

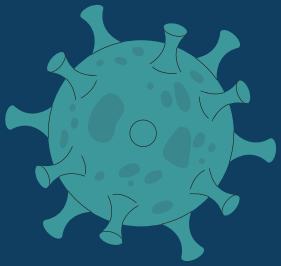
# IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES WITH THE COVID-19 VACCINE

**A Research Study**



**CIRCLE LAB**

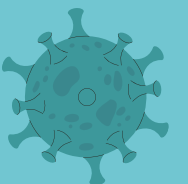
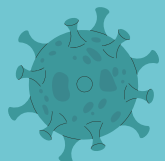
COMMUNITY INTEGRATED RESEARCH  
FOR CARE AND LANGUAGE EQUITY

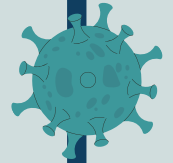


# REMEMBER HOW CONFUSING IT WAS WHEN THE COVID-19 VACCINES FIRST CAME OUT?



**What would it have been like if you were living in a place where you didn't speak the language and had a hard time making doctor's appointments even before the pandemic?**





# **WE WANTED TO FIND OUT**

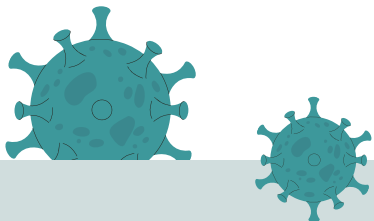
**The goal of this study was to work with community partners to explore the perspectives of non-English speaking immigrant and refugee communities on COVID-19 vaccines and on their vaccination experiences.**



# WHO DID WE INCLUDE?

Participants were from four major immigrant and refugee groups in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Participants were non-English speaking (English was not their first language and they don't understand it well).

Latine or Hispanic (Spanish)	Bhutanese (Nepali)
Congolese (French)	Chinese or Taiwanese (Mandarin)



**66 INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED**  
**85% WERE VACCINATED**

# HOW DID WE DO IT?

Our community partners hosted **group interviews** with community members in their preferred language.

Groups were organized by the participants' **language preference** and **vaccination status.**



# MAIN FINDINGS



1

**THE VACCINATION EXPERIENCE WAS OFTEN POSITIVE**

**PARTICIPANTS FACED LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND OFTEN RELIED ON FAMILY MEMBERS FOR INTERPRETATION**

2

3

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS HELPED CONNECT PARTICIPANTS TO VACCINES**



**UNVACCINATED PARTICIPANTS SHARED FEARS OF SIDE EFFECTS AND BELIEF IN NATURAL IMMUNITY**

4

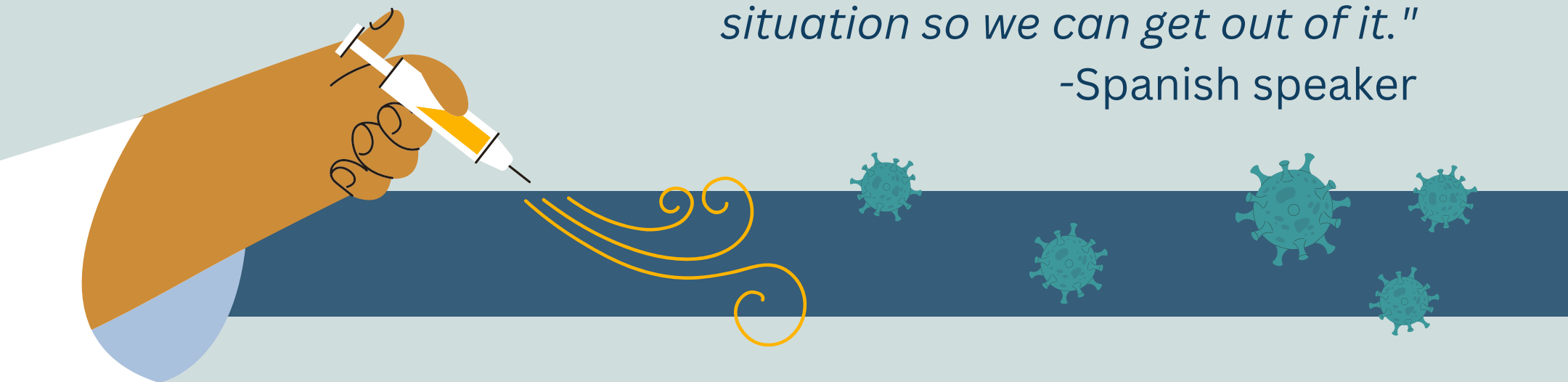
1

# OVERALL, THE VACCINE WAS SEEN AS TRUSTWORTHY AND VACCINATION EXPERIENCES WERE POSITIVE

**Most participants got the vaccine because they trusted in its effectiveness...**

*"Personally, I believe in science. There are many people united in working to improve the situation so we can get out of it."*

-Spanish speaker



**... but some had other reasons.**

*"The reason why I took the vaccine was **because of the restrictions... It is like we did not have a choice.** They were forcing us to be vaccinated if we wanted to travel."*

-French speaker



2

## IT WASN'T ALL EASY

Participants said that language, transportation, and complicated registration and documentation requests were some of the most difficult parts of the experience.



*"The person I met did everything to make sure that I was understanding her. It was a wonderful experience but when I went back **for my second dose, it was the other way around.**"*

-French speaker

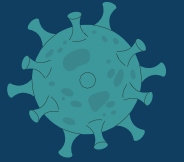
*"I don't really understand English... **My child played the role of interpreter there.**"*

-Nepali speaker



3

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS PLAYED A BIG ROLE



Community organizations that serve immigrants and refugees connected participants with vaccines and held vaccine clinics that helped remove some language and cultural barriers.

*“The Asian clinic made it really easy! ... [Community members] really liked the **ease of communication, good parking, and on a Sunday morning** when restaurants [their work places] are not yet open.”*

- Mandarin speaker



4

## UNVACCINATED PARTICIPANTS SHARED FEARS OF SIDE EFFECTS AND BELIEF IN NATURAL IMMUNITY



*“The vaccine was researched and developed in the United States so research subjects were basically Caucasians... **It could be that the protection is worse for Asians than that for Caucasians.**”*

-Mandarin speaker

*“I’m thinking about myself, **I haven’t had a child yet so I just don’t want that to be affected, I’m still young.**”*


-French speaker.

# WE CAN DO BETTER

Participants offered suggestions to providers for improvements to vaccine access and trust and access in non-English speaking communities.

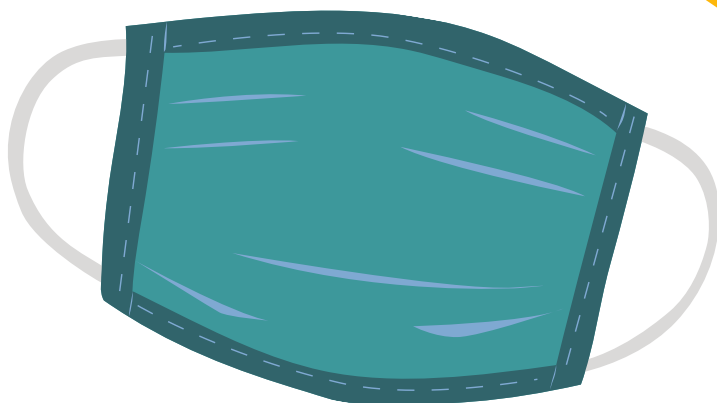
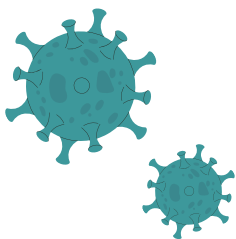
Allow walk-in  
or in-home  
vaccination

Language access  
is **ESSENTIAL**  
(bilingual staff or  
interpretation  
services)



Provide  
clearer, more  
available  
information on  
vaccines

Offer vaccines at  
doctor's offices  
and in the  
workplace



# **FUTURE RESEARCH CAN CLEAR UP SOME DETAILS**

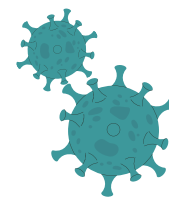
**Future research should explore  
the differences in COVID-19  
experiences between immigrant  
and refugee groups and by  
where they live...**

**... and should look into  
the work of community  
organizations on  
vaccination efforts.**

## **OUR NEXT STEPS**

**The study team  
continues to invest in  
community  
partnerships and  
community-based  
participatory research**

# OUR PARTNERS



**Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance of Pittsburgh + Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh + Casa San José + Congolese Union of Pittsburgh + Jewish Family and Community Services + Organization of Chinese Americans**

**For more information about this study  
and to see other projects, find us at**

**RAGAVANCIRCLE.COM**



**CIRCLE LAB**

COMMUNITY INTEGRATED RESEARCH  
FOR CARE AND LANGUAGE EQUITY

**STUDY CONDUCTED IN SUMMER 2021**