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**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE
TOWARDS COVID-19 AMONG GENERAL
POPULATION IN PALAKKAD DISTRICT, KERALA**



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ABSTRACT

Background: Since covid 19 has been declared a pandemic by WHO on March 11, 2020. A coordinated effort is needed to control the spread the infection. Among them Knowledge attitude and practice is plays an important in control of the disease. The aim of this study was to assess knowledge, attitude, and practices towards COVID-19 in Palakkad district. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was among study participants who were representative of Palakkad district. Convenience sampling was employed in this study and data was collected using questionnaire designed through google form. The questionnaire consisted questions related to sociodemographic profile, KAP towards covid 19. The study included those above the age of 20 years. **Results** Majority (96.5%) of the participants had knowledge regarding the mode of transmission. Among the study participants (97.3%) have correctly reported main symptoms of covid 19 i.e, fever, cough, sore throat and breathing difficulty. The majority of participants (>90%) had an acceptable level of knowledge to stop the spread of COVID-19. Majority (>90%) of the study subjects felt there it was necessary inform a suspected case to the health authorities. More than (90%) of the study participants practiced preventive measures while going out. **Conclusion** Majority of the study participants had good knowledge, positive attitude, and good practices towards the COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

The novel corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) which was initially diagnosed from Wuhan, Hubei Province (Mainland China), has already taken on pandemic proportions, affecting the whole world in the minuscule of time 1. SARS-CoV-2 is an enveloped RNA β -corona virus with an outer fringe of envelope proteins resembling like a crown, which has a phylogenetic genome similarity with other known highly pathogenic and transmissible corona viruses, that is, SARS-CoV-1 (2003) and MERS-CoV (2012) 2. Studies suggest the basic reproduction number (R0) of SARS-CoV-2 to be around 2.2 or more up to 6 3. As of 15 October 2021 there are more than 239 million confirmed cases world wide 4. As of 16 October 2021 India's ministry of health and family welfare has confirmed there are about 201632 number of active cases and 451980 deaths 5. Kerala has 97630 number of active cases and 26571 deaths and a test positivity rate of 12.31 whereas in Palakkad the overall covid 19 cases have reached 366841 confirmed cases with 9475 active number of cases and 2582 deaths 6. Since studies have shown the importance of public awareness in controlling pandemic 7.

Objective

To assess knowledge, attitude and practice towards covid 19 among

general population in Palakkad district.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study was conducted in Palakkad district during the period 1st October 2021 to 11th October 2021. Keeping in view, avoiding direct contact with the study participants which was necessary during the current ongoing covid 19 pandemic the study was conducted via online mode. Convenience sampling was employed in this study and data was collected using questionnaire designed through Google form. The questionnaire consisted questions related to socio demographic profile, KAP towards covid 19. To make the study more reliable and unbiased the questionnaire was translated in to Malayalam. Informed consent regarding anonymity and voluntary nature of the study was attached at the beginning of the questionnaire. The inclusion criteria of the study were those belonging to Palakkad district and those above 20 years of age.

Results

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of the study participants

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	N=1260 (%)
Gender	
Male	864 (68.5)
Female	396 (31.5)
Age	
20-40	927 (73.5)
41-60	290 (23)
Above 60	43 (3.4)
Marital status	
Married	988 (78.4)
Unmarried	272 (21.6)
Education	
Below secondary school	3 (0.2)
secondary school	286 (22.7)
Graduate	562 (44.6)
Postgraduate and above	409 (32.4)
Residence	
Urban	811 (64.3)
Rural	449 (35.6)

Table 1 depicts the socio demographic profile of the study participants. A total of 1260 adults participated in this study where majority (68.5%) of the study participants were males, married (73.3%) of the age group 20 to 40 (78.4%).

Table 2. Knowledge towards covid 19 among the study participants (N=1260)

SLNO	Questions	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Don't know N (%)
1	Covid 19 can be transmitted through respiratory droplets when Coughing or sneezing	1216 (96.5)	4 (0.3)	40 (3.1)
2	Common symptoms of covid 19 includes fever, cough, sore throat , breathing difficulty	1226 (97.3)	9 (0.7)	25 (1.9)
3	The Time required for onset of symptoms following exposure to COVID-19 virus can range from 1-14 days.	1191 (94.5)	25 (2)	44 (3.5)
4	Person with Covid 19 cannot infect others if symptoms such as fever,cough, sore throat is absent.	78 (6.19)	1027 (81.51)	155 (12.3)
5	Person with history of contact with covid positive individual should be isolated for 14 days	1229 (97.5)	3 (0.2)	28 (2.2)
6	There is no effective cure for COVID-19, other than symptomatic and supportive treatment	1166 (92.5)	42 (3.3)	52 (4.1)
7	Physical distancing and hand washing will help prevent the risk of infection	1229 (97.5)	2 (0.1)	29 (2.3)
8	Do you think consumption of non veg food is responsible for spread of covid 19 infection?	106 (8.4)	1012 (80.3)	142 (11.2)
9	Drinking alcohol will prevent the risk of covid 19 infection	63 (5)	1080 (85.7)	117 (9.2)
10	Smokers are more vulnerable to covid 19	1140 (90.48)	40 (3.17)	80 (6.35)

Table 2 shows the knowledge of study participants towards covid 19. With respect to mode of transmission majority (96.5%) of the participants seems be aware .The main symptoms of covid 19 i.e, fever, cough, sore throat and breathing difficulty was correctly reported by (97.3%) of the responders. More than 50 percent of the study participants had good knowledge regarding the isolation period of 14 days and there is no effective cure other than symptomatic and supportive treatment for covid 19. However about (81.51%) of the responders disagreed to the fact that person having covid 19 cannot infect others if there are no symptoms such as fever cough and sore throat and (80.3%) of the responders did not agree to spread of covid19 virus through consumption of non vegetarian food.

Majority of the participants (>90%) were aware of risk of smoking and the importance of physical distancing and hand washing. Only (5%) agreed to the misconception of drinking alcohol will help prevent the risk of infection.

Table 3 :Attitude towards covid19 among participants (N = 1260)

SNO	Questions	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Don't Know N (%)
1	Do you feel it is necessary inform about a suspected case to health authorities?	1233 (97.8)	9 (0.7)	18 (1.4)

2	Do you feel health education plays an important role in controlling the outbreak?	1137 (90.2)	32 (2.5)	91 (7.2)
3	Do you think it is necessary to protect individuals who are 60 years and above from COVID-19?	1213 (96.2)	9 (0.7)	38 (3)
4	Do you think wearing a face mask will protect you from the risk of infection?	1226 (97.3)	8 (0.6)	26 (2)
5	Do you think that the government's initiatives to contain the covid 19 pandemic are adequate?	949 (75.3)	53 (4.2)	258 (20.4)

Table 3 shows attitude of the study participant towards covid 19 more than 90 percent of the study participants believed there is a necessity to inform to inform the health authority about a suspected case and health education plays a crucial role in prevention and control of covid 19.In the study about 96.2% of the responders felt there is a need to protect elderly individuals above 60 of years. However the study showed 75.3% of the responders felt the government's initiatives to contain the covid 19 pandemic are adequate.

Table.4:Practice towards covid19 among participants (N = 1260).

SNO	Questions	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
1	Do you consult a doctor if you have any fever, cough, sore throat and common cold	1179 (93.5)	81 (6.4)
2	Did you stop going to any crowded places or public gathering	1137 (90.2)	123 (9.7)
3	Do you wear face mask when going outside.	1215 (96.4)	45 (3.5)
4	Do you dispose your mask after 8 hours of using	1163 (92.3)	97 (7.6)
5	Do you frequently wash your hands during your daily routine activities	1205 (95.6)	55 (4.3)
6	Did you stop shaking hands with your friends and family members	1138 (90.3)	122 (9.6)
7	Do you cover your mouth and nose with handkerchief while coughing or sneezing	1113 (88.3)	147 (11.6)

Table 4 shows the practices of the study subjects towards covid 19.In the study majority (>90%)of the study participants were of the idea of consulting a doctor if there are symptoms of fever cough sore throat and common cold. The study showed majority of the study population were practicing preventive measures against Covid 19 such as avoiding crowded places (90.2%), wearing face mask(96.4%), disposing mask after 8 hours of using(92.3%), hand washing(95.6%), avoid greeting by shaking hands (90.3%). and covering of nose and mouth with handkerchief (88.3%).

Discussion

Since the first confirmed case of covid 19 in India the disease has posed a burden on the existing health system and economy. All epidemics and pandemics have their unique characteristics in terms of causality, progression, and control measures. It is crucial to

provide health education and create awareness during such situations for effective prevention of disease spread⁸.

The present study was undertaken to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice towards covid 19 in Palakkad district. In this study most of the study participants were aware of mode of transmission (96.5) and symptoms associated (97.3) with covid19 such high values may be attributed to the government actions (such as public lockdown) that was taken since the beginning of the outbreak and the news of the virus that reached people through social media as shown in other studies⁹. The findings of the study were similar to those done in US and UK^{10,11}. Our Study showed majority (97.5%) agreed to isolation is needed for individuals who have history of contact with covid 19 positive individuals which was similar to the results derived from studies done in china which was found to be (97.3%)¹². In our study majority of the study participants (92.5) agreed to the fact that there is no treatment for covid 19 other than symptomatic and supportive treatment which was similar to studies done in Malaysia where (94.1%) thought on similar lines¹³. Most of the study participants knew about the importance of physical distancing and hand washing (97.5%). They were also aware of the misconception of alcohol (85.7) in preventing the risk of infection, the findings were in congruence with studies done by other authors also^{14,15}. The study showed (90.48%) of the responders had good knowledge regarding the vulnerabilities of smoking which was in contrast with the studies done in Iraq which showed (79.2%) of responders thought on similar lines¹⁶.

In our study majority (90.2%) of study participants had an overwhelming positive attitude in reporting a suspected case to the health authority and majority (97.8%) of participants felt the importance of health education in controlling the outbreak which was in consistent with a study done in Bangladesh where the percentage of responder having a positive attitude to reporting a suspected case to the health authority was (98.8%) and importance of health education was found to be (95.6%) respectively¹⁷. More than 90 percent of the study participants felt there is a need in protecting elderly individuals above 60 years where as studies done in Tamil Nadu has shown (97.8%) of the participants thought on similar lines¹⁵.

This attitude could have a positive impact on the practice where it was found more than 90 percent of the study participants were following preventive measures such similar findings were seen in other studies also^{13,14,15}.

Conclusion

It is evident from our study the majority of the study participants had acceptable level knowledge regarding covid 19 which in turn had a positive impact on attitude and practice. The result also depicts the quantum of awareness decimated by health authority to sensitize the public. The study gives an insight about the knowledge, attitude and practice of the general population of Palakkad district. Hopefully through collective efforts of the people and health authority we will soon be able to control the outbreak.

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