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Health News

Online COVID Q&A session lets western Sydney students raise their voices, questions and concerns

ñ 06 Oct, 2021, 2:39 pm



An online information session for western Sydney high school students to delve into questions about COVID-19 and vaccinations has been attended by close to 60 young people.

Hosted by the Prevention Education and Research Unit (PERU) at Western Sydney Local Health District in collaboration with the COVID-19 Western Sydney GP Network, the session was an opportunity for young people to voice both their questions and concerns.

"In the face of rapidly evolving vaccination advice for 12 to 15 year olds and return to school plans, we felt it was important that students were given a voice," PERU Director Professor Smita Shah said.

Two senior students from Rooty Hill High School shared their experiences about getting vaccinated for COVID-19 before questions covering topics such as COVID health effects, vaccination safety and effectiveness and return to school plans were discussed.

An expert panel of local doctors (Michael Burke, Kean-Seng Lim, Kim Loo and Michael Fasher), infectious disease experts (Associate Professor Holly Seale and Dr Archana Koirala), a psychologist (Associate Professor Frankie Meritt) and a medical student (Ms Aanchal Shankar) were all on hand to answer the questions of local young people.

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Students were particularly interested in whether vaccinations would be made mandatory and what school activities would be permitted for vaccinated students.

Afterwards, students shared they found the session helpful, in particular the information on vaccine safety.

"I've learnt more about the side effects and I'm more reassured for taking the vaccine," one 12 year old participant said.

Dr Michael Burke said the session was an effective tool for giving young people a voice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The high level of interest by students indicates the need for further conversations involving representatives from the education or public health sector and the importance of good links with general practice," Dr Burke said.

New COVID-19 vaccine safety data from AusVaxSafety has shown adolescents aged 12-19 years are reporting similar short-term vaccine side effects to those reported by older Australians.

All people aged 12 and up can get their COVID-19 vaccination now. People aged 12-18 are eligible for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

Vaccinations are available at more than 3000 locations across NSW including pharmacies, GPs and NSW Health clinics. Find the next available appointment at a location near you.

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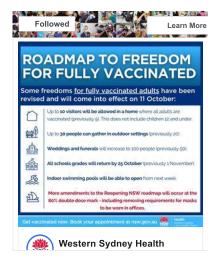
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