

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES RELATED TO COVID 19 AMONG MBBS STUDENTS IN A MEDICAL COLLEGE OF RAJASTHAN

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Abstract

Background: India is not only one of the numerous countries that have suffered heavily as a result of the coronavirus outbreak recently. Managing such a large-scale problem depends heavily on public awareness and training of healthcare workers including the students, which are highly influenced by knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The study was conducted to assess the same amongst medical students doing MBBS. **Materials and Methods:** The study design comprised of a cross-sectional study where the data were recorded in a single attempt. Sociodemographic characteristics and questions related to Covid 19 were recorded. **Result:** Majority responses were satisfactory in all of the domains of assessment. **Conclusion:** More emphasis has to be placed on these aspects in awareness campaigns for medical students, including knowledge of the risk of close contact, knowledge of the incubation period, and identification of vulnerable groups.

INTRODUCTION

More than 6 million people have died as a result of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which is the cause of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the most serious global health crisis since the 1918 influenza pandemic. This has had a devastating impact on the world's demographics. SARS-CoV-2 spread quickly around the world when the first instances of this mostly respiratory viral infection was initially reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in late December 2019. As a result, the World Health Organization (WHO) was forced to declare it a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020.^[1]

From a modest fever, cough, and shortness of breath to severe pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, renal failure, and multiple-organ failure leading to death, COVID-19 symptoms can range widely.^[2]

Nearly all countries including India had put in place measures, to contain, control and restrict COVID-19, such as partial or total lockdowns, and the struggle against the illness is still ongoing.^[3]

The global spread of COVID-19 may be prevented, managed, and reduced, according to international research. The current recommendations continue to

stress the importance of washing hands, maintaining a social distance of 1-2 metres, avoiding crowds, refraining from touching one's mouth or nose, and wearing the proper masks. It is recommended that people with cough and other ailments should contact a physician.^[4]

As seen reliable providers of health information by the society and community, medical students represent a significant portion of the younger generation that can have an impact on the health status and attitudes of their family and friends. As a result, it is critical to systematically evaluate their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) about COVID-19.^[5]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the period of February to May 2022, a cross-sectional survey was carried out in Dr. SS Tantia Medical College in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan to get the KAP of medical students doing MBBS, BAMS and BHMS course. The survey was conducted among 450 medical students. The students were given a pre validated questionnaire to respond on various parameters. Ethical clearance was taken from the institutional ethics committee after which the study was initiated. Using reference materials, data sheets,

and information booklets on COVID-19 created by the WHO, Ministry of Health & family, and relevant literature, a questionnaire with 20 items was prepared. Prior to being pretesting among ten randomly chosen medical and allied health science students for clarity, significance, and acceptability, the developed draught questionnaire was validated by the 3 physicians and faculty members using the face and content validation method to gauge its readability and validity. To improve comprehension and arrange the questions, changes and improvements were made in response to suggestions received. To preserve its correctness, all the obtained data were put into Microsoft Excel. For the purpose of calculating proportions and frequencies, descriptive statistics was used. The chi-square test was employed to determine the strength of the correlation between the research variables. Statistical significance was considered as a p-value of less than 0.05.

RESULTS

[Table 1] reveals the sociodemographic profile of the study's subjects. 388 (86.22%) of the total study participants were undergraduate students, with 56% of them being females and 766.88% more than the age of 20 years.

[Table 2] shows the responses of the study participants assessing the knowledge domain. More than 80 % of the participants responded correctly to the questions of viral origin of covid 19, being respiratory illness, its mode of transmission and availability of vaccine of covid 19. Least number of students responded correctly to RNA being genetic material for the virus (63.33 %).

Table 1: Characteristics of study participants. (n=450)

Variable	Classes	Number (%)
Age in years	≥ 20	346 (76.88)
	< 20	104 (23.12)
Gender	Male	198 (44)
	Female	252 (56)
Course Undergoing	Postgraduate	62 (13.78)
	Undergraduate	388 (86.22)

Table 2: Knowledge domain of the study participants. (n=450)

Question	Correct Response: n(%)
COVID-19 is a Viral Disease.	410 (91.12)
RNA is the genetic material.	285 (63.33)
COVID-19 is a Respiratory Illness.	399 (88.67)
Mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets	366 (81.34)
Its incubation period is 2–14 days.	301 (66.88)
Fever, cough, and shortness of breath are common symptoms of COVID-19.	323 (71.78)
Patients with underlying diseases are at higher risk of infection and poor prognosis.	354 (78.66)
Vaccine is available for prevention of covid-19.	400 (88.89)

Table 3: Practices related to Covid 19 as responded by the study participants. (n=450)

Question	Positive Response: n(%)
Frequent Handwashing	276 (61.34)
Wearing face masks.	333 (74)
Drink warm water.	156 (34.67)
Social Distancing	299 (66.45)
Frequent face touching	312 (69.34)
Respiratory hygiene	377 (83.78)

Table 4: Attitudes of the study participants toward COVID-19. (n=450)

Statement	Agreement n (%)
COVID-19 may cause death.	425 (94.5)
Face mask should be worn with proper technique to be effective.	392 (87.12)
Home isolation must be followed in suspected cases.	320 (71.12)
Treating a COVID-19 patient does not put you at risk of infection.	301 (66.89)
Health education helps in disease prevention.	401 (89.12)
One can encounter Covid 19 from a apparently healthy person.	288 (64)

[Table 3] representing the responses related to the practice domain. Drinking warm water was the least followed (34.67%) whereas respiratory hygiene and use of face masks was most followed by study participants (84 % and 74 % respectively). Attitude of the study participants was assessed using certain statements related to covid 19. 95 % agreed to the statement of covid 19 being a deadly disease and

similar number also agreed upon health education being a preventive measure. Two thirds of the study participants (67 %) believed that being health care personnel in management of Covid-19 patients do not put one in risk of contracting the disease.

DISCUSSION

Medical students and other healthcare professionals are anticipated to play a big role in educating the public about the condition since, despite recent advances in COVID-19 vaccine research, there is still no cure for the illness. Negative attitudes, high-risk behaviours, and a lack of understanding of the virus' morphology, transmission, and other elements within this demographic may cause misconceptions and increase infection risk. In a similar study on 730 participants, majority of the participants had sufficient knowledge, whereas 18% only had some understanding of the symptoms of severe COVID-19 instances. While there were few incorrect responses relating to the usage of garlic or herbal remedies, students demonstrated a good opinion of COVID-19 prevention and control. The medications and vaccination are currently ineffective against COVID-19 infection, as almost 50% of respondents correctly noted.^[5] In another study just 36.4% of health care professionals who participated in the study properly recognised the COVID-19 incubation period, which is 2–14 days.^[6] A survey of the Egyptian populace revealed that almost 95% of respondents thought COVID-19 was more fatal for the elderly and individuals with chronic illnesses.^[7] About 20% of respondents correctly identified COVID-19 as being spread by close contact with an infected individual, compared to about 80% who were aware of this fact. This response is lower than that of research done among Jordanian medical students (94.7%), which was reported.^[8] In current study, a large majority of students (71.78%) were aware of typical COVID-19 symptoms such fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Similar results were obtained by University of Sharjah students.^[9] The majority (91%) of participants in this survey were of the opinion that COVID-19 was a severe condition. This is comparable to what students from Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates reported.^[10]

CONCLUSION

With the exception of the few inadequate responses listed above, the students' KAP for COVID-19 were mostly acceptable and upto the mark. Awareness efforts should be unabated that would have major impact on the ones with poor responses.

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