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Background

At the beginning of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the German MS Registry and the German Multiple Sclerosis Society started a survey to examine the pandemic impact on the behavioral changes of people with MS (PwMS) and the SARS-CoV-2 infection rate, following recommendations of the global data sharing initiative. In prospect of a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 in November 2020, the survey was redesigned to address the participant's attitude towards a SARS-CoV-2-vaccination.

Objective

We aim to provide new insights into the vaccination attitude of PwMS in light of the prospect of a SARS-CoV-2 vaccination in Germany.

Methods

The online survey was created with the survey application LimeSurvey of the MS Registry. The call for participation was published in all media of the MS Registry and especially in the Germany Multiple Sclerosis Society (more than 40,000 members), print and online. Only anonymized data were collected. Only the MS Registry and authorized persons have access to the data.

Descriptive analyses were carried out to describe the readiness of PwMS to get vaccinated, subdivided by sex and age, and presents the individual objections to vaccination.

Results

By January 31, 2021, 914 PwMS (77% female, 23% male) participated in the survey. The average age was 48 (± 12) years.

56% of the PwMS wanted to get vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2, 32% considered to be vaccinated, and 12% did not want to be vaccinated.

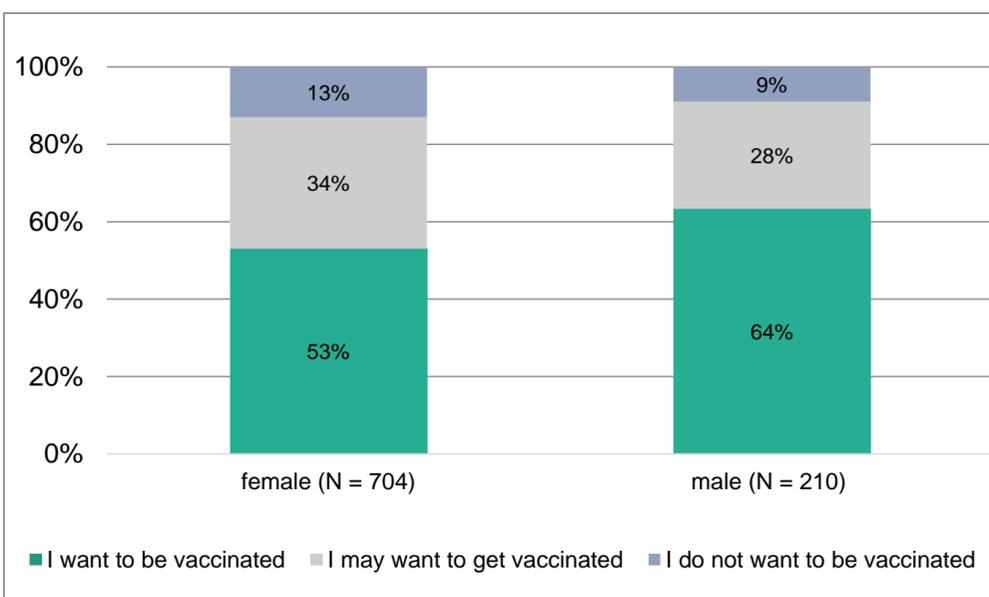


Figure 1: Vaccination readiness, by sex

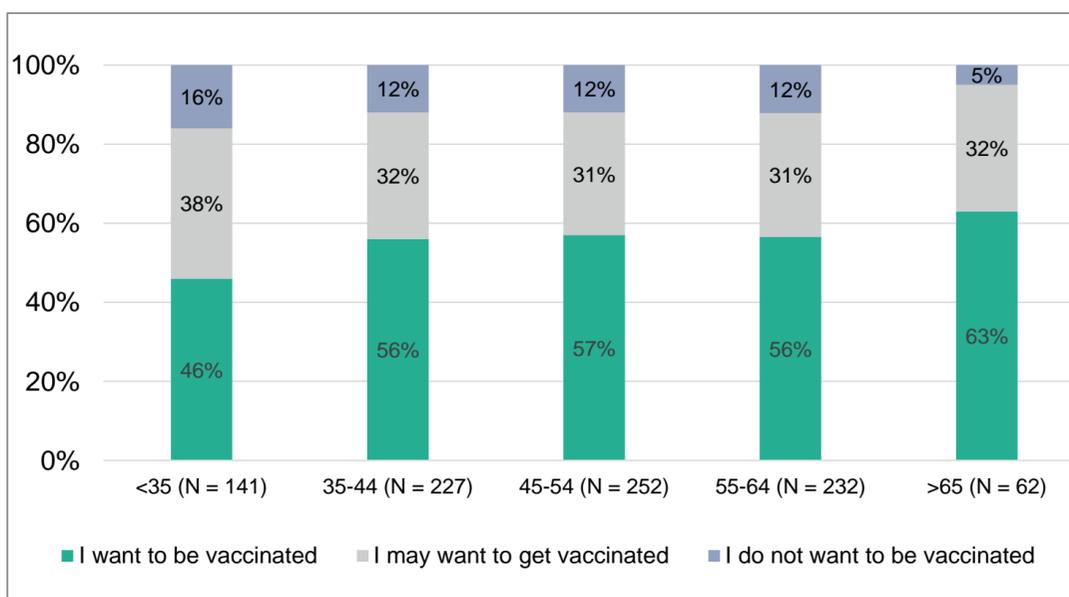


Figure 2: Vaccination readiness, by age

Objections against a vaccination:

72% feared possible side and long-term effects, 11% doubted the vaccination's efficacy and 18% had other concerns e.g.:

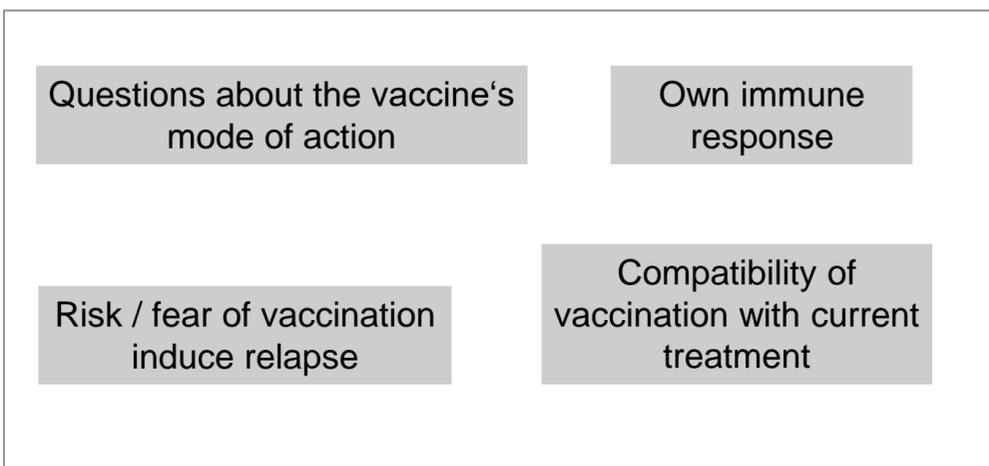


Figure 3: Objections to a vaccination

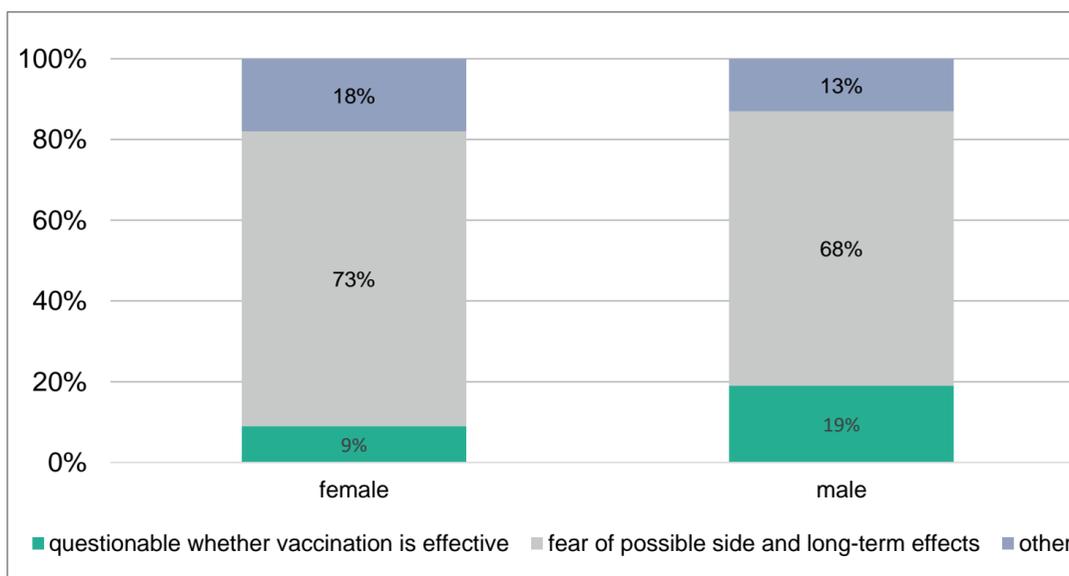


Figure 4: Objections to a vaccination, by sex

Conclusions:

At the time of the survey 88% [CI 85-90%] of PwMS considering being vaccinated which is significantly higher compared to a Germany-wide survey of the general population from November 2020 in which vaccination readiness was 71% [CI 68-74%], $p < 0.001$.

References:

ARD-DeutschlandTrend: Klare Mehrheit zu Impfung bereit [cited 2021 May 18] Available from: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/deutschlandtrend/deutschlandtrend-2403.html>

Disclosures - Declaration of interest:

AR and NF received travel funds for (research) meetings from Novartis. None resulted in a conflict of interest. DE, CM, TP, and MP have nothing to disclose. HT has no personal pecuniary interests to disclose, other than being the Secretary General of the German MS Society, federal association, which receives funding from a range of public and corporate sponsors, recently including Bundesgesundheitsministerium (BMG). The German Innovation Fund (G-BA), The German MS Trust, Biogen, Celgene (BristolMyersSquibb), Merck Serono, Novartis, Roche, and Sanofi, Viatrix (former Mylan), Janssen. None resulted in a conflict of interest. AS has no personal pecuniary interests to disclose, other than being the lead of the German MS Registry, which receives funding from a range of public and corporate sponsors, recently including The German Innovation Fund (G-BA), The German MS Trust, German MS Society, Biogen, Celgene (BristolMyersSquibb), Merck, Novartis, Roche, and Sanofi. None resulted in a conflict of interest.