



COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN: **PARENTS'** **DILEMMA**

Children and adolescents usually demonstrate fewer and milder symptoms of Covid-19, compared to adults. This could be the reason why children are tested less than adults, resulting in fewer cases being reported. Cases reported to WHO from December 30, 2019 to October 25, 2021 show that children and young adolescents between the ages 0 and 15 years account for 9% of reported global cases, while older adolescents and young adults (15 to 24 years) represent 15% of reported global cases. People below the age of 25 years represented less than 0.5% of reported global deaths.

Are parents in favour of getting their children vaccinated?

We conducted a study to understand willingness of parents to vaccinate their children against Covid-19. We received 424 responses from parents/caretakers (56% - fathers, 38% - mothers, and 7% relatives). An overwhelming 91% of respondents wanted their children to get the shot. The positive response is primarily driven by the need to protect the child against severe effects of Covid-19 and desire to return to a normal life. However, at the same time, parents expressed concern towards probable side effects and novelty of the vaccine.

Identification of factors that affect parents' willingness to get their children vaccinated against Covid-19 will enhance parents' trust in the vaccines and improve uptake of Covid-19 vaccine for their children.



Covid-19 vaccination for children: How parents responded

Once available, are you willing to vaccinate your child against Covid-19?

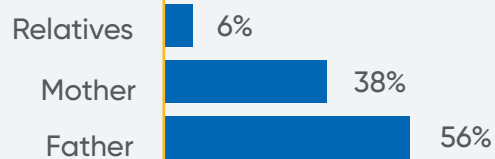


Note: Out of the 51 children who have not received age-appropriate vaccination, 18% (9) parents of these children continue to be hesitant about Covid-19 vaccination as well.

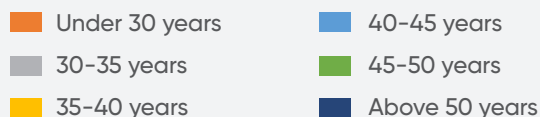
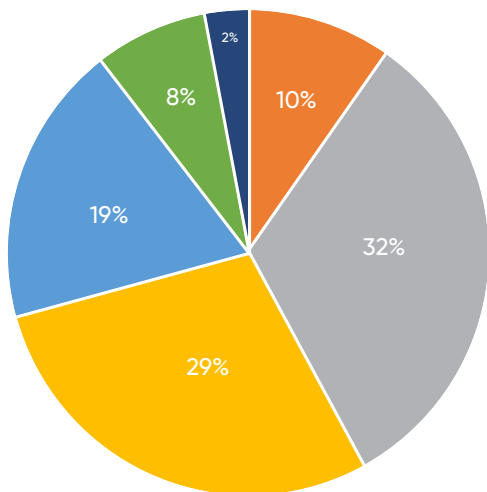
About the respondents

We reached out to employees in the corporate sector through various channels. 424 respondents participated by answering the survey questions.

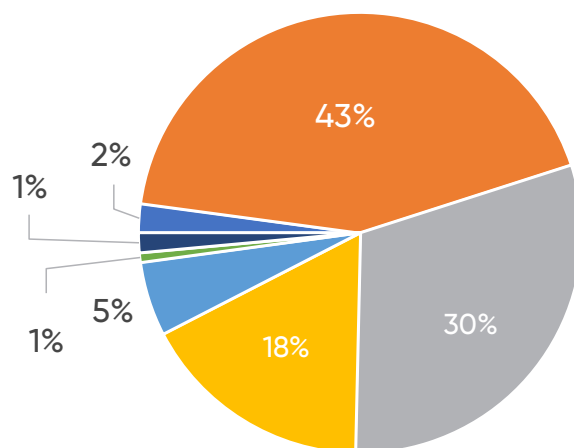
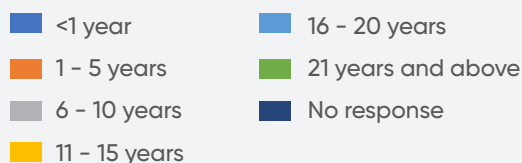
The majority (98%) of the respondents were vaccinated against Covid-19.



Age band of respondents

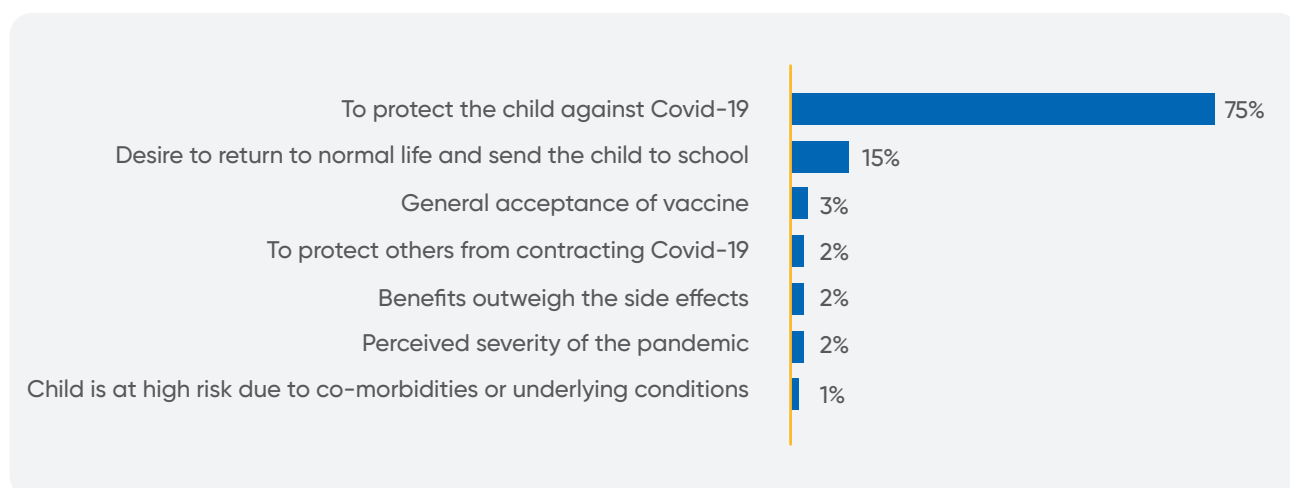


Age of children



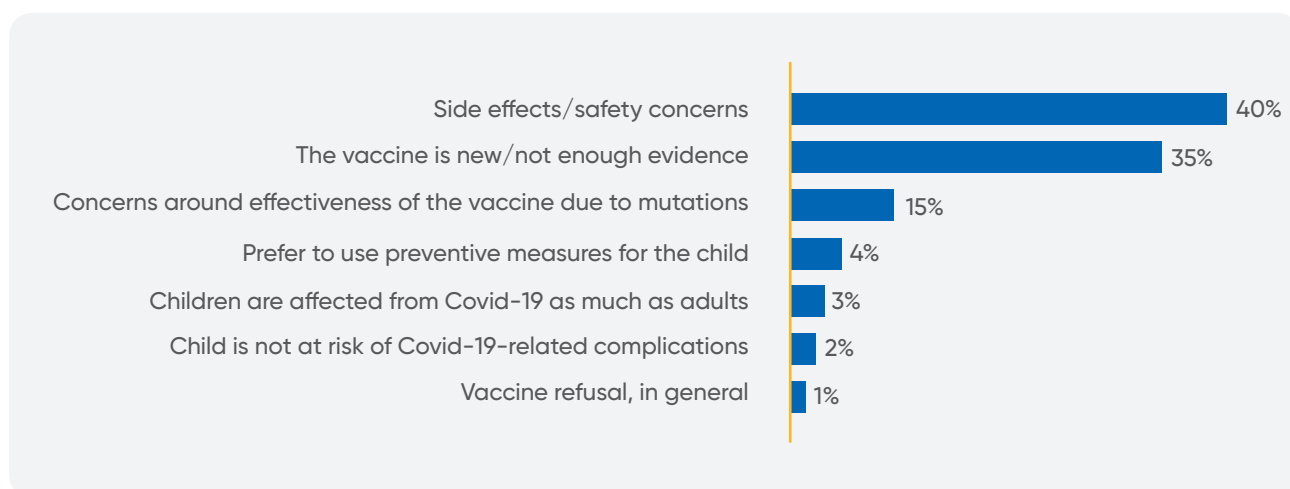
Details of children: medical condition and vaccination status	NO	YES
Does the child have any co-morbidities, underlying, or chronic condition?	97%	3%
Has the child received age-appropriate vaccinations?	12%	88%
Has the child ever contracted Covid-19?	90%	10%

Reasons to vaccinate



While the primary reason stated by parents is to protect their child against Covid-19, there is a significant emphasis on the desire to return to normal life. The majority of young children have been at home ever since the first lockdown in March 2020, resulting in additional pressure on parents, who have had to wear dual hats of a caretaker and an educator.

Concerns around vaccinating the child



Insufficient information about the side effects of vaccines is the biggest cause of worry for parents. Additionally, there is not adequate data on the effectiveness of vaccines amongst children. Considering that not many cases of Covid-19 are reported in children, according to general opinion, children have better immunity than adults.

Amongst the parents who were unwilling to vaccinate their children, 68% responded that they would change their mind if a vaccine was recommended by their pediatrician or if they had access to more information.

Side-effects of vaccination

Based on publicly available information from countries who are administering vaccine to children and teenagers, the child may have some side effects, which are normal signs that their body is building protection. These may include pain, redness or swelling in the arm, tiredness, headaches, chills, fever, or nausea.



Vaccination for children in India

India has been administering the Coronavirus vaccination for adolescents belonging to the age group 15-18 years since January 3, 2022. The Govt. of India is evaluating the plan to inoculate children between the age of 12-14 years.

In August 2021, India's drug regulator approved Zydus Cadila's needle-free ZyCoV-D vaccine for those aged 12 years and above. It is the world's first DNA-platform vaccine for Covid-19 but is yet to be rolled out.

WHO-approved vaccines for children

Three vaccines that have been approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) are being administered on children in various countries: the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the Sinopharm shot, and the Sinovac vaccine. Soberana, the homegrown Cuban vaccine, is awaiting approval from WHO. However, it is being administered to young children as well.

Vaccination for children: The road ahead

While additional research is required, based on experience with adults, vaccination amongst children can help protect them against the severity of illness. Vaccination drives could reduce the possible Coronavirus transmission from children to adults, thereby relaxing the safety measures taken in schools resulting in minimum disruption to schooling. The overall wellbeing, health, and safety of children is also an important consideration.





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