

PUR3500- Public Relations Research

# H1N1 Awareness Study

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes of University of South Florida college students towards the H1N1 vaccine, and to encourage students to get the vaccine.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To discover students' attitudes about H1N1 and the vaccine
- To reveal students' awareness of the H1N1, how it can be contracted and how it can be prevented
- To explore students' actions and reasons why or why not a student is planning to get the vaccine

## METHODOLOGY

To conduct our study and gather research, we utilized an online questionnaire tool called SurveyMonkey, which allows users to design and distribute surveys in various ways. We drew our sample from the population of students at USF, since our study specifically targeted this audience. The population is appropriate because the student constituency is the specific group we are aiming to effect. The sample was selected at random and contacted via common communication tools such as Facebook, Twitter, USF e-mail and other online sources.

Before viewing a short video concerning the vaccine, respondents were directed to answer five screener questions relating to their enrollment at USF. The screener questions also reviewed basic knowledge of the H1N1 virus and vaccine. Essentially, the screener questions dictated the correct respondents to take the survey.

Data was collected over a period of 5 days, beginning on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and ending on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

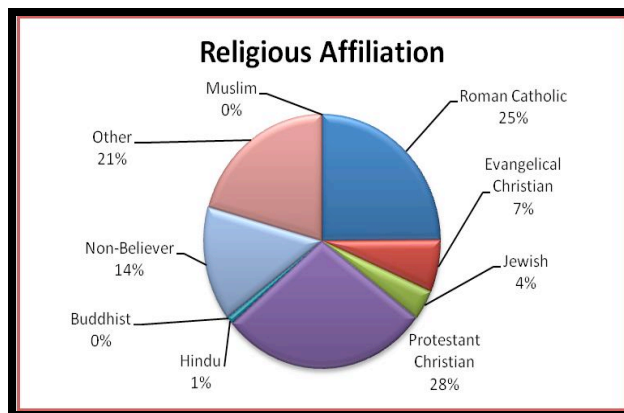
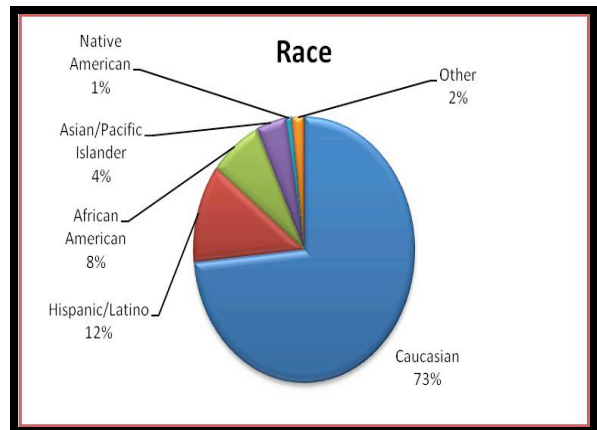
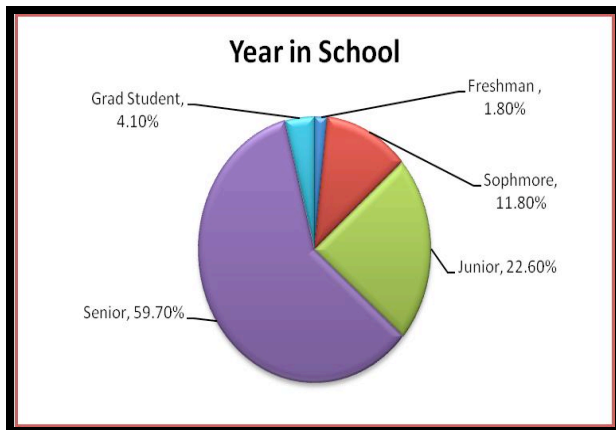
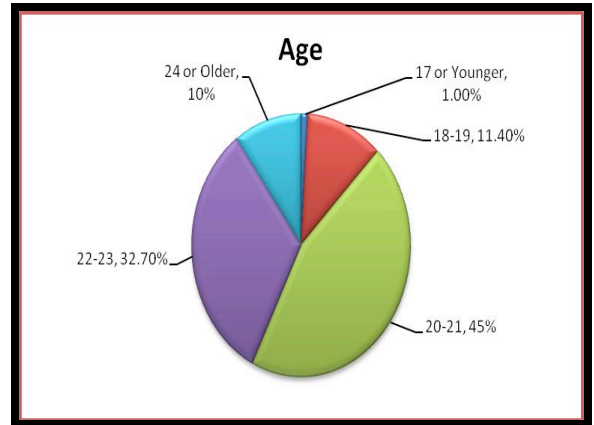
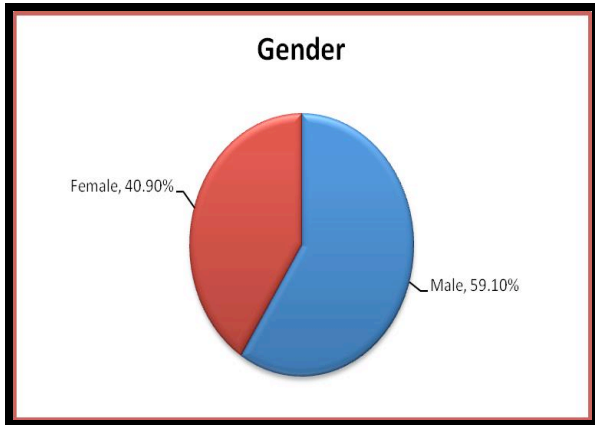
The survey consisted of several questions relating to and assessing the respondents' birth month to direct them to the designated stimuli and perceived message of the stimuli; current knowledge of the H1N1 virus and efforts to further learn about the H1N1 virus; knowledge about the H1N1 vaccine before and after viewing the stimuli; experiences and attitudes of the H1N1 virus and vaccination process; perceived behaviors regarding the H1N1 virus; USF's effectiveness at communicating about the H1N1 virus and vaccine; and demographic questions for classification.

Rather than conduct follow-up communication to increase response rate, we included an incentive in the form of a drawing for a \$25 gift card to a local restaurant or store to be chosen by the winner.

Videos were used as stimuli, created by researcher teams and distributed to respondents according to their birth month. This question was given after the screener questions and prior to viewing the actual video. Researchers were directed to produce short films that could be effective at raising awareness of the H1N1 flu virus and the need to get the vaccine. In our video, we attempted to change students' attitudes towards the flu and encourage them to get the vaccine. We taped daily occurring situations around the USF Tampa campus that could potentially permit the virus to travel and spread among students, such as sharing of water fountains, bathroom habits, handle and doorknob holding, hand shaking, etc.

In terms of various characteristics such as demographics, the majority of the participants in the sample were USF seniors, female, between the ages of 20 and 21, Caucasian (non-Hispanic) and Protestant Christian. Prior to taking the survey, many responded as very unlikely to get the H1N1 vaccine.

# Demographics



## RESULTS

### Experience

- Number of times in past 5 years respondents had the flu shot

A majority of respondents (50%) indicated they had not received the flu shot in the past 5 years. Other responses were 1-2 times (40%) and 3-4 times (9%).

- Seasonal flu vaccine this year

Most respondents (90%) signified they had not received the seasonal flu vaccine this year. A small number (9%) said they had.

- Immediate family members who have received the H1N1 vaccine

Over half (63%) said that did not have a family member receive the vaccine. Some respondents (22%) were unsure, and others (13%) said yes.

- Close friends or roommates who have received the H1N1 vaccine

A majority (50%) of respondents did not have close friends or roommates receive the H1N1 vaccine. A smaller amount (31%) said were unsure, and an even smaller amount (18%) said yes.

- Know anyone that has contracted H1N1

A huge majority (81%) indicated they knew someone that had contracted H1N1 virus. Very few (18%) said they did not know anyone who has contracted H1N1. Some (7%) said they were not sure.

### Knowledge

- Message of video and opinion of the effectiveness in communicating a message about H1N1

Most responses focused on the message that germs are everywhere, and how it seems so easy to catch H1N1 and spread it around.

“Get vaccinated because germs are easily spread around campus.”

“You can catch the H1N1 virus at anytime or anywhere!”

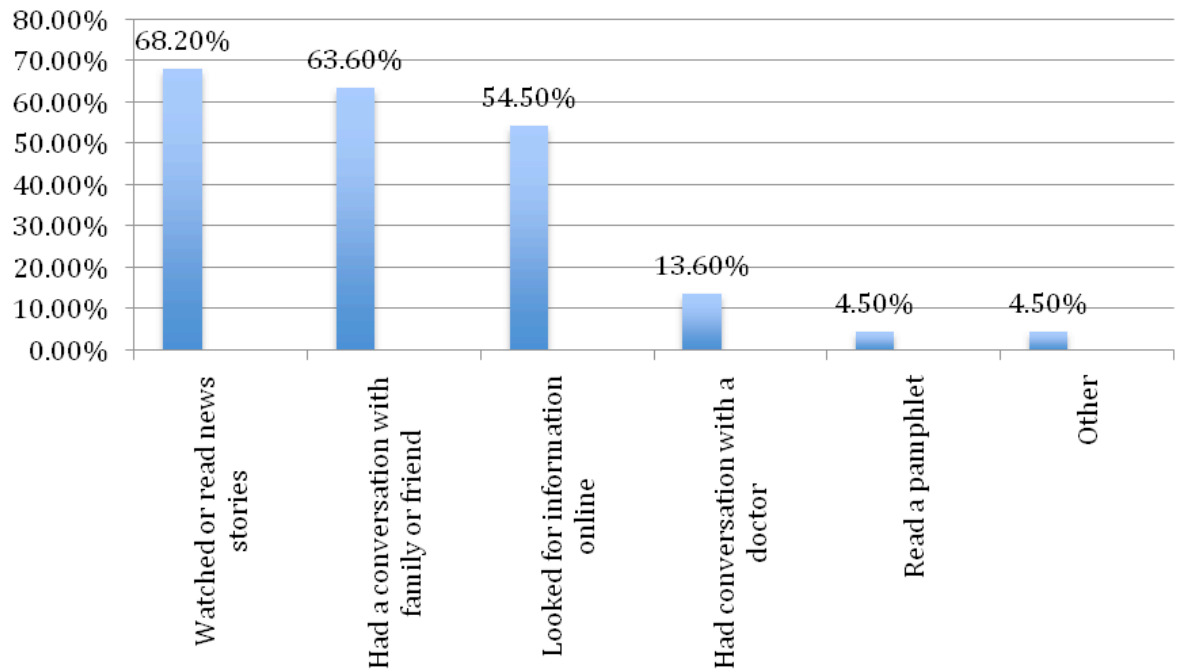
“The video is very effective. The message of the video is to inform people of how often we come in contact with germs on a daily basis just by doing routine tasks.”

“The message of this video was to create awareness about the spread of germs and how the H1N1 virus can stay alive on an inanimate object for 2-8 hours.”

- Actions taken to learn more about the H1N1 vaccine

A majority of respondents n=22 (68%) indicated they watched or read news stories. Other actions included had a conversation with a family member (63%), looked for information online (54%), had a conversation with a doctor about it (13%), read a pamphlet (4%), or other (4%).

### Actions Taken to Learn More About the H1N1 Vaccine



Other included one response:

- “Didn’t really try to find anything about H1N1.”

- Attitudes toward infirmity

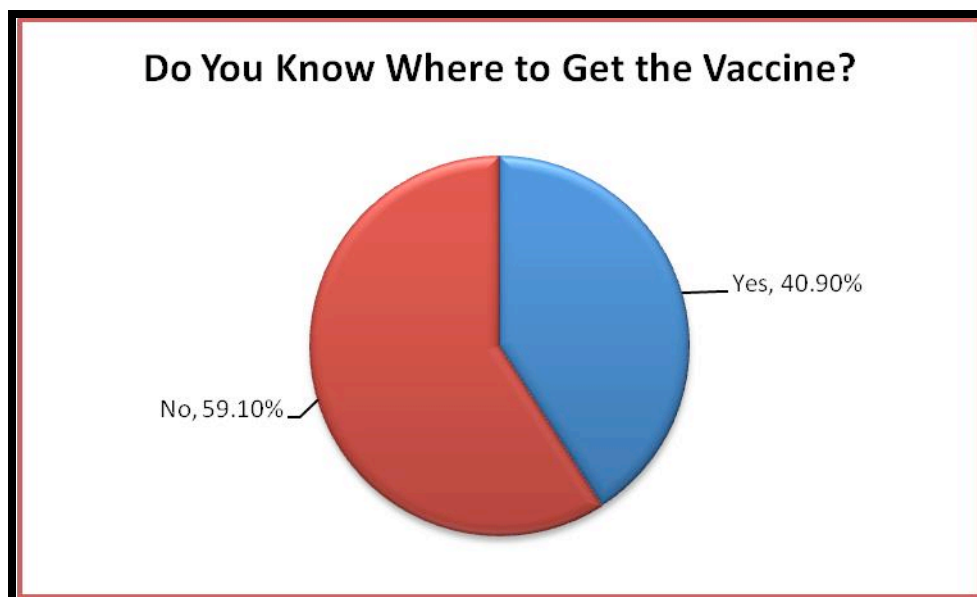
The highest percentage of students either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed (81%) that they felt very informed about ways to prevent the H1N1 flu. Respondents also had strong levels of agreement for feeling very informed about the H1N1 flu (72% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed) and for feeling very informed about the benefits of the H1N1 vaccine (47% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed).

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average
<b>I feel very informed about ways to prevent the H1N1 flu.</b>	50%	31.8%	13.6%	4.5%	0%	4.27
<b>I feel very informed about the H1N1 flu.</b>	27.3%	45.5%	18.2%	4.5%	4.5%	3.86
<b>I feel very informed about the benefits of the H1N1 vaccine.</b>	14.3%	33.3%	33.3%	9.5%	9.5%	3.33
<b>I feel very informed about the side effects of the H1N1 vaccine.</b>	13.6%	16.3%	22.7%	22.7%	27.3%	2.64

*Respondents (n=22) responded to the above choices using a 5-point likert scale where 5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree.*

- Where to go to receive the vaccine

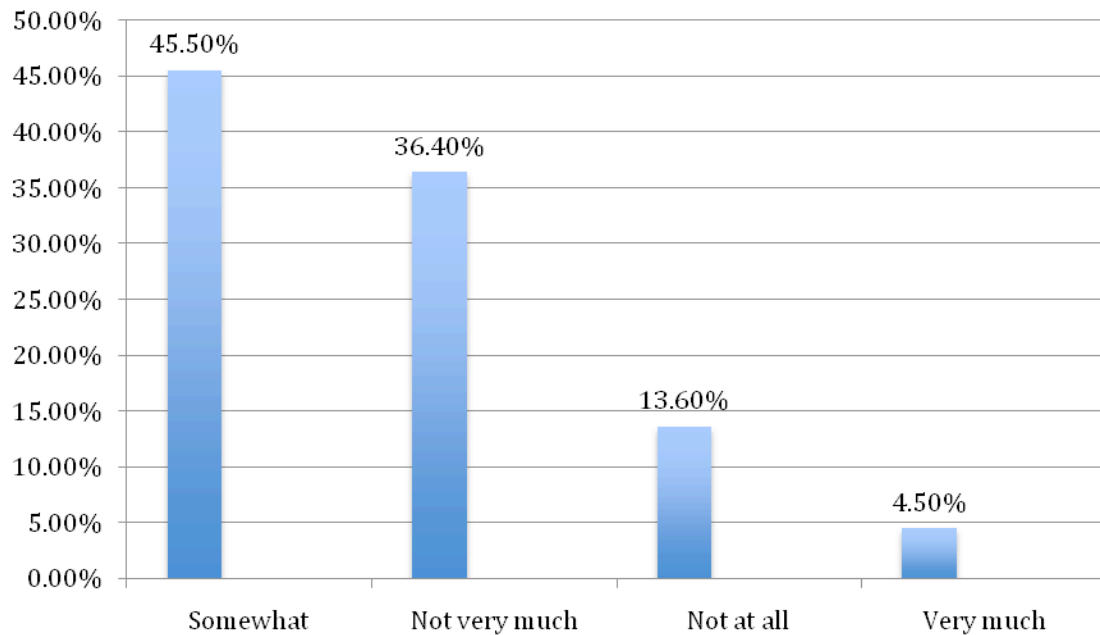
Over half of 22 respondents (59%) indicated they did not know where to go to get the vaccine. The rest of the respondents (41%) claimed they did know where to get the vaccine.



- Extent to which the video increased knowledge of the H1N1 vaccine

A majority of 22 respondents (45%) indicated the video somewhat increased their knowledge of the H1N1 flu and the vaccine. Others (36%) said not very much, followed by a smaller group (13%) saying not at all, and the least (4%) claimed very much.

### Extent to Which the Video Increased Knowledge of the H1N1 Vaccine



*Respondents (n=22) responded to the above choices using a 4-point likert scale where 5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree.*

## Attitudes

- Levels of agreement or disagreement within statements regarding attitudes

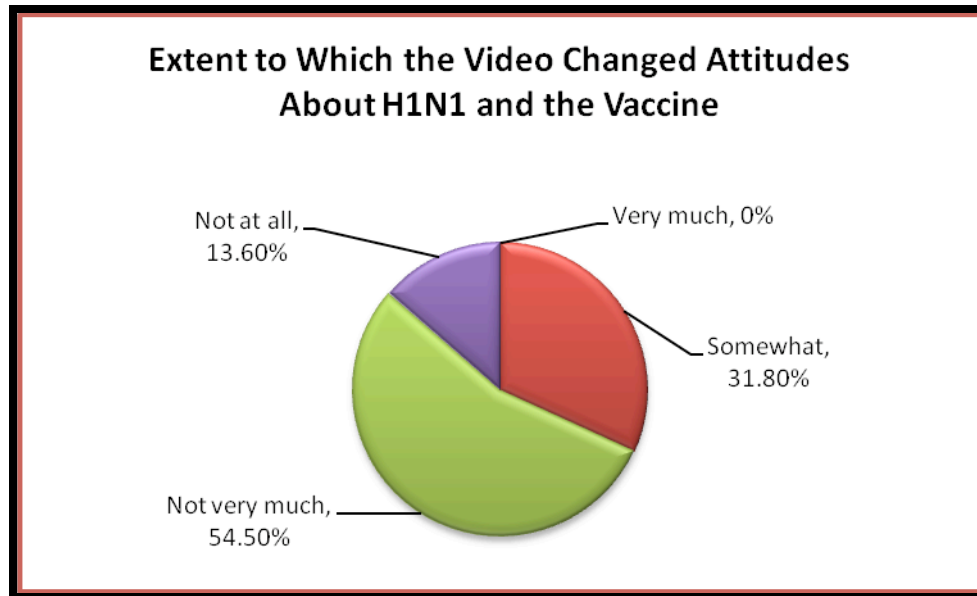
The highest percentage of students either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed (75%) that they did not like to miss work or class due to being sick. Respondents also had strong levels of agreement for the media doing a good job of informing people in the symptoms and prevention of H1N1 (63% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed) and for being scared to get the vaccine for the H1N1 virus because of its potential side effects (41% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed).

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating average
<b>I don't like to miss class or work because I am sick</b>	54.5%	22.7%	4.5%	18.2%	0.0%	4.14
<b>I think people are overreacting to H1N1</b>	27.3%	45.5%	9.1%	13.6%	4.5%	3.77
<b>The media are doing a good job of informing people on the symptoms and prevention of H1N1</b>	13.6%	18.2%	45.5%	13.6%	9.1%	3.14
<b>I feel the H1N1 vaccine is safe</b>	9.1%	22.7%	45.5%	18.2%	4.5%	3.14
<b>I'm scared to get the vaccine for the H1N1 virus because of its potential side effects</b>	18.2%	22.7%	18.2%	18.2%	22.7%	2.95
<b>Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent getting the H1N1 virus</b>	4.8%	23.8%	28.6%	23.8%	19.0%	2.71
<b>The H1N1 vaccination should be mandatory for college students</b>	4.5%	18.2%	18.2%	22.7%	36.4%	2.32
<b>It takes too much time to get vaccinated</b>	4.5%	0%	36.4%	31.8%	27.3%	2.23
<b>I am worried about getting the H1N1 virus</b>	4.5%	9.1%	18.2%	40.9%	27.3%	2.23
<b>The vaccine is only for children, the elderly, and pregnant woman</b>	4.5%	4.5%	9.1%	22.7%	59.1%	1.73

*Respondents (n=22) responded to the above choices using a 5-point likert scale where 5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree.*

- Extent to which the video changed some of respondents attitudes about H1N1 and the vaccine

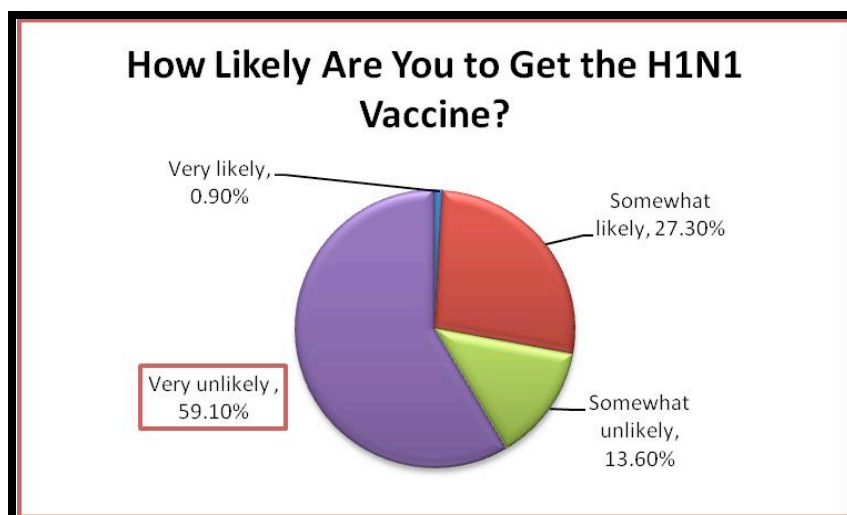
A majority of the 22 respondents (54%) indicated the video did not very much increase their knowledge of the H1N1 flu and the vaccine. Others (31%) said somewhat, followed by a smaller group (13%) saying not at all.



## **Behavior**

- Likelihood of getting the H1N1 vaccine

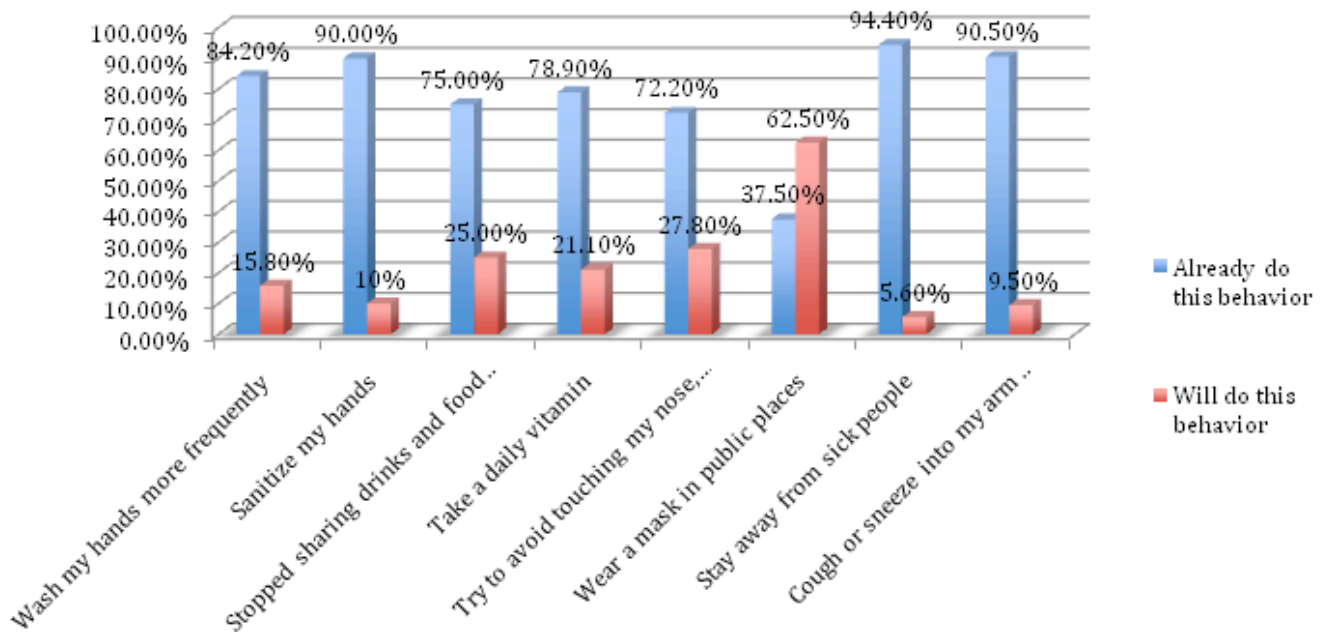
A good majority of respondents (59%) claimed they were very unlikely to get the H1N1 vaccine. Fewer (27%) said they were somewhat likely, and a small group (13%) said they were somewhat unlikely.



- Personal efforts due to the increase in reported cases of H1N1

Out of 22, most participants (94%) said that even before watching the video they stayed away from sick people. Another high volume of respondents (90%) said that they coughed or sneezed into their arm instead of their hand before they watched the video. Another large group of participants (79%) said that they had already stopped sharing drinks and food with others pre-video. As for a behavior changed due to watching the video- a majority of respondents (62%) said they will wear a mask in public places after viewing the video.

### Personal Efforts Due to the Increase in Reported Cases

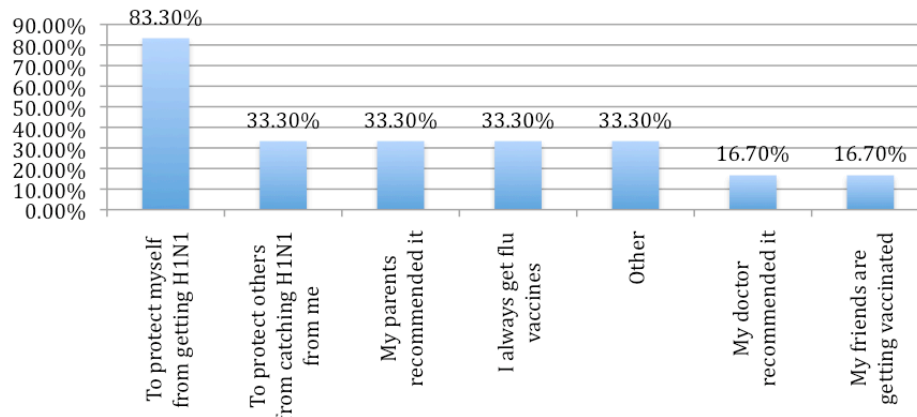


## Reasons

- Different motivations to get the vaccine

A majority (83%) of n=22 said they would get the vaccine to prevent from getting the H1N1 flu. Other reasons were to protect other from catching it (33%), doctor recommendation (16%), parents recommended it (33%), always get flu vaccines (33%), friends are getting vaccinated (16%), other (33%).

### Reasons That Motivated Respondents to Get the H1N1 Vaccine



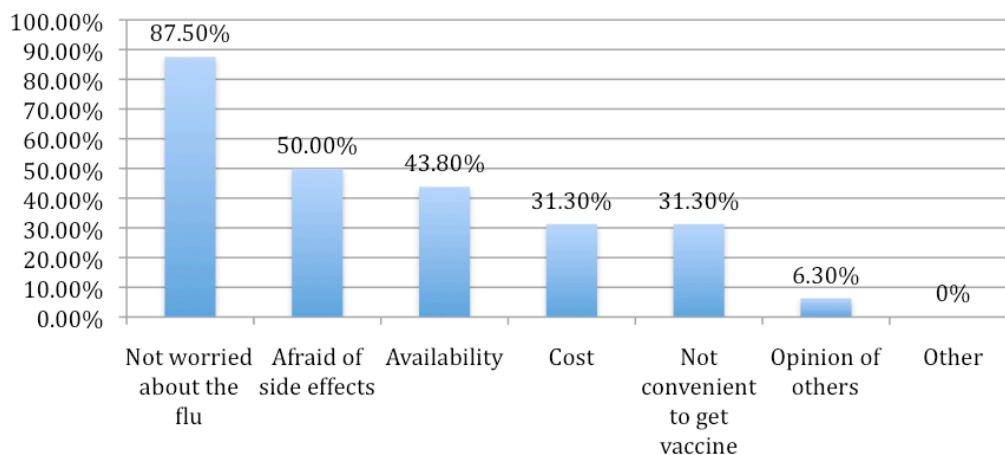
Other consisted of two statements:

- "This survey."
- "I'm not motivated to get the vaccine."

- Prevention reasons for not getting the H1N1 vaccine

Out of 22, most respondents (87%) claimed they were not worried about the flu. Other reasons that followed were afraid of side effects (50%), availability (43%), cost (31%), not convenient to get vaccine (31%), opinion of others (6%).

### Reasons That Would Prevent Respondents from Getting the H1N1 Vaccine



## Communication

- Levels of agreement or disagreement within statements regarding communication

The highest percentage of students either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed (75%) that USF had appropriately informed students about how to prevent the spread of H1N1. Respondents also had strong levels of agreement for USF has appropriately informed students about the risk of H1N1 (68% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed) and USF has appropriately informed students about the need to get the H1N1 vaccine (50% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed).

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average
<b>USF has appropriately informed students about the risk of H1N1.</b>	38.1%	23.8%	14.3%	19.0%	4.8%	3.71
<b>USF has appropriately informed students about how to prevent the spread of H1N1.</b>	28.6%	33.3%	19.0%	14.3%	4.8%	3.67
<b>10.0%</b>	2.95	33.3%	28.6%	23.8%	9.5%	3.00
<b>USF has appropriately informed students about when and where they can get the H1N1 vaccine.</b>	10.0%	30.0%	15.0%	35.0%	10%	2.95

*Respondents (n=21) responded to the above choices using a 5-point likert scale where 5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree.*

- Actions USF could take to increase the likelihood that students will get the vaccine

Most respondents indicated they felt USF could advertise/promote where to get the vaccine to get more students to participate.

“I was never told about where to get the vaccine so maybe tell teachers to inform us.”

“If they advertised the vaccine better and offered it at Student Health for free students would be more likely to get it.”

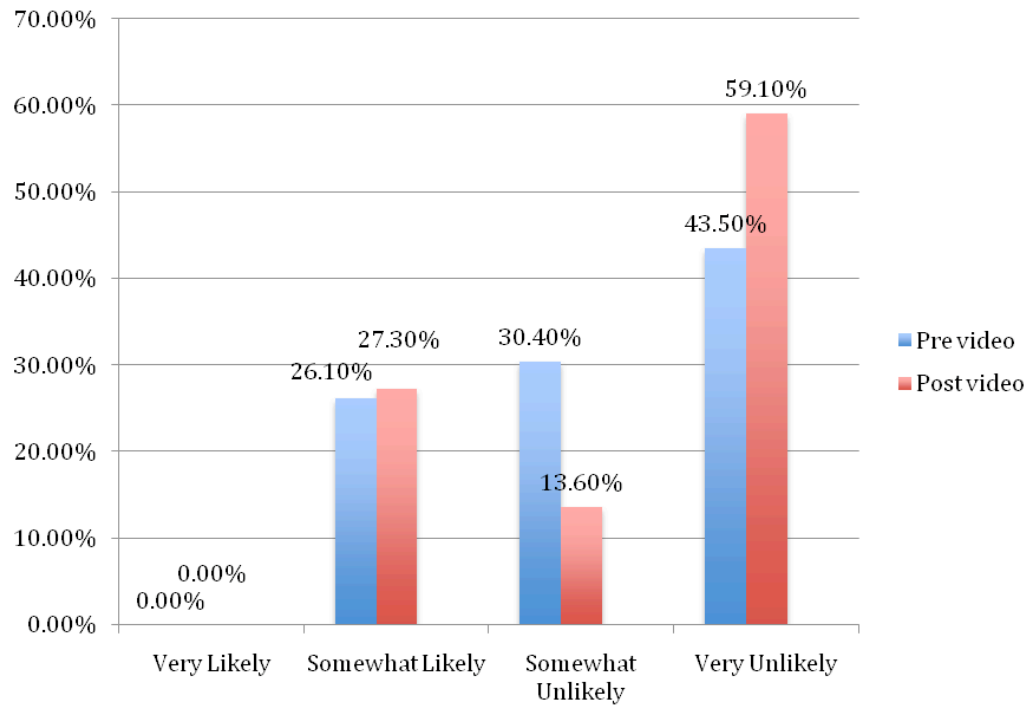
“Advertise the vaccine much more around campus.”

“Have a booth set up near cooper hall that is similar to the donate blood truck.”

- Pre and post-video effectiveness towards getting the vaccine

Pre-video 26% of 22 respondents were somewhat likely to get the vaccine, post-video 27%. Pre-video 30% were somewhat unlikely to get the vaccine, and post-video 13%. Pre-video 43% were very unlikely to get the vaccine, post-video 59%.

### Pre and Post-Video Effectiveness Towards Getting the Vaccine



## CONCLUSION

Our research team uncovered an abundance of information regarding college students' attitudes about the H1N1 flu and vaccine. Our purpose and objectives for this study were properly met.

The majority of respondents indicated that they thought people were overreacting to the H1N1 virus. Many knew that the vaccine is not only for children, the elderly and pregnant women; however, most students indicated that they didn't feel worried about getting the H1N1 flu themselves. Most students were neutral on the following topics: whether or not they feel the vaccine is safe; whether or not they are scared to get vaccinated because of the side effects; the amount of time it takes to get vaccinated; and whether or not the vaccination is the best way to prevent getting H1N1. The majority of respondents indicated that the video had not changed their attitude towards getting the H1N1 vaccine.

Most respondents agreed that they felt very informed about ways to prevent the H1N1 flu and the benefits of the vaccine. The majority of respondents indicated that they watched or read news stories to increase their knowledge about the flu, but most were neutral as to if the media are doing a good job of informing people on the symptoms and prevention of the H1N1 virus. The only disagreement concerned their knowledge of side effects associated with the H1N1 vaccine. The majority of respondents indicated that they knew where to get the vaccine. Most respondents indicated that the video somewhat increased their knowledge of the H1N1 flu and the vaccine. The video's main message created an awareness that germs are able to remain on inanimate objects for up to 2-8 hours. Respondents indicated that the message was clear and the video was effective in communicating that message.

Most respondents agreed that USF has appropriately informed students about the risk of H1N1 and ways to prevent the spread of it. However, most students were neutral on whether or not USF has appropriately informed them about the need to get the vaccine. Many respondents felt USF could better advertise or promote when and where to get the vaccine in order to get more students to do so.

Most students, prior to watching the video, indicated that it was very unlikely that they would get the vaccine. After watching the video, respondents still indicated that it was not likely that they would get the vaccine. Though the results showed that many weren't likely, most respondents indicated that their main motivation to get the vaccine is to protect themselves from getting H1N1. Other reasons that followed were to prevent passing it to others, because the respondent's parents recommend it and because they always get flu vaccines. One respondent indicated that the survey motivated them to get the vaccine.

Results we found through our survey indicate that the majority of respondents are not motivated to get the vaccine because they are not worried about H1N1. Students' fear of the side effects the vaccine would impose was the next greatest deterrent for students.

Nearly all participants said that even before watching the video, they tried to stay away from sick people. Another high number of respondents said that they coughed or sneezed into their arm instead of their hand, prior to watching the video. The majority of the respondents said that after watching the video, they will wear a mask in public places.