

Expanding the role of psychiatrists to increase Covid-19 vaccination rates in clozapine-treated patients with serious mental illness: A quality improvement project



Vaccine Hesitancy: Concerns expressed by patients

I will not get the virus, I don't go out much

My doc has not recommended it to me yet

I'm immunized because I already had Covid-19

I will wait and see

The government wants to inject a microchipe

I am worried about side effects

Covid-19 is harmless, like the common cold

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Background

- A diagnosis of schizophrenia:
 - The second largest predictor of mortality from Covid-19, after age¹
- Covid-19 Vaccines: the most effective preventive measure but the odds of getting vaccinated were significantly lower in the schizophrenia group²
- Psychiatric Providers:
 - Frequent contact with their patients
 - Trusted source of information
 - Experts in behavioral management

Objective
 Standardizing a process to address vaccine related concerns and needs of patients with serious mental illness (SMI) at psychiatric visits to support vaccination

Well-positioned to build vaccine confidence and address barriers to vaccination

Methods

- Provided In-service education and resources to psychiatric providers to enhance vaccine knowledge, to identify vaccine hesitant patients, to apply their expertise in nudging and motivational interviewing to resolve patients' vaccine ambivalence, and to help address logistical barriers to vaccination.
- Sample:
 - 193 clozapine-treated patients in a community mental health enter
 - Ages 19-81, M = 46.4 years
 - N=158 (85%) with schizophrenia spectrum disorder
- Developed a population-based monitoring tool to track patients' vaccination intention, hesitancy, and uptake based on literature and implemented in the electronic medical record
- Starting February 2021, psychiatric providers used guided interview based on this tool at each outpatient visit to encourage Covid-19 vaccinations

References

1.Nemani K, Li C, Olfson M, et al. Association of psychiatric disorders with mortality among patients with COVID-19. JAMA Psychiatry. 2021;78(4):380-386
 2.Biton DT. Patients with schizophrenia are under-vaccinated for COVID-19: a report from Israel. World Psychiatry. 2021;20(2):300
 3.Freudenreich, O., Van Alphen, M., & Lim, C. (2021). The ABCs of successful vaccinations: A role for psychiatry. Current Psychiatry, 20(3), 48-49.

Results

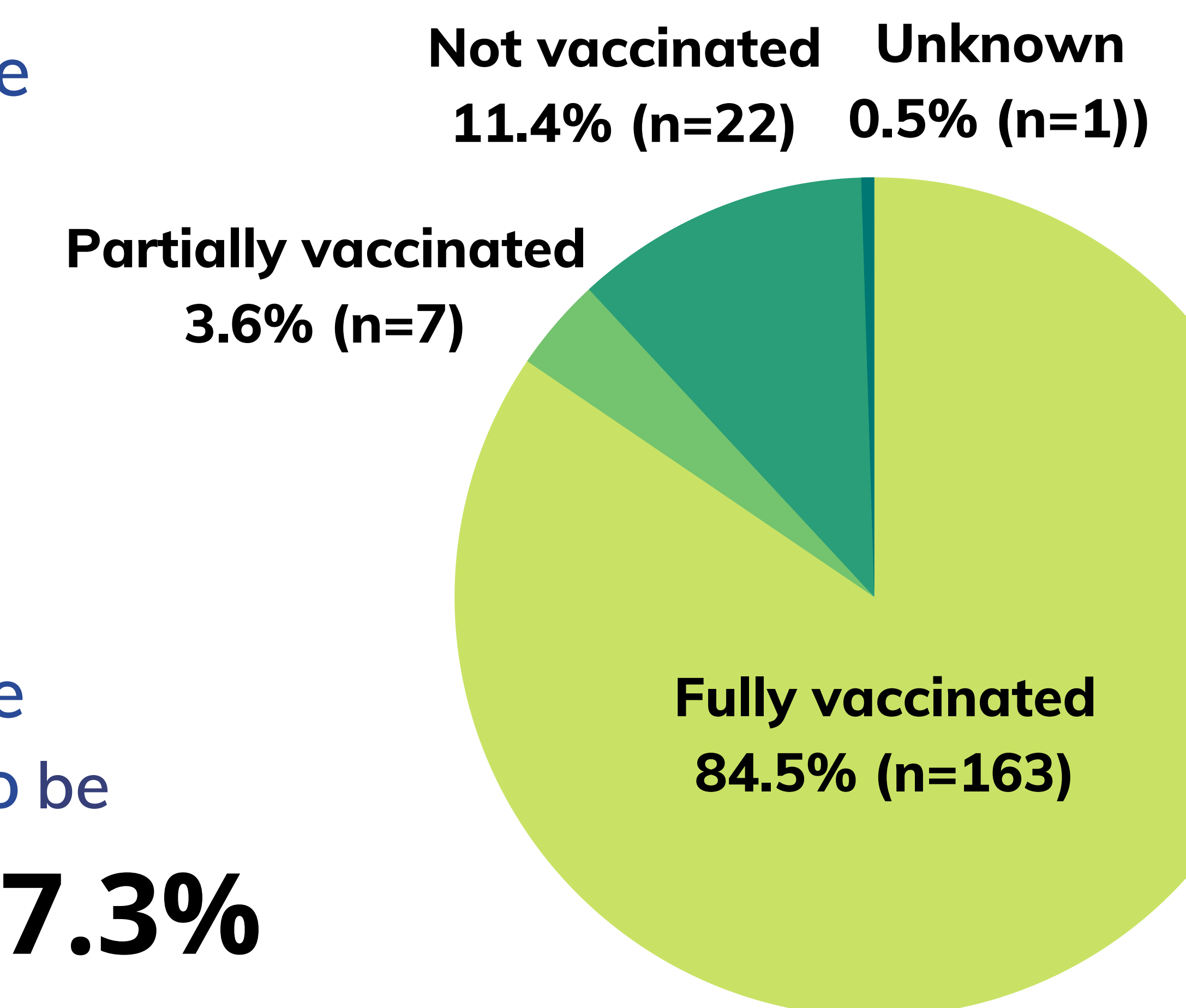
The actual full vaccination rate in our clozapine cohort as of June 30, 2021 was

84.5 %

compared to the MA state rate on the same date estimated to be

between **62.5% and 77.3%**

Vaccination Status (N=193)



COMMENTS FROM PATIENTS WHO ARE...

Fully vaccinated

- Mobile clinic came to my buiding
- Walk-in clinic was convenient
- I received 3 doses of vaccines
- Family/VNA/case manager helped with scheduling and transportation.
- Received it through group home/work/mass vaccination site

Not fully vaccinated

- I missed my appointment
- I don't know how and where to get it
- I don't know how to get to the vaccination site
- I don't know how to schedule an appointment
- I just do not want it

Vaccine availability alone is insufficient³

- A** Change **ATTITUDES** toward vaccination
- B** Help overcome practical **BARRIERS** to vaccination
- C** Ensure **COMPLETION** of vaccination series

Conclusions

- Engage psychiatric providers to help patients with SMI get vaccinated
- Standardize a process of vaccination support at outpatient psychiatric visits to positively impact vaccination rates among patients with SMI
- Psychiatric patients, particularly those who are marginalized, have much to gain if psychiatric providers are involved in preventive health care including other vaccination efforts such as the annual flu vaccine and hepatitis B