

PROCEEDINGS ABSTRACT

Impact of the COVID-19 vaccination on hair loss: a study on vaccinated individuals from the Babil Province (Iraq)

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The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) mainly leads to symptoms affecting the lower respiratory tract and causes pulmonary complications such as the acute respiratory distress syndrome; it is now established as a multisystem disease exhibiting diverse manifestations. This retrospective survey aimed at determining whether there is an impact of the COVID-19 vaccination on hair loss in vaccinated Iraqi individuals. The study was conducted online, and the questionnaire was distributed through electronic media, with all data being collected exclusively through the Google Forms platform. The study was carried out from October to March 2024 and was limited to Iraq's Babylon Governorate (including its districts and sub-districts). The study included a total of 221 individuals who had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in the past; of these participants, 78 were men and 143 were women. The average age of the participants was 26.61 ± 6.89 years, with an age range of 20 to 70 years. Our findings indicated that a significant majority of respondents (62.5%) were from the city center (Hillah), and it was also noted that 95% of the respondents did not have any comorbidity. Our data revealed that the majority of respondents (92.3%) were within the 20- to 30-year age bracket, with a higher proportion of the participants being women (64.7%). Post vaccination hair loss was found to be significantly higher among females when compared to males (34.1%

versus 65.9%, $p < 0.05$). Our data also suggest that approximately three quarters (73.7%) of the study's participants had been vaccinated with the Pfizer–BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, followed by those vaccinated with the Sinopharm BIBP COVID-19 vaccine (10.4%) or the Oxford–AstraZeneca one (8.6%). A significant correlation was identified between receiving a COVID-19 vaccine and hair loss in both sexes. In fact, hair loss was quite common among our study's participants, with 47 (22.9%) out of 221 of those who had received a COVID-19 vaccine reporting hair loss following the first or the second dose. The lowest hair loss rates amongst men and women based on comorbidity status were 5.1% and 7.7%, respectively. This was consistent with the very low number of participants in our study reporting comorbidities compared to healthy participants, while no significant differences were noted between men and women regarding such comorbidities (namely, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and allergies). Interestingly, no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were recorded between the different types of vaccines with regard to hair loss-triggering in Iraqi men or women. Our study has also identified the most common types of hair loss, with a higher prevalence in females than in males for alopecia areata (70.9%) and androgenetic alopecia (62.5%). In conclusion, hair loss may be associated with COVID-19 vaccination, is more frequent in women than men, and

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may be influenced by comorbidities such as diabetes mellitus and allergies.

Keywords

alopecia; COVID-19; hair loss; Iraq; vaccination

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Conflicts of interest statement

None to declare.

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