New Yorkers With HIV Are Less Likely to Be Vaccinated Against COVID-19

Data also revealed ethnic and racial disparities in COVID-19 vaccination rates among people diagnosed with HIV in New York state.

February 9, 2022 By Trent Straube

People in New York state living with diagnosed HIV are less likely to be vaccinated against COVID-19 than their HIV-negative counterparts, according to findings published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, a publication of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What's more, researchers found racial and ethnic disparities in the COVID-10 vaccination rates.

Overall, 63.5% of people with HIV in New York state were vaccinated—64,378 people out of 101,205—compared with 75% of the general adult population. Of note, HIV-positive people engaged in care were significantly more likely to get the COVID-19 shots than those with HIV and not in care (69.2% compared with 29.1%). People with HIV who maintained an undetectable viral load were also more likely to be vaccinated (72%) compared with those not known to have an undetectable viral load (38.1%).

> A study published in @CDCMMWR found low Covid-19 vaccination rates among people with diagnosed #HIV compared to the general population of adult New Yorkers. https://t.co/KDGKsym5L0
>
> — CDC HIV (@CDC_HIV) February 4, 2022

People living with HIV are at "elevated risk for severe COVID-19-accociated outcomes" if they have a low CD4 count or are not on HIV treatment, notes the CDC.

"People living with HIV have long faced barriers in meeting their health care needs," said New York State Health Commissioner Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH, in a press statement from the New York

State Department of Health, adding, “Our study shows this disadvantage extends to COVID-19 vaccination.”

Among people in New York state with diagnosed HIV, COVID-19 vaccination rates between December 14, 2020, and October 24, 2021, break down as follows:

Race/Ethnicity and (Number of People)	Fully Vaccinated	Partially Vaccinated
White (23,208)	70.8%	2.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander (2,519)	68.6%	2.1%
Latino (29,075)	65.0%	4.0%
Multiracial (590)	60.8%	4.1%
Black (45,534)	58.6%	5.3%
American Indian/ Alaska Native (190)	58.4%	3.7%
Unknown (89)	70.8%	2.2%

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The rates of among people with HIV were lowest among Native Americans (58.4%) and Black Americans (58.6%) and highest among whites (70.8%) and Asian or Pacific Islanders (68.6%). In the middle range were Latinos with HIV (65% fully vaccinated).

In addition, 64.8% of 7,636 men living with HIV were vaccinated; 60.5% of 30,476 women were vaccinated; and 58.1% of 93 gender-nonconforming or nonbinary people received full vaccinations.

For the study, researchers with the New York State Department of Health and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene collaborated with researchers from the CDC's Division of HIV Prevention. They looked at data between March 1, 2020, and October 24, 2021.

"New York has the highest U.S. per capita rate of persons living with diagnosed HIV infection (PLWDH)," wrote the study authors. "And population-level analyses adjusting for age, sex and region have shown that PLWDH are more likely to be hospitalized for and to experience an in-hospital death from COVID-19 than are those not known to be PLWDH.

"Given the increased likelihood of severe COVID-19–related outcomes experienced by [people living with diagnosed HIV]," the researchers continued, "it is essential to address the large disparity in COVID-19 vaccination coverage by HIV care and viral suppression status, in addition to ensuring access to booster doses."

"Vaccination remains the best tool we have to keep New Yorkers safe and healthy," added New York City Health Commissioner Dave A. Chokshi, MD. "We know that people living with HIV are at higher risk for severe outcomes, and we must continue to do all we can to prevent needless suffering and death."

In related news, a separate group of researchers recently reported that over time, Black Americans became less hesitant to get COVID-19 vaccinations more rapidly than white Americans, yet they still see lower vaccination rates.

To learn more about HIV, visit the HIV/AIDS Basics on POZ.com. For need-to-know facts about the coronavirus, see the Health Basics section of COVIDHealth.com. Meanwhile, visit RealHealthMag.com for the latest health news relevant to Black Americans and TuSaludMag.com

for articles pertaining to Latinos.

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