Abstract

Background. The global spread of COVID-19 prompted a need for widespread vaccination to slow the transmission of the virus. Despite global, national, and local efforts, many people in various nations were hesitant to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Objective. The purpose of this systematic review was to synthesize the existing literature addressing factors influencing COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and hesitancy.

Methods. A literature search was conducted between November 2021 and March 2022. Inclusion criteria were studies identifying causations of COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and/or hesitancy since March 2020 in six developed/developing countries, Australia, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Russia, and the United States. Studies that were not originally published in English were excluded.

Results. Patterns in the factors influencing both acceptance and hesitancy toward the COVID-19 vaccines emerged. Vaccination acceptance was largely related to individuals’ personal preferences and beliefs regarding immunity, while vaccination hesitancy was attributed to fears and distrust of vaccine safety, side effects, and efficacy.

Limitations. Lack of consistency in methodical procedures and text availability by country may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion. In developed/developing nations, emerging data suggest that skepticism surrounding COVID-19 vaccines was the most prevalent factor leading to vaccination hesitancy, while factors including personal protection were largely associated with higher acceptance rates of the COVID-19 vaccine. Because widespread immunization is necessary to slow the transmission of COVID-19, it is important that factors leading to hesitation are addressed in order to increase vaccination rates and achieve herd immunity.

Key words: COVID-19, vaccine, vaccination, immunization, hesitancy, resistance, acceptance, confidence, trust, refusal, rejection, attitude, perception, willingness, global, worldwide, United States, Brazil, Nigeria, Russia, Australia, and/or India