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Winter 2022



Emory Prevention Research Center

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Research in Georgia and Beyond

In This Newsletter:

- COVID Studies happening in Southwest Georgia
- Introducing Emory's New SIP Funding

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VaxUp!

Increase Vaccine Confidence and Uptake in SW Georgia

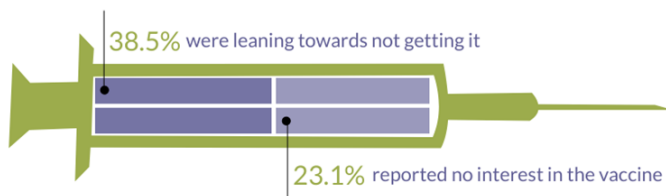
Southwest Georgia has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring of 2021, when the high level of vaccine hesitancy was becoming obvious and the virus was starting to surge again, community partners asked the EPRC to support local efforts. We formed a work group and started a community assessment to better understand how to boost vaccine confidence.



Focused on 24 Counties in SW Georgia

Partway into that process, CDC funded the EPRC to design, implement, and scale up an intervention to increase vaccine confidence and uptake in Southwest Georgia. We prioritized rural and Black communities because of the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on these communities. We expanded our work group to include more local public health officials and health care system personnel, and completed a web-based survey to gather COVID-19 vaccine opinions.

The survey (n=138) found that of the respondents not yet vaccinated,



Region had one of the highest COVID-19 death rates in the country during the early part of the pandemic.

The survey (n=138) found that of the respondents not yet vaccinated, 23.1% reported no interest in the vaccine, and another 38.5% were leaning towards not getting it. Worry about vaccine safety, long-term side effects, perceived short duration of testing, and potential adverse

reactions were given as reasons not to get vaccinated. Respondents believed more research on how the vaccine was made and tested needs to be presented, that more people need to receive the vaccine to confirm there were no adverse effects, and more information about the vaccine's safety should be provided in order to push people into getting the vaccination.

After the survey, we conducted 35 qualitative interviews. Four main topics were covered: (1) what people think about the COVID-19 vaccines, (2) social processes that impact vaccine uptake, (3) practical issues that impact vaccine uptake, and (4) people's motivation to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Based on our findings, vaccinated and unvaccinated people alike may benefit from information related to the development of the vaccines, as this was a commonly cited concern among our participants. Additionally, we found that unvaccinated individuals may benefit from unbiased information on the prevalence and types of adverse vaccination events (or lack thereof), as many of our participants relied heavily on anecdotal evidence portraying the vaccines as risky and dangerous.

Furthermore, when assessing participants level of trust, we found that COVID-19 health-related education should come from those who are embedded in the local community, for example, religious leaders, health practitioners, hospitals, and the local public health department. During the interviews there were several mentions of peer pressure impacting COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake. A substantial number of people also felt that hearing specific messaging strategies (i.e., receiving the vaccine protects older people, helps keep schools open, and prevents the virus from spreading) would convince friends or family to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vax Up! Increase Vaccine Confidence and Uptake in SW Georgia



Survey

The survey (n=138) found that of the respondents not yet vaccinated, 23.1% reported no interest in the vaccine, and another 38.5% were leaning towards not getting it.



Interview

Four main topics were covered: (1) what people think about the COVID-19 vaccines, (2) social processes that impact vaccine uptake, (3) practical issues that impact vaccine uptake, and (4) people's motivation to be vaccinated against Covid-19



Conduct

Natural Helpers were trained and deployed to deliver vaccine-related education to their communities, building on what was found in the qualitative and quantitative community assessment.



Evaluate

(1) Process evaluation monitors fidelity to the intervention via the Community Member Tracking and Follow-Up Form, (2) The outcome evaluation monitors vaccination uptake among those reached by the intervention as well as county-level vaccine rates.

During Phase II of VaxUp! we are focused on training and deploying Natural Helpers to deliver vaccine-related education to their communities, building on what was found in the qualitative and quantitative community assessment. Natural Helpers are trained either in person or via the [VaxUp! Southwest Georgia YouTube channel](#). The training consists of 5 modules: (1) COVID-19 Basic Information, (2) Vaccine-Related Education, (3) Making Vaccine Appointments, (4) Community Member Follow-Up, and (5) Documentation. The purpose of each module is to train Natural Helpers to deliver tailored education, utilize effective messaging strategies, schedule vaccine appointments, and document their encounters with community members. This training manual is used as a guide for Natural Helpers throughout the program.

Lastly, we will evaluate our work. Our process evaluation monitors fidelity to the intervention. The outcome evaluation will monitor vaccination uptake among those reached by the intervention as well as county-level vaccine rates. If you live in Southwest Georgia and want to serve as a Natural Helper, please call 404-712-8755 for more information!

Recruiting Flyers and YouTube Training Videos




Help prevent further loss due to COVID-19



EMORY
ROLLINS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

<p>We are seeking volunteers to deliver COVID-19-related vaccine information to members of their community</p>	<p>Who are the volunteers? Those age 18 and older living in 1 of 24 SW Georgia counties</p>
<p>How do we support the volunteers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training session and monthly update meetings A loaner iPad with WiFi connection to conduct project activities UP to \$500 of a monthly stipend 	<p>How do you get more information and undergo screening? Call us at 404-712-8755</p>



Natural Helpers Training (7 Videos)

Did you know?

We create infographics to make it easier to learn about our research.

[Find them on our website](#)



The Smoke-Free Homes Intervention

A research-tested program to create smoke-free homes among 2-1-1 callers

[Learn about us >](#)



Weight Counseling In Community Health Centers

Exploring weight counseling practices and barriers among Community Health Center (CHC) clinicians in Southwest Georgia

[Explore more >](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine and Southwest Georgia Cancer Survivors

The EPRC's Dr. Cam Escoffery is working with Phoebe Cancer Center to learn more about cancer survivors and COVID. The goal of the work, funded by a mini grant from Emory's Winship Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, is to disseminate practices that have proven effective in improving cancer outcomes.

Dr. Escoffery's team will survey cancer survivors at Phoebe Cancer Center who have not completed their COVID-19 vaccination series or booster shots. Most survivors come from the Dougherty, Mitchell, Terrell, Lee, and Worth county areas.

The survey will assess attitudes, intentions, and practices related to COVID-19 vaccination among cancer patients. It will measure the impact of the COVID pandemic on their household, mental health, work, and other social determinants of health. It also will evaluate COVID-19 education offered to

adult cancer survivors. The study will provide information that may help to increase vaccine uptake in the vulnerable population of cancer survivors.



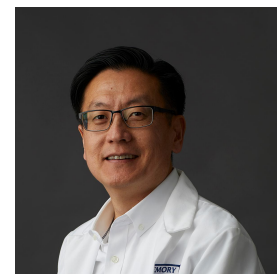
**Phoebe Cancer Center at Phoebe Putney Memorial
Hospital Albany, Georgia**

Awarded in 2021

SIP 21-008 Examining approaches to improve care and management of people with lupus

Co-Principal Investigator: S. Sam Lim, MD, MPH

- Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology
- Emory University Department of Medicine and Rollins School of Public Health
- Chief of Rheumatology, Grady Health System



[Learn about other investigators and more project details](#)

Both mental and physical health are consistently reported to be worse in people with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) compared to those with diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic conditions, in large part due to the systemic involvement, challenging diagnosis and management, and multiple comorbidities that often come with having SLE. This is exacerbated in Black individuals by their disproportionate burden of SLE prevalence, poor outcomes, comorbidities, and poor health-related quality of life. Successful self-management of SLE requires having the skills to engage in effective daily activities, which often comes from having access to up-to-date health education and self-management support. Currently, there are no widely available, evidence-based, SLE-specific self-management resources.

The study has two aims. Aim 1 will examine behavioral and psychosocial factors and their association with patient reported outcomes using already collected data from an ongoing prospective cohort of individuals with SLE that reflects “real world” lupus in the community in and around Atlanta, Georgia. Aim 2 examines changes in patient reported outcomes after being exposed to an online lupus self-management program.



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