

Oxford Vaccine Knowledge Project

The
Strategy
Unit.



Overview

Reference: 40

Location: National

Target Group: Black,
Asian and Minority
Ethnic Groups

Initiative type: Online
Q&A sessions

Contact

Email:

seilesh.kadambari@paediatrics.ox.ac.uk
samantha.vanderslott@paediatrics.ox.ac.uk

Website:

<https://vk.ovg.ox.ac.uk/vk/>

Top Tip

Be patient - keep going back to the same groups and make sure that you are there to listen and respond directly to their queries.

Why is this important to us?

We have been struck by how COVID-19 has affected minority ethnic groups disproportionately. However, vaccine uptake has been low in certain BAME communities and for lots of different reasons. These include specific concerns about vaccine safety, increased exposure to misinformation, reduced access to vaccines and historical distrust with institutions. Asylum seekers have cited negative experiences with authorities, and some don't trust public health messaging relating to vaccines. Central government often use one way messaging, which will sometimes miss these groups. We encourage a two-way dialogue in the hope that these groups can trust us with providing evidence-based answers to queries and enable informed decision making before getting a vaccine.

What are we doing?

We found approximately 200 BAME Organisations online who provide community, religious or social support to individuals and groups across the UK. We approached these organisations to invite us to any online meetings being held during the lockdown in order to provide information about the vaccine, answer questions and encourage dialogue. Our intention has not been to overwhelm individuals with information and so we do not use slides and avoid scientific language. We have spoken to organisations that support asylum seekers, refugees, interfaith groups and elderly ethnic minority citizens. Concerns have ranged from the risk of deportation by registering for a vaccine, addressing misinformation that has circulated in specific communities and discussing a range of vaccine safety concerns.

Who is involved?

This initiative is conducted by the Oxford Vaccine Group and use information and materials from the [Vaccine Knowledge Project](#). The Vaccine Knowledge Project has also worked with the British Islamic Medical Association to develop FAQs about vaccines and vaccine ingredients, translated into over 100 different languages, available on the website. This resource has been shared through these online conversations and their communities. We have benefited from having a medic able to address safety issues and health conditions and a researcher able to address vaccine policies and misinformation.

What works for us?

This work has highlighted the importance of connecting with individuals and groups directly. We ensure that every opportunity is taken to answer questions and that individuals can make an evidence-based decision to receive a vaccine. The meetings are held at convenient times for different organisations (e.g. in the afternoon for an organisation supporting elderly women of South Asian background, in the evening after work for a group supporting Asylum seekers and on a weekend before Ramadan for Muslim organisations) and facilitated by community leaders. Our aim has been to provide individuals with sufficient confidence to receive a vaccine and therefore ensure protection against a pandemic that has exacerbated disparities in these vulnerable groups.