

In Norway, vaccination coverage varies with birth country

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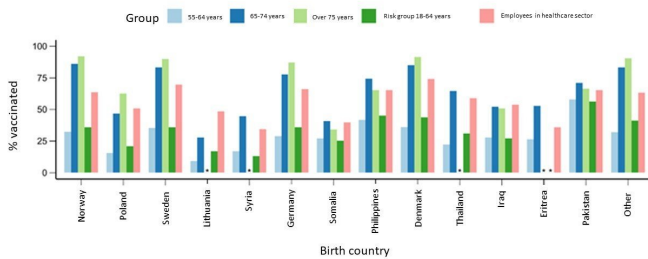


Figure 1. Proportion vaccinated with at least the first dose of coronavirus vaccine among people with different birth countries, divided by age group, medical risk group for severe COVID-19 disease course and employees in the health service. * = number too low to be displayed. Credit: Norwegian Institute of Public Health

Vaccination coverage varies with country of birth, according to a new review about the proportion of people vaccinated among immigrant groups conducted by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. The reasons for the differences are unknown.

"There is good vaccination [coverage](#) in the Coronavirus Immunization Program in Norway. However, we see there are differences in coverage for some [immigrant groups](#)," says Geir Bukholm, Director of the Division of Infection Control and Environmental Health at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH).

The COVID-19 epidemic in Norway has hit some immigrant groups particularly hard. People born outside Norway are over-represented among those who have been infected and admitted to hospital throughout the epidemic.

In a new review of vaccination coverage based on

country of birth, the NIPH has looked in particular at the proportion of vaccinated people in three groups; among the [oldest age groups](#), among people between 18-64 years with risk of a severe disease course due to an underlying disease, and among employees in the healthcare service.

Vaccination coverage among oldest age groups

The review shows that the proportion vaccinated in the 75 years and older age group is highest among people born in Norway, Sweden and Denmark (over 90 %), and lowest among people born in Iraq (51%) and Somalia (34%).

The trend is relatively similar in the age group between 65 and 74 years. Several countries are not included in the overview because the number of inhabitants in the age group is too low to display the results. Vaccination coverage is currently low in the age group 55-64, regardless of country of birth.

People with underlying diseases with increased risk of severe disease course

People between the ages of 18-64 with underlying diseases or conditions that increase the risk of a severe COVID-19 disease course have a more equal vaccination coverage. Coverage was highest among people born in Pakistan (56 %) and the Philippines (45 %) and the Scandinavian countries, and lowest among people born in Iraq (27 %), Somalia (25 %), Poland (21 %), Eritrea (22%), Lithuania (17 %) and Syria (13 %).

Healthcare service employees

Vaccination coverage in the healthcare service is highest among people born in Denmark (74 %) and Sweden (70 %), and lowest among people born in Somalia (39 %), Eritrea (36 %) and Syria (34 %).

Differences in priority areas

The NIPH has also looked at differences in vaccination coverage between prioritized and non-prioritized geographical areas.

"The differences that have been identified are primarily in the proportion of vaccinated people in the 55-64 year age group. The geographically prioritized areas have a higher proportion of vaccinated people among all birth country groups, and more people born abroad have as high vaccination coverage as people born in Scandinavia," says Bukholm.

Several reasons

It is unknown why there are differences in vaccination coverage between different birth countries.

"The reasons for the variations in [vaccination coverage](#) are unknown. Language barriers or other practical barriers such as availability may have contributed to some people not accepting the offer of a [vaccine](#). The information we have now received is valuable in further efforts to ensure equal vaccination availability for everyone," concludes Bukholm.

Provided by Norwegian Institute of Public Health

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