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Attitude and needs of the community pharmacists in Abu-Dhabi Emirates about administering Flu and COVID vaccine: A cross sectional study.

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Background and aims: A rising number of countries have been enlarging the role of pharmacists to offer vaccination services, which magnified vaccination access and rates. Currently the Department of Health in Abu- Dhabi is proposing and piloting changing the paradigm of community pharmacists in Abu -Dhabi role to include administering both Flu and COVID vaccine to the public. The aim of this study is to explore and assess the needs, attitudes of the community pharmacists in Abu Dhabi about administering Flu and COVID vaccine and exploring their perceived challenges and enablers.

Methods: a cross-sectional study design had been adopted using a validated questionnaire. Ethical approval was obtained from the Social Research Ethics Committee, UAE University. Binary and multiple binary logistic regression model was used to identify factors associated with the willingness of the respondents to provide vaccine services. IBM SPSS was used for the analysis.

Results: The majority of the respondents were female (58.8%), married (58.9%), non-Emiratis (90.4%), and had more than five years of work experience (53.8%), in which at least one year working in the UAE (80.2%). The majority agreed that pharmacy students must be trained to administer vaccines and it should be part of the curriculum (81.0%). On the other hand, 82.2% of participants doubt the ability of their pharmacy to arrange a space for the administration of the vaccines. Having experience in administering subcutaneous (AOR=4.12, 95% CI=1.06-16.81, P=0.045), having the belief that students should be trained (AOR=18.88, 95% CI=9.00-39.58, P<0.001) were significantly associated with willingness to administer vaccines after adjusting for confounders.

Conclusions: The explored perspectives and needs of the community pharmacists will help stakeholders to have an evidence-based approach and strategy. Addressing the enablers and challenges will streamline the implementation of such initiative to the seven Emirates of UAE.