



# Co-Creating a Culturally Tailored COVID-19 Testing Program in the San Ysidro US/Mexico Border Region

Linda Salgin, Lawrence O. Ayers, Maria-Linda Burola, Anne-Marie Engler, Alexis Osuna, Luis Gay, Nicole Stadnick, Borsika Rabin, Ilya Zaslavsky, Louise C. Laurent, Robert Tukey, Marva Seifert



## INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) continues to lead the world with the largest number of infections and deaths due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), with more than of 81 million infections and approximately 990,000 deaths.<sup>1</sup>

Racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 incidence are pronounced among underserved communities as these communities comprise a disproportionate percentage of workers in essential industries and experience higher housing density, which increases risk of COVID-19 infection and transmission.<sup>2-5</sup>

Among US/Mexico border communities, such as San Ysidro, California, these factors can be exacerbated by lack of access to culturally appropriate information and COVID-19 testing, particularly for prenatal and pediatric populations.

We partnered with a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in San Ysidro and engaged with multiple partners including patients and community members, FQHC partners, and academic research partners to conduct a needs assessment and co-create a culturally-tailored COVID-19 testing program for border communities with a specific focus on prenatal and pediatric patients and their support systems.

## METHODS

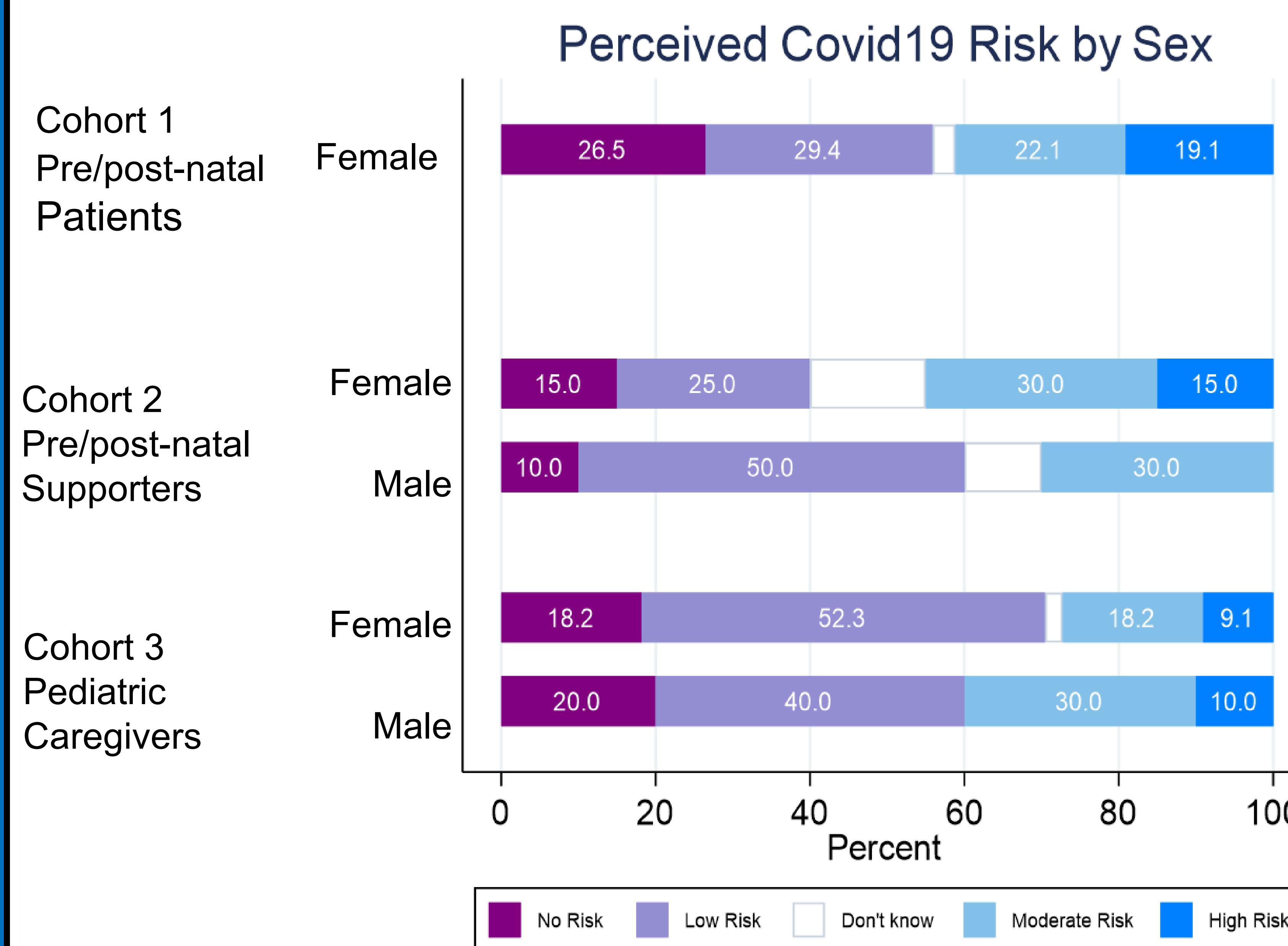
A cross-sectional survey was used to collect information on experiences accessing COVID-19 testing and perceived risk of COVID-19 infection within the San Ysidro community between December 29, 2020 through April 2, 2021.

## RESULTS

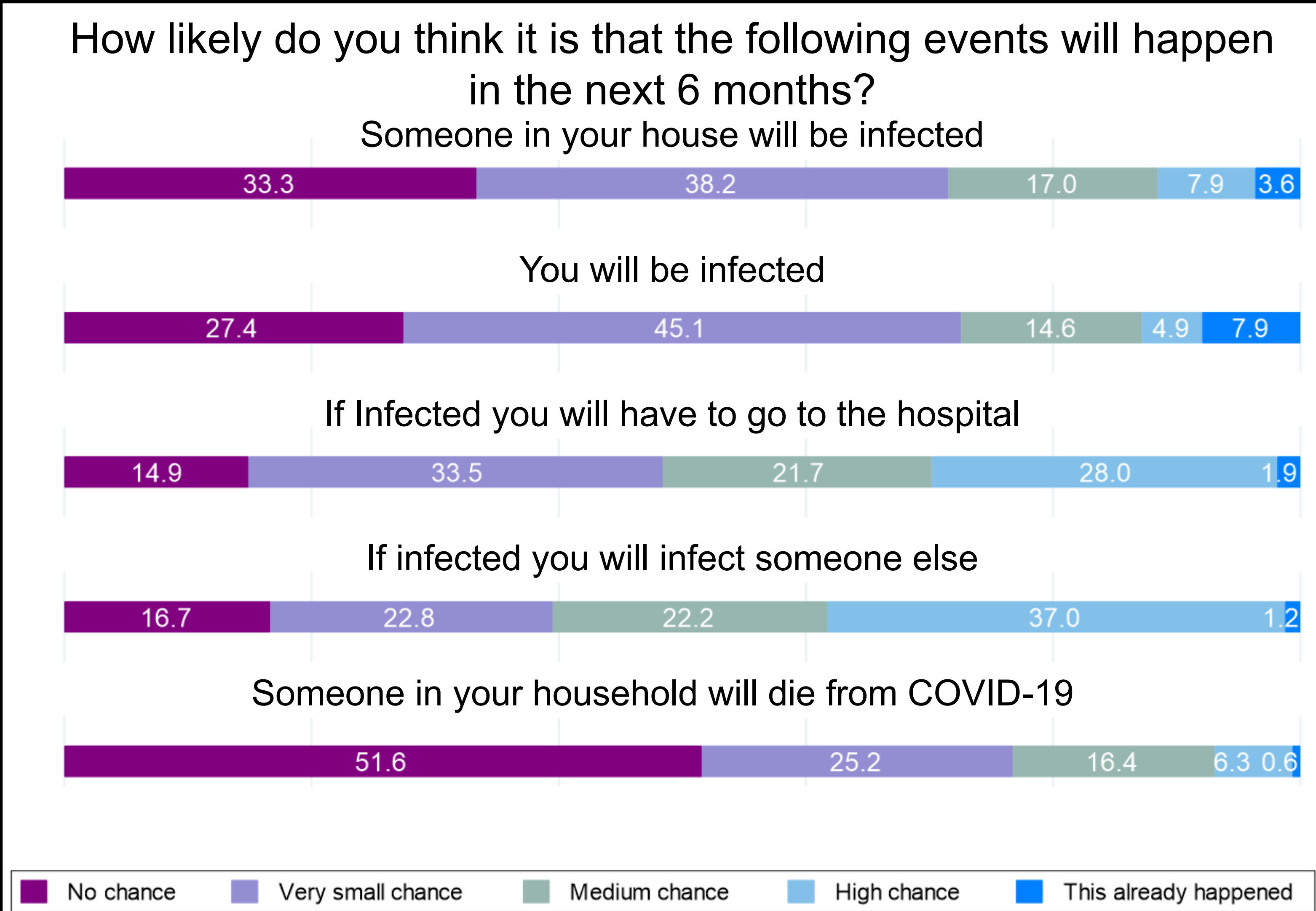
- 179 participants completed a survey available for analysis.
- 85% identified as female and 75% as Mexican/Mexican American.
- 56% were between the age of 25-34 years old.

**Perceived Risk:** 37% of participants rated their risk of acquiring COVID-19 as moderate to high whereas 50% rated their risk of getting COVID-19 as low to none. Figures 1 and 2 further highlight COVID-19 risk perceptions. **Testing Experience:** Approximately 68% of participants reported a history of COVID-19 testing. Among those who had been tested, 97% reported having very easy or easy access to testing for COVID-19. Reasons for not testing included limited appointment availability, cost concerns, not feeling sick, and concern about risk of infection while at a testing facility.

**FIGURE 1:** Perceived COVID-19 risk by sex and cohort among survey participants between December 29, 2020, and April 2, 2021, within a FQHC in San Ysidro (n=179)



**FIGURE 2:** Perception of future risk and/or complication from a COVID-19 infection among survey participants between December 29, 2020, and April 2, 2021, within a FQHC in San Ysidro (n=179)



## CONCLUSIONS

This study is an important first step to understand COVID-19 risk perceptions and testing access among patients and community members living near the US/Mexico border in San Ysidro, California. These findings informed the iterative design of the RADx-UP testing program, CO-CREATE, which offers no-cost, walk-up testing at a FQHC.

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