COVID-19 vaccination in individuals with cystic fibrosis at a pediatric cystic fibrosis center

Christopher M. Oermann
*Children's Mercy Hospital*

Claire Elson
*Children's Mercy Hospital*

Ellen Meier
*Children's Mercy Hospital*

Paula Capel
*Children's Mercy Hospital*

Jessica Haynes
*Children's Mercy Hospital*

See next page for additional authors

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Authors
Christopher M. Oermann, Claire Elson, Ellen Meier, Paula Capel, Jessica Haynes, Michelle Fischer, and Stephanie Duehlmeyer

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Observational data suggest that COVID-19 appears to have similar outcomes among most individuals with cystic fibrosis (CF) compared to the general population. However, people with CF (pwCF) who have advanced age, CF-related diabetes, lower lung function, or a history of lung transplantation may be at increased risk for more severe disease. Therefore, the CF Foundation advocates for pwCF to have discussions about vaccination with care teams. At present, the FDA has granted emergency use authorization (EUA) of three COVID-19 vaccines. Initially ACIP/CDC guidance allowed each state to determine vaccine distribution based on an individual's exposure and risk for severe disease. This study describes the attitudes of adolescents and their caregivers with CF followed by Children's Mercy Kansas City (CMKC) CF center eligible for COVID-19 vaccination in the state of Missouri. At the time publication, COVID-19 vaccination is available for all individuals > 12 years of age in all states.

CMKC Cystic Fibrosis Center is in Missouri but provides care for 234 pwCF from Missouri and Kansas. We receive COVID-19 vaccine from both Missouri and Kansas’ allocation with distribution based on state-wide, phased, and tiered systems. Starting in January 2021, Phase 1B – Tier 2 in Missouri included, among others, pwCF. Starting in March 2021, Phase 4 in Kansas included pwCF. CMKC was allotted doses (first and second) to be administered. Center staff contacted (telephone and EMR messaging) and documented vaccine status of all pw CF age > 16 years receiving care at CMKC from January 2021 to 02 April 2021. Updated analysis was completed on 31 July 2021 with expanded approval of COVID-19 vaccination to pwCF ≥ 12 years (FDA EUA approved: May 2021).

Reasons for Declining Vaccination (N=18) N (%)
Logistic Issues (i.e., unable to travel, scheduling conflict) 5 (28)
Unknown 5 (28)
Mistrust in Vaccine and/or Pandemic Severity 3 (17)
Current SARS-CoV2 infection 2 (11)
Concern over Vaccine-Related Adverse Drug Event 1 (6)
Wanted to Get Minor Child Consent 1 (6)
Perceived Lack of Susceptibility to Infection 1 (6)

Children’s Mercy Kansas City

Of the 234 individuals followed at CMKC, 56 (24%) were age ≥ 16 years and initially eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Of the 56 individuals, the majority agreed to COVID-19 vaccination. A variety of reasons were given for declining vaccination; most concerning among these were skepticism regarding the pandemic and vaccine necessity and misconceptions about safety and efficacy. As access to SARS-CoV-2 vaccination is expanded nationally and includes younger children with CF, it will be critical for CF Care Center staff to proactively address issues surrounding vaccination hesitancy.