survey is not demographically representative of the Putnam County Population as a whole. Over- represented demographic groups (i.e., 10509 zip code, age range 35-54 years, women) may be skewed toward individuals who have chosen not to be vaccinated, while individuals in under-represented demographic groups (i.e., 10541 zip code, younger and older age groups, men) may have issues with access to vaccination that went undetected by the survey.

- The survey was not designed to examine degree of certainty in the decision to not be vaccinated. Further research would be needed to determine the proportion of this population that may be “moveable,” and what factors they would consider in decision making.

Of those respondents who stated willingness to take one of the three available vaccines, very few stated willingness to accept any vaccine offered to them. Greater ability to choose the vaccine they receive should improve vaccine acceptance in this segment of the population.

Survey findings indicate high levels of concern with overall vaccine safety and side effects. Community level education and outreach efforts should address a full spectrum of long- and short-term safety and side effects concerns. However, several respondents mentioned a preference to receive information from their own doctors. It is to be expected that information provided one on one by trusted sources such as primary care providers will be most impactful to those with concerns about COVID-19 vaccination. Putnam County vaccine providers should be prepared to address a wide variety of concerns with their patients including mistrust of government and pharmaceutical company findings on vaccine safety, fear of unknown long-term risks of vaccination, concern about risks communicated by sources propagating misinformation, and management of short-term side effects.

The very low proportion of survey respondents citing access issues and providing preferences for alternative locations, days, and times for vaccination clinics limits the usefulness of this information in decision making regarding future clinic locations and times. Putnam County vaccine providers should continue to solicit information from the populations they serve regarding accessibility of current vaccination clinics. Efforts should continue to deliver vaccination opportunities to traditionally underserved populations such as homebound individuals, non-English speakers, migrant communities, and people of color. In order to reach those who are open to vaccination, but not highly motivated to seek it out, consideration should be given to delivering vaccination opportunities in other venues where people congregate such as workplaces, houses of worship, and other public events.

Survey results indicate that Putnam County vaccination providers should continue to use multiple modalities to communicate vaccination information to the population at large.