

7-6-2021

Building Trust: Merck Grant Funds Vaccine Interview Research

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/news_releases



Part of the [Organizational Communication Commons](#), and the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)

This News Release is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 6, 2021

CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
[@cedarvilleneews](#)

Building Trust: Merck Grant Funds Vaccine Interview Research

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- When it comes to vaccines, a little bit of understanding can go a long way.

Dr. Aleda Chen, associate dean of the Cedarville University school of pharmacy, and Dr. Justin Cole, associate professor of pharmacy practice and director of the Center for Pharmacy Innovation, received a grant for just over \$70,000 on July 2 from the Merck Investigator Studies Program (MISP).

Chen and Cole's goal? To find out how valuable a few questions might be in helping people work through their concerns about vaccines.

This is the second grant that Chen and Cole have received from MISP to test and evaluate what they call motivational interviewing. Motivational interviewing is a collaborative conversation between healthcare providers and their patients. Patients are encouraged to do most of the talking so healthcare providers can understand their reasoning and thinking styles and their beliefs about health.

In phase one of their research, the Cedarville professors tested the question-based tool at Springfield's Rocking Horse Clinic with parents of children six-years-old and younger due for scheduled vaccines, such as the MMR (mumps, measles and rubella), DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis, or whooping cough) and seasonal influenza vaccines.

The findings from that research are now being reviewed by professional research journals for possible publication.

This MISP grant will allow Chen and Cole to broaden the scope of their research to test the value of motivational interviewing in community pharmacy settings with adult patients.

"There's a lot of hesitance associated with the flu vaccine for a broad variety of reasons," Chen said. "Our tool really aims to help providers have a better conversation about vaccines."

The motivational interviewing approach starts with general questions such as "Have you gotten the vaccine?" or "Have you thought about getting the vaccine?"

"We start with open-ended questions rather than 'Do you want to get the vaccine today?'" Chen explained. "If they aren't sure about the vaccine, then it shifts to other questions trying to find out if their concerns are about safety, efficacy, scheduling or ethics."

The process is about narrowing down the problem or concern and discovering the underlying health belief. An open-ended approach helps providers share information, rather than give the impression that patients should know the information already or that the primary care provider has all the answers.

"When the COVID vaccine first came out, I wanted to learn more too," Chen said. "I read the clinical trials, and I want to share the information I found out about safety and effectiveness. This approach is truthful, and lets the patient know it's OK to have questions."

The research begins in August and will include Cedar Care Village Pharmacy in Cedarville, Ohio, the university's teaching pharmacy, and other pharmacies in southwest Ohio. Data will be collected over 18 months and findings will be submitted for publishing in professional journals.

Four current professional pharmacy students are helping Chen and Cole with the project, from data collection to helping create motivational interviewing training modules that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can view on-demand. Those students are Alea Anthony from Lapeer, Michigan; Hollyanne Hickey from Wilmington, Ohio; Lucas O'Brien from Powell, Ohio; and Adeola Balogun from Blacklick, Ohio.

The students will help collect data from participating pharmacies and non-participating pharmacies serving similar populations about the number of adults receiving the vaccine. They will also be learning if patients found the motivational tool helpful in making a decision.

"A lot of this is not as simple as 'Did the patient get the vaccine?'" Chen said. "That's a nice thing, but it is not necessarily the goal.

"We're trying to build confidence in vaccines, but we're also focusing on that patient-provider relationship," she continued. "The patient might not get the vaccine this time, but maybe they developed a better relationship with the provider. Maybe the flu vaccine is not for them, but perhaps the tool helped build confidence that when another vaccine comes out, they can have a good conversation about it."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including its [Doctor of Pharmacy](#) program, strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Clem Boyd