



**VOICES OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS  
(VOIS CYPRUS)**

A VOIS Report on COVID-19  
and Vaccines

*Vois*

VOIS Cyprus is an NGO that represents international students in the northern part of Cyprus. We are a platform through which international students can voice out the difficulties they go through within, as well as beyond their academic institutions. We focus particularly on racism, human trafficking, sexual harassment, unfair working conditions, housing problems, police and judiciary bias, as well as other forms of institutional bias and/or discrimination. We also serve as a bridge between international students and the local community; often playing the role of mediator between the public and private bodies, and international students.

VOIS Cyprus is committed to contributing to ensuring a just society in the northern part of Cyprus by working with the necessary stakeholders and our partners.

This report is the result of a collaborative undertaking involving several contributors under the direction of the head of the VOIS committee which focuses on issues relating to institutional discrimination.

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Website: [www.voiscyprus.org](http://www.voiscyprus.org)  
Email: [info@voiscyprus.org](mailto:info@voiscyprus.org)

### *Editorial, review, and research team*

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Editor	Maghazi Ahmed Emmanuel Achiri Samuel Akoni
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Contributors	Maghazi Ahmed Blerta Totaj, Amarachi Madueke, Matilda Kadhikwa, Hasher Salar, Quadri Yinka, Zuchi Silas, Ali Ace, Keitumeste Lateno.
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Reviewers	Asanga Fon Emmanuel Achiri Samuel Akoni
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Report design and layout	Abayomi Victor
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***Disclaimer:*** *All information provided in this report is based on research from reliable medical sources. While the team responsible for preparing it has done due diligence, we rely heavily on the credibility of peer-reviewed sources. VOIS Cyprus encourages international students to only trust information from verifiable and reliable sources.*

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## **COVID19 and Vaccines**

## ***Introduction***

The harmful misinformation on COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccines has spread just as quickly as the disease itself, drowning out credible sources of scientific information and causing immense confusion on how to protect people's health and safety. Misinformation has also circulated through social media and mass media which adds to the issues of racism and xenophobia, health equity, and the balance between public health imperatives and individual rights raised by the pandemic. As an organization that advocates for the welfare and health of international students in the northern part of Cyprus and the community at large, we feel the need to provide reviewed and trusted information regarding COVID-19 and vaccines.

As an organization that advocates equal rights, fairness, and equity of health access; we are obliged to critique the ongoing implementation in the northern part of Cyprus vaccination plan and provide suggestions of measures to be taken in order to pre-empt potential discrimination and ensure the safety of the community.

This report intends to tackle popular misinformation about COVID-19 and vaccination, and to encourage the northern part of Cyprus authorities, in conjunction with the educational institutions, to ensure seamless and fair vaccination for all residents, including international students.

## ***Preamble***

The COVID-19 pandemic has been declared as a health crisis that affects the welfare, wellbeing and healthcare of global citizens in different aspects other than just their physical health. The pandemic has led to a decrease in employment rates, an increase in financial strains and mental health issues, a significant disruption of education and other issues that affect international students in the northern part of Cyprus, as well as global citizens at large, as emphasized in this report. The social crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic amplifies inequality, exclusion and discrimination in the medium and long term, if not properly addressed through 'government' policy, intervention and implementation.

This report aims to and consequently focuses on boosting vaccine confidence, advocating for the universal human right to access vaccination, and emphasizing the measures necessary to ensure the welfare and healthcare of international students in the northern part of Cyprus as provided for under Article 45 of the 'Constitution', which states that "it shall be the duty of the 'State' to ensure that every person enjoys sound physical and mental health and receives medical care".

On June 10th, 2021, a couple of days prior to the publication of this report, we received information that some students had been invited by the authorities to be vaccinated. A quick social media poll was conducted to get a general sense of the new developments. The results shared in the conclusion of this report are still not optimistic and point toward the necessity for clarity and a concrete plan for the vaccination of international students - even with the recent announcement by the authorities that international students will be vaccinated.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The information in this paragraph was added during the publication process as a result of new information obtained. It is not in any way intended to contradict the information contained in this report. At the moment, even with this new piece of information, the lack of clarity on the part of the administration strengthens the arguments made in this report.*



## ***The Coronavirus Pandemic***

The novel Coronavirus was reported to have emerged in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and was declared a Public Health Emergency of international proportions on the 30th of January 2020, and a pandemic on 11th of March, 2020, according to the World Health Organization (Cucinotta & Vanelli 2020). The pandemic has affected almost all aspects of our lives resulting in global socio-economic disruptions, including the largest global recession recorded since the Great Depression of the 1930s (World Bank, 2020). It also resulted in agricultural disruption and food shortages. Most educational institutions and public spaces have been partially or fully shut down, and many physical events have been moved online. Quoting Henrietta Fore, the UNICEF Executive Director; “the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose serious challenges to global health beyond the impact of the disease itself.” (WHO, 2021).

### ***Effects of the Pandemic on International Students in northern part of Cyprus***

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the overall academic and social lives of international students residing *in the northern part of Cyprus*. The disruption of travel plans has caused many international students to cut down on domestic and international travels, except for emergencies; hence, many have not been able to travel back home and/or to other international destinations, leading to high-stress levels and mental health concerns from being kept away from their families. A lack of jobs has increased unemployment and financial constraints to the extent that many students are unable to pay for their house rents, bills, and daily upkeep, as well as other financial needs including tuition fees (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2021). While the efforts by the 'government' and some universities in providing food packages to some students in need are commendable, we must highlight that these efforts are not only short-term but have also not alleviated the many difficulties international students face as a result of the pandemic.

The mental health of international students continues to be a concern as a result of high stress levels, anxiety, and separation from family caused by the pandemic. This is exacerbated by financial constraints, lockdowns and curfews, limited social interaction, concerns over the future, lack of 'government' and institutional support, and fear of contracting the virus. This is most severe in students who have preexisting mental health and psychological problems. International students require assistance, support, and attention from the host community

which is severely lacking at the moment.

Furthermore, it was quite unfortunate to perceive a series of headlines and commentaries, stated by some members of the local community, which blamed foreign students for the current number of COVID-19 cases, highlighting a despairing level of racial discrimination and xenophobia within the northern part of Cyprus.

Moreover, we are receiving a higher number of complaints of domestic abuse amongst students. Worldwide, levels of domestic abuse have increased during the pandemic (Sri et al., 2020) and the northern part of Cyprus is no different. The VOIS Cyprus Committee dealing with issues relating to gender violence has responded to this increase in violence by creating an 'online Safe Space' for survivors of abuse. However, there is a need for more institutional support, which so far has not been forthcoming .

The financial constraints caused by the pandemic are disproportionately affecting students, as many are unable to pay for their accommodation. The 'government' issued an announcement in May 2020 calling for house owners to extend deadlines for house payments (Detay Kıbrıs, 2020), but the implementation has been problematic, and in reality, the attitudes of house owners specifically towards international students have not improved.

Language barriers and access to information were already a concern prior to the pandemic and not much has changed since. 'Government' communiqués regarding COVID-19 are still largely released in Turkish and when English translations are provided, they are often incoherent, resulting in the student community missing out on vital information. So far, to mitigate this, VOIS Cyprus translates these communiqués to English and attempts to provide clarifications where necessary. Nonetheless, given the lack of sufficient professional translators as well as the lack of clarity with communiqués, the process of getting this information is slower and sometimes confusing for many students.

Other issues facing students during the pandemic range from a lack of care from their host universities and other duty bearers, to a rise in levels of racism and discrimination experienced as detailed in reports and statements published on the VOIS Cyprus website ([Racism report](#), [Statements on Discrimination](#)).

## ***The Coronavirus***

The Coronavirus is continuously mutating, creating multiple variants that help it spread more effectively. There has been speculation that the new variants lead to higher infection rates, more severe symptoms, and are resistant to vaccines (Daniel C. DeSimone, M.D, 2021). The symptoms of the Coronavirus do not only depend on the variant, but vary significantly amongst its carriers, ranging from zero symptoms to life-threateningly severe.

Transmission of COVID-19 occurs mainly when an infected person is in close contact with another person and droplets containing the virus leave the infected person when they breathe, cough, sneeze, or speak, and enter the other person via their mouth, nose, or eyes (WHO, 2020). Airborne transmission is also sometimes possible as smaller infected droplets can linger in the air for minutes to hours within spaces that have inadequate ventilation. Carriers may start showing initial symptoms within 14 days and remain contagious for up to 20 days (CDC, 2021, p10).

There are two internationally acceptable tests to confirm if a person is infected with the COVID-19, as follows:

### *1. Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Test:*

This method was invented in 1985 by Kary B. Mullis, and is commonly used to rapidly produce millions to billions of copies of a specific DNA sample. It allows scientists to take a small DNA sample and amplify it enough for a detailed evaluation. When it comes to SARS-CoV-2 detection, PCR testing is considered the “gold standard”. This test targets RNA (or genetic material) that is specific to the virus, allowing it to detect the virus within days of infection, even in asymptomatic individuals. The results of a PCR test take between one to three days. According to one publication, the PCR test has 96% specificity with a positive likelihood ratio of 18.82, and a negative likelihood ratio of 0.13 making it the most accurate and reliable test (Floriano 2020, p. 884).

### *2. Rapid Test:*

This is an antigen test that detects protein fragments specific to the coronavirus, often applicable for people who are asymptomatic. It involves taking cotton-swabs over and inside nostrils at home or rapid test sites, using devices similar to pregnancy test kits, and samples do not need to be taken to the laboratory. This is usually very quick and results can be

reported within 15 – 30 minutes. According to a publication by Cochrane (2021), amongst people who were not infected, Antigen Tests accurately ruled out 99.5% of symptomatic cases and 98.9% of asymptomatic cases, although accuracy depends on brands of the tests.

Aside from the aforementioned tests, preventive measures against coronavirus include hand washing, covering one's mouth when sneezing or coughing, social distancing, wearing face masks in public, ventilation and air-filtering, disinfecting surfaces, as well as monitoring and self-isolation for people exposed to the virus.

### ***The Race for a Cure***

Efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic are still on. An unparalleled universal scientific response was launched to better understand virus genetics, immune pathogenesis, and therapeutic strategies. The race for a cure encouraged collaboration between international scientists, the healthcare community, industries, and 'government' policymakers, to bring about a well-integrated COVID-19 vaccine. The fast-spreading nature and the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak showed the world that similar pandemics cannot be managed solely at the national level. This created alliances, consortia, and networks that appeared on every continent, to link experts in different research areas of fundamental science, clinical trials, social and behavioral sciences, bioinformatics, and engineering (Healthcare Workers, 2021). The race to tackle COVID-19 also led research groups and companies across the globe to reinvent equipment, facilities, and product lines in a joint effort for a rapid response to fight the pandemic. The production of essentials like hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and face masks increased to meet the demand in many countries, and automotive companies also pushed forward on the production of medical devices, such as ventilators.

Before the relatively recent successes in vaccine development, people were advised to take good care of and strengthen their immune systems due to the correlation between the severity of the SARS-CoV-2 infection and the strength of individual's immune system, which also left the elderly and people with underlying health conditions at a greater risk than younger and relatively healthier people.

### ***The COVID-19 Vaccines***

This segment of the report provides information that is reviewed by experts in the medical field and characterises what the COVID-19 vaccines are and answers some of the questions frequently asked by international students.

### ***Ingredients of the Vaccine***

A vaccine is a biological creation that helps provide active immunity against a specific infectious disease, composed of ingredients that ensure safety and effectiveness including:

- **The antigen** – this is typically an inactive or weakened form of a virus or bacteria, which helps the body recognize a specific disease and enables it to fight the disease in the future.
- **Adjuvants** – these are substances that enhance the immune system's response to the presence of an antigen. They are commonly used to improve the effectiveness of a vaccine. Generally, they are injected alongside an antigen as catalysts to help the immune system generate antibodies that fight the antigen.
- **Preservatives** – these substances keep vaccines safe and effective by inhibiting growth of bacterial and fungal contaminants, which may be introduced during repeated use of a multi-dose vial.
- **Stabilizers** – these help protect the reliability of the active ingredients in a vaccine during manufacturing, storage and transportation. A commonly used stabilizer that can be associated with allergic responses to vaccines is gelatin.

The ingredients in vaccines, as well as the vaccines themselves, are thoroughly tested and vaccines can only be administered when they are certified safe and subsequently approved (CDC, 2019).

### ***Why Vaccine Side Effects are Good***

Vaccine production includes multiple rigorous steps: from development in the laboratory, to testing, approvals, manufacturing and distribution to millions of people all over the world. The human trials stage is arguably the most important step in which the vaccine is tested on humans in three key phases, from small groups of people in order to determine its safety and side effects, to larger groups in order to ascertain its effectiveness and safety on a large scale (see Josefsberg & Buckland, 2012). According to University of Maryland's Dr. Kirsten Lyke, who led the Phase 1 study of COVID-19 vaccine by Pfizer's BioNTech, said side effects are possible with any vaccine "it is nothing to fear, it is our own immune system kicking in as it is supposed to do". (Vox, 2021).

The most common side effects, including pains of injection, fatigue, headache, and muscle pain, are similar to those of normal flu vaccines. The pains from mild and/or moderate side effects are caused by increased blood flow in the body, which may result in feverish conditions or chills; hence experts emphasize that the side effects should be positively viewed as indications that the vaccines are working. Severe and life-threatening side effects are rare, because they are unacceptable. Vaccines effectively trigger the immune system to respond to the presence of antigens by attacking them and creating antibodies for future response without hurting your body and its functions. Vaccines are also effective in stimulating the immune system for protection against COVID-19 (García-Arriaza et al., 2021). This means, the vaccines are more effective than the vaccines for chickenpox, mumps and flu. Moreover, most negative reactions to the vaccines have been traced to factors other than the vaccines themselves, and there have been no hospitalizations and deaths from the vaccines. Experts have also stressed the need to reduce sources of transmission through immunization, as a way out of the COVID-19 pandemic (Graham 2020, p. 1).

### ***Efficacy of Available Vaccines***

An effective clinical trial has two arms of participants: those who get the real vaccine, and those who get a placebo. The latter is what is called the control arm.

When measuring vaccine efficacy, you're pitting the relative risk of someone contracting a virus who received an actual vaccine dose (or two, as Pfizer's BioNtech and most others require) versus those who got the placebo. For instance, Pfizer's 95% efficacy rate does not imply that 5% of people who receive the vaccine will end up contracting COVID. It simply means that those who receive it have a 95% lower probability of contracting symptomatic COVID, whereas only a negligible 0,04% of the people who received the doses of Pfizer's vaccine have later on contracted symptomatic COVID-19.

### ***(Vaccines in the northern part of Cyprus (Side effects and efficacy rates***

#### **✓ *Sinovac vaccines***

Efficacy: 50.38%-91.25% - Turkey reported 91.25% based on their clinical trials. (see Liang, Z., 2021)

Side effect: fever, headache, injection site pain, chills, and muscle aches.

#### **✓ *Pfizer's BioNtech vaccines***

Efficacy: 95% efficacy rate, after the second dose - This percentage is declared to be the average efficacy rate that is calculated from numerous trials conducted on the US and Germany, as stated on the company's official website. (see Mahase E., 2020)

Side effect: elevated blood pressure, headache, injection site pain, dizziness, and rash

✓ *Oxford's AstraZeneca vaccines*

Efficacy: Currently about 70% overall, according to Knoll, M. D., & Wonodi, C. (2021)

Side effect: fever, chills, tiredness, and headache

All the vaccines currently being disseminated in the northern part of Cyprus are approved by the FDA and the WHO. For a vaccine to win FDA approval, any reactions people have during clinical trials have to be mostly mild and moderate. This is because the safety threshold for vaccines is really high, even compared to medicines.

### ***The northern part of Cyprus Vaccination Plan***

As a way of containing the spread of the virus, the 'government' of *the northern part of Cyprus* has previously enforced lockdowns and curfews, as well as, enacted policies like closing all cinemas, bars, night clubs, and casinos, massage rooms, all kinds of game halls, taverns, enforcing social distancing and regular PCR tests for individuals who regularly come in contact with people, reducing the number of incoming flights and maintaining a night-time curfew while educational activities remain online (northern part of Cyprus Ministry Of Health, 2021). Despite all these preventive measures, the medical consensus is that vaccines are the most effective plan going forward and having the majority of the population vaccinated to create “herd immunity” depends on both the public and the 'government'.

It is widely agreed that without vaccination, it would not be possible for universities to return to face-to-face education. Moreover, the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (YÖK) has called for the staff and students in higher education institutions to be vaccinated by September 2021, in efforts to facilitate a return to face-to-face education. This was emphasized in a letter sent from YÖK (YÖK, 2021) to the Ministry of Health in Turkey:

*"In this context, in our higher education system, which has an important place in achieving the development goals of the country, the education and training activities in our higher education system are completely normalized, and the formal education and training activities given face to face in our higher education institutions can be started in the 2021-2022 academic year and are working in higher education institutions. It is important that academic and administrative staff and students who study in formal education are also included in the priority vaccination program.*

*Otherwise, it is highly likely that those who will graduate from applied education fields, especially health, will produce irreparable results in their professional performance.*

*Accordingly, I would like to emphasize that the personnel in academic and administrative staff in higher education institutions and our students studying in formal education should be vaccinated by September 2021. "*<sup>2</sup>

The letter above supports the fact that the transition to global normalization process will only be possible with the spread of vaccination.

The northern part of Cyprus has been receiving vaccines from Turkey, and the European Union through the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and has been able to successfully vaccinate some members of the population. As announced by the Ministry of Health:

“Vaccination service to people in the risk group aged 65 and older has been carried out as of September. Considering the success achieved so far in vaccination, our people getting vaccinated for the COVID-19 will play a very important role in our country's fight against COVID-19. Since January, our ministry has given 110.410 doses of COVID-19 vaccines in total, including the first dose for 61.490 people and the second dose for 48.877 people. Our goal is to increase the rate of vaccination for COVID-19 as soon as possible above 65 % of the population”. (Ministry of Health, 2021)

Applications for vaccination are submitted online via the ‘ministry of Health’s’ Vaccine

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<sup>2</sup>Translated from Turkish to English. For the original version in Turkish, visit: ([YÖK'ten Sağlık Bakanlığı'na aşı çağırısı](#))



Information System website<sup>3</sup>. The Vaccination plan is arranged following the order below:

#### *STAGE ONE*

- *Group 1*
  - a) *Health Workers (Public and Private)*
  - b) *Elderly Care Center Residents*
  - c) *Aged Care Center Caregivers*
  - d) *Bed-Dependent Patients*
  
- *Group 2*
  - a) *Persons 80 and older*
  - b) *People aged 65-79*
  
- *Group 3*
  - a) *Those with High Risk Chronic Diseases \**
  - b) *Those with Chronic Diseases in the 50-64 Age Group*
  - c) *Other Persons aged 50-64*

#### *STAGE TWO*

- *Group 1*
  - a) *Home Care Workers*
  - b) *Employees in Schools, Kindergartens, Nurseries and Child Care Facilities*
  
- *Group 2*
  - a) *Those who work in key positions are police, armed forces, fire brigade, etc.*
  - b) *Transport Industry Employees*
  - c) *Restaurant and Tourism Sector Employees*
  - d) *Persons between the ages of 40 and 50*
  - e) *Those who live in environments that facilitate virus transmission employees where the minimum social distance is not maintained, where the take-off is inadequate, where there is strong aerosol formation, prisons, ovens, etc.*
  - f) *Professional and National Athletes*

#### *STAGE THREE*

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<sup>3</sup> [www.sibilgisistemi.com](http://www.sibilgisistemi.com)

- *Group 1*
  - a) *People between the ages of 30 and 40*
  - b) *People between the ages of 18 and 30*

## ***Key Issues and Recommendations***

### ***Issue 1: How the northern part of Cyprus' vaccination plan lacks clarity***

International students are left unaccounted for due to the fact that the vaccination plan lacks clarity about their status. There are lingering questions whether students' health insurance covers vaccination costs and whether the vaccines will be available and free for all international students. Many international students fear they are being neglected and without protection in the face of this pandemic. Despite repeated enquiries and requests from VOIS to the 'government' and academic institutions, there has been no information availed to international students about the concerns they have raised. As such, one has to wonder what happens to this group.

### ***Issue 2: How the ongoing implementation of the northern part of Cyprus' vaccination plan lacks consistency***

In efforts to ascertain as to whether international students, particularly those in high-risk groups are able to have access to vaccines, VOIS reached out to a number of students who<sup>4</sup> fall in this group and requested that they apply to be vaccinated.

So far, none of these students has yet to be vaccinated or informed of a time when they will be vaccinated. In fact, to the best of our knowledge, there are no reported cases of international students receiving vaccines for COVID19. We find this concerning especially given that during this same time, efforts to attract new students to the northern part of Cyprus have not relented.

Furthermore, when international students have attempted to make contact via the hotline, the responses have been unclear at best. Students have reported being told by the responder that they were unaware of any such vaccination plan for students (Vaccine customer service hotline, March, 2021). Other students have reported being told that if they apply through the 'government' online system, they will be given an appointment for vaccination. In a lot of cases, it was reported that this was inaccessible.

Despite claims by 'government' and school officials that there is a vaccination plan, which

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<sup>4</sup> As stated in the preamble and in the conclusion, new information received a day before the publication of this report, indicated that some international students received invitations for vaccination sometime between June 10th and 11th. A follow-up report will seek to shed more light on this.

also includes international students, so far, there has been no indication or steps taken by the authorities to offer vaccines to international students, particularly those in high-risk groups.

According to The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), public health means protection of the population as a whole and health for all (Hindle, 2021). It is not only a question of fairness, but also the failure to vaccinate certain social groups, who are often more susceptible because of pre-existing health conditions or their living environments, has repercussions for the rest of the community.

The right to health is enshrined under Article 45 of the northern part of Cyprus' 'Constitution', which states: "It shall be the duty of the State to ensure that every person enjoys sound physical and mental health and receives medical care". The right to health is a human right, and by consequence, access to vaccination is a necessity to ensure good health. One which, in this case, must be provided by the state to all who live within its borders to ensure the welfare and health of the community.

## ***Our Recommendations***

Based on the concerns raised and the foregone, we call on the 'government' in the northern part of Cyprus, in conjunction with the educational institutions, to:

1. Clarify the vaccination plans with regards to international students by specifically including international students into the vaccination plan;
2. Facilitate access to relevant information for the international student community on 'governmental' decisions concerning COVID-19 measures, and provide clarification on issues regarding health insurance coverage, cost of vaccines, etcetera.
3. Commence vaccinations for students in high-risk groups, and;
4. Undertake steps to raise awareness on the importance of vaccination in efforts to combat the misinformation spreading within the society.

We call on the international students in the northern part of Cyprus to, with the help of the educational institutions:

- Seek only verified information from official sources and make inquiries about whatever remains unclear;
- Conduct themselves with dignity, honour and strict adherence to the laws and public health guidelines of the northern part of Cyprus while pursuing their educational goals.

## ***Conclusion***

- COVID-19 is continuously mutating thereby creating multiple variants which may accelerate its spread or resist existing remedies..
- Transmission of COVID-19 occurs mainly through contact with droplets containing the virus, and airborne transmission is possible as infected droplets can linger in the air for a while. Carriers may start showing initial symptoms within 14 days and remain contagious for up to 20 days.
- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and Rapid Antigen Tests are two internationally acceptable tests to confirm the COVID-19 infection.
- The vaccines currently used in the northern part of Cyprus are approved by the WHO and FDA.
- Following the enforcement of restrictions and other public health measures, and subsequent release of its vaccination plans, the 'government' of the northern part of Cyprus has begun vaccinating the populace.
- The harmful disinformation on COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccines has spread just as quickly as the disease itself, drowning out credible sources of scientific information and causing immense confusion about how to protect people's health and safety.
- This report critiques the ongoing implementation of the vaccination plan in northern part of Cyprus and recommends measures to be taken in order to combat the spread of misinformation, as well as, prevent discrimination of minority groups such as international students. It also seeks to encourage the northern part of Cyprus authorities and the educational institutions to take measures to offer protection to everyone within the northern part of Cyprus.
- “Herd immunity” from the COVID-19 vaccination exercise will play an important role in the country's fight against COVID-19. However, the northern part of Cyprus vaccination plan lacks clarity about the status of international students, and the implementation of the vaccination plan appears to lack consistency.
- Trustworthy sources for pandemic-related information include:
  - World Health Organization official website: [www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/)

European Vaccination Information Portal: [www.vaccination-info.eu/en](http://www.vaccination-info.eu/en)

Lancet Journal of Medicine: [www.thelancet.com/coronavirus](http://www.thelancet.com/coronavirus)

New England Journal of Medicine: [www.nejm.org/coronavirus](http://www.nejm.org/coronavirus)

The northern part of Cyprus 'government' Vaccination Website: [www.asibilgisistemi.com](http://www.asibilgisistemi.com)

- On June 10th, we received new information that some students had been invited to be vaccinated. As a result, we ran a quick social media poll to assess the situation. The initial results from the poll revealed that 37 of the 114 students who applied for vaccination had received responses. Of this, only 16 students received invitations for vaccination. The low number of students applying for vaccination is an indication of the general scepticism of international students with regards to vaccination. Some students have hinted that the lack of clarity from the authorities, as well as low confidence in the administration contributes to this uncertainty.
- On June 11th, the 'government' also declared that international students will be vaccinated (Prime Minister's Office, 2021). Although, the details of this vaccination plan remain unclear and still need to be clarified.

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