

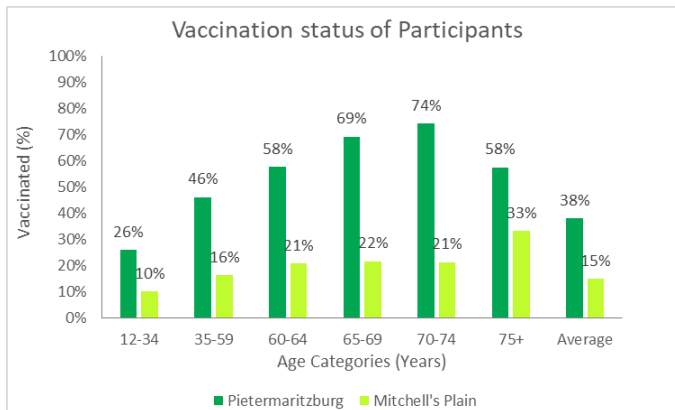


The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), together with research partners, Epicentre, and Genesis Analytics, have completed the follow-up study on SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence in two districts in South Africa that took part in the first round of the Healthcare Utilisation and Seroprevalence (HUTS-1) survey.

The follow-up seroprevalence study (HUTS-2) was conducted in Pietermaritzburg (KwaZulu-Natal) and Mitchell's Plain (Western Cape). At each site, households that took part in the first round of HUTS were asked to take part in the follow-up. The target was to enroll 2,400 individuals from each site, with the majority being participants from the HUTS-1 and a few new participants who were living in the HUTS-1 households visited.

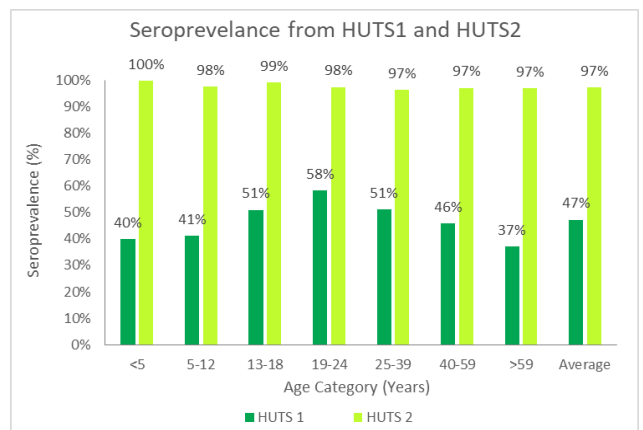


Participants answered a short questionnaire with follow-up on respiratory illness since the last survey, and blood samples were taken to test for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, and HIV for new participants. Questions regarding vaccination were also included.



A total of 4,821 individuals were enrolled in HUTS-2, about 50% from each site. Of these participants, 61% were female, and the average age was 34 years (range 2 to 93 years). Only 26% (1142/4443) of participants eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination reported to be fully or partially vaccinated, with most vaccinations recorded by the Pietermaritzburg participants (38% vs 15%). Only 2% of participants reported having respiratory illness symptoms, and less than 1% had severe symptoms.

The results from the COVID-19 antibody testing showed that on average 97% of participants had COVID-19 antibodies. More than double the number of participants have antibodies to COVID-19 in HUTS-2 compared to HUTS-1. Whilst the number of people with antibodies is high, it is important to get vaccinated and for those who are vaccinated to get their boosters in order to keep their level of protection high.



We would like to thank all community members and HUTS participants for supporting this valuable research. As a result of the successful outcomes and importance of the results, HUTS will continue with additional visits later this year and again next year. We look forward to visiting you again!