

COVID-19 Vaccination Survey for All POCs in China's mainland

Summary of Outcomes

In order to understand POC's accessibility and willingness to receive COVID-19 vaccination in China, the Protection team designed an online questionnaire on KOBO in multi-languages and requested all POCs (1017) to complete it. As of 2 July 2021, 306 valid responses came in, which covers 455 individuals residing in 62 cities of 24 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions.

Sources of information

Among the 455 POCs, 417 were aware of the vaccination campaign, and 194 of them knew that they could register for the vaccination. They were mainly informed by the property management of their compound, local community workers and immigration officers. Some people were informed by landlords, friends, university, employers or through a WeChat group. One of the POCs saw the queue lining up for vaccination and he joined and received it. Some POCs received the information through media.

Willingness to receive vaccination and obstacles to getting vaccinated

358 (79%) out of the 455 POCs are willing to receive the vaccination, and 75 (20%) of them have received at least 1 shot. Those who are willing but have not yet received it indicated that they 1) do not know how to make an appointment (42%), 2) are still waiting for the appointment (25%), 3) cannot afford the vaccination (13%), 4) are hesitant as they are afraid of the possible side effects (8%), 5) suffer from comorbid health conditions (7%), 6) cannot book the appointment due to lack of valid passport, visa, Chinese ID, or the appointments are fully booked (5%).

Those who cannot book appointment due to lack of valid identity document are from Beijing, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Shantou, Huizhou, Langfang, Changchun, Shenyang, Xi'an, Jinan, Shanghai, Taiyuan, Wenzhou and Yiwu.

Concerns about the vaccine

97 POCs are not willing to be vaccinated mainly because they 1) are afraid of possible side effects (66%), 2) suffer from comorbid health conditions (24%), 3) do not think the vaccine is effective (6%), 4) cannot afford it (2%). A few refugees only want to receive vaccination before their resettlement departure (2%).

Costs and appointment booking channels

The responses were from POCs that reside in 62 different cities in China. POCs in 26 cities said they were informed that the vaccination would be provided free of charge. After some of them received vaccination, POCs from 22 cities confirmed that it was actually free of charge. Interestingly, some POCs from Beijing, Hefei, Wuhan, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Huizhou and Yangjiang said they had received free vaccination, while some others from the same cities said they were charged a fee. It seems that not all community health centres implement the Government policy very strictly.

Among the 75 individuals who have received at least 1 shot, 51 were given free of charge (68%), and 24 (32%) were charged. Those who were charged paid around CNY 100/shot, which is consistent with the published rate. These POCs received their last shot between 26 April and 29 June 2021. The main channels through which POCs booked their vaccination appointments were 1) community health centres, 2) WeChat APP, 3) community workers, and 4) the universities they study/work at.

Key findings

- A majority of the POCs (79%) is willing to receive COVID-19 vaccination.
- Only 1/5 of those who are willing have received at least 1 shot. The main challenge in appointment booking is not knowing how to book it. Several POCs also reported that they could not book due to lack of required identity documents.
- 13% of the ones willing to receive a vaccination could not afford it.
- Those who do not want to be vaccinated are mainly afraid of possible side effects, suffer from comorbid health conditions or do not trust the vaccine's effectiveness.
- As per the government policy, foreigners who are not on social insurance should pay CNY 100/shot if they wish to get vaccinated. However, the policy is implemented with some flexibility in some places, as more than half of POCs who are vaccinated were offered the vaccines free of charge.

Next steps

- Develop an information page about COVID-19 vaccination, including Q&A on side effects, effectiveness, age and health requirements, and useful links and hotline numbers. Share the page with all POCs to help them make informed decisions on whether to receive the vaccination, and to guide them to find channels of appointment booking.
- Discuss in the Office the possibility to reimburse POCs' costs for COVID-19 vaccination.
- Advocate with the central Government for POCs to receive vaccines free of charge as they have limited financial means.
- Advocate on a case-by-case basis with local authorities for those who cannot get vaccination due to lack of valid identity document to allow them to register at the community health centre with the UNHCR certificate.

Prepared by Protection Team
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