



COVID-19 Listening Sessions

Avianne Robinson
LeMoyne-Owen College— Memphis, Tennessee

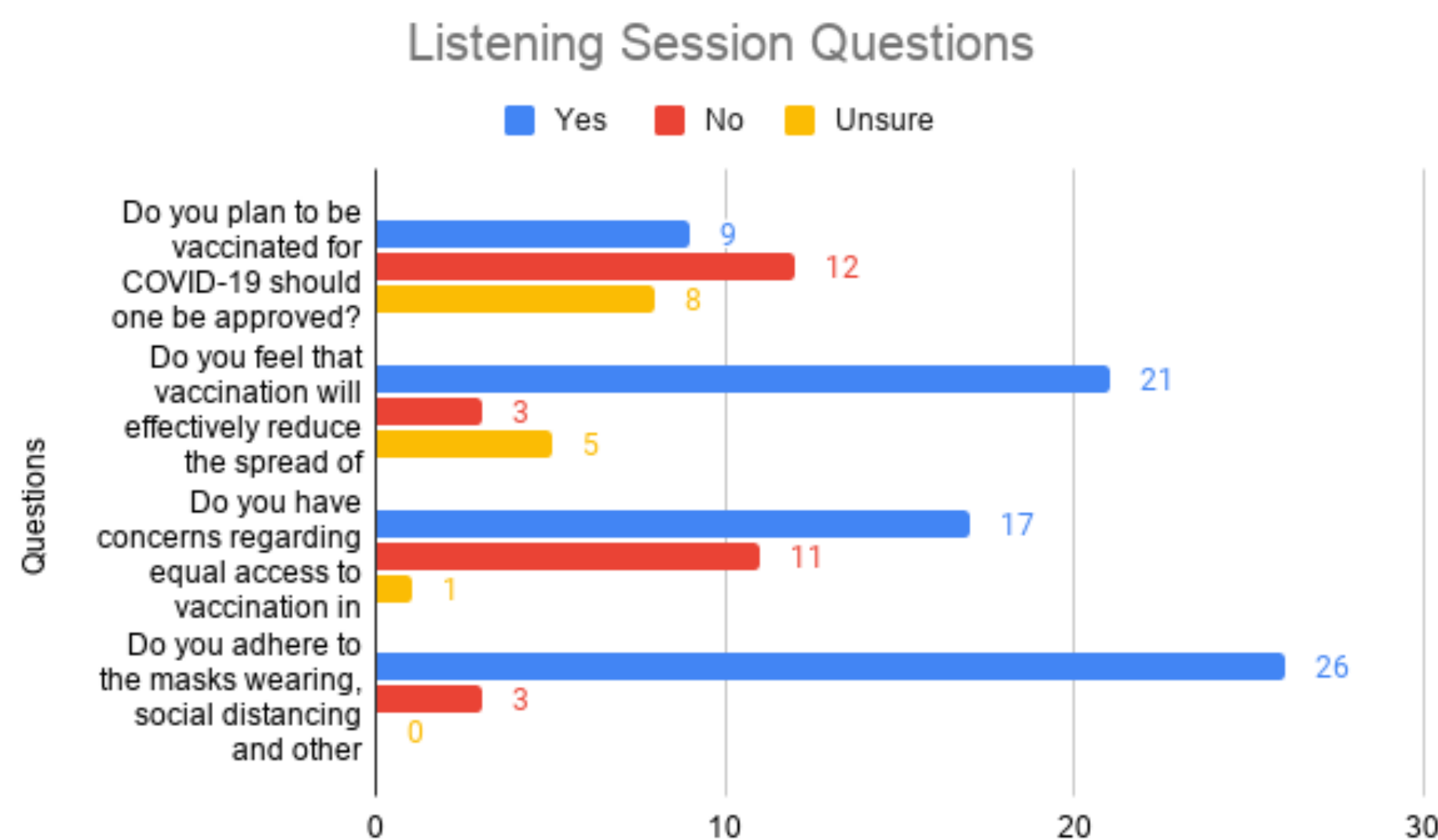


PURPOSE

The purpose of the project was to assist the individuals in the State of Tennessee to understand the public perceptions about the COVID-19 vaccine and to understand the role of public health officials in advancing the vaccinations. Listening sessions were held to gather the opinion of African Americans in Memphis, TN about the current vaccine development for the COVID-19 virus. Specifically, participants were required to respond to five questions. The approach of this project was to acquire comprehensive and effective information that could be used to deliver effective messages about the COVID-19 vaccine.

DEMOGRAPHIC

The target demographic for this project was African American men and women from LeMoyne-Owen College and the Memphis community from 18- and older that were from various socioeconomic background. Thirty percent of participants self identified as male, and 72.4% of participants self identified as female. 100% of participants self reported as being African American. (n=29).



METHODS

To solicit participants for the “Listening Sessions” flyers were posted on social media platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat. In addition, the community partner, The Place of Hope, invited their members and encouraged their participation. The social media post on Facebook received ten (10) likes and two (2) shares. The Snapchat post was viewed by eighteen (18) individuals.

Once participants were selected, the “sessions” were conducted via Google Meet. To ensure participants had the opportunity to express their opinion two “sessions” were available to attend.

In an effort to accurately document these interactions, the “sessions” were voice recorded and later transcribed.

Prior to beginning the session, each person was sent a consent form via Google Docs that had to be returned prior to contributing.

Finally, each participant was given the opportunity to provide any additional comments regarding COVID-19 and the development of the COVID-19 vaccine.

OUTCOMES

Ninety percent (90%) of participants self reported that they adhered to CDC guidelines regarding masks wearing and social distancing.

2) Seventy percent (70%) of participants self-reported that they were unsure or planning not to take the vaccine due to long term health concerns, distrust, and desire for more research.

3) Sixty percent (60%) of the participants were concerned about equal access to vaccinations currently and in the future.

STUDENT LESSONS LEARNED

1) Despite majority of participants reporting they planned to not take the vaccine, 72.4% believe that vaccines will help reduce cases.

2). Sixty percent believed that there is or will be issues of equal access to the vaccine largely due to the complicated history regarding the medical system and minorities.

3). Overall distrust regarding vaccines and guidelines appeared to stem from conflicting/changing reports from governmental personnel and agencies such as the CDC.

4). The knowledge of accurate information was vastly different between sessions with college students and sessions with the community partner.

5). I observed that people were more excited than I expected to discuss their thoughts regarding the pandemic with others in a safe environment.

6). “Word of Mouth” and personal initiations garnered the most participants as over ninety 90 percent were recruited via those methods.

COMMUNITY PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LeMoyne-Owen College
The Place of Hope Church
TN-MMC HBCU Wellness Project
Dr. Calverta McMorris