

Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Related To Covid-19 Infection

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ABSTRACT

Background On 11 March 2020, WHO declared the status of the Covid-19 to a pandemic. . Till 12th April 2021, India has 13.5 million confirmed Covid positive cases. With the second wave set in, the number of cases are increasing rapidly. The spread of Covid -19 is affected by the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of the public towards the pandemic. The objective of the study was to assess the KAP regarding Covid 19 among the female population. Only 52 % women had a knowledge score of 5, most had a score of 3-4 indicating average knowledge. Positive attitude (score of 5) was seen in only 56 %, 89 % suggested vaccine should be taken by those eligible. Analysing the practices toward Covid 19 disease, 95% said that they used face mask when going out but were getting tired of restrictions and wished to move around freely.

Keywords: attitude, Covid-19, lockdown, practices, vaccine

INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid -19) caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) ,initially diagnosed from Wuhan, Hubei Province (Mainland China) took pandemic proportions, affecting whole world in a short time[1-3] .

On 11 March 2020, WHO changed the status of the Covid-19 emergency from public health international emergency (30th January 2020) to a pandemic. The fatality rate of the pandemic was on the rise (between 2%-4%), relatively lower than the previous SARS-CoV (2002/2003) and MERS-CoV (2012) outbreaks[4]. The pandemic of Covid-19 has been recorded in 216 countries with 137 million confirmed cases and 2.95 million deaths around the world [5].

After a 14-hour voluntary public curfew named as 'Janta Curfew', India had announced the implementation of a nation-wide complete lockdown for 21 d (i.e. up to 14th April 2020), which only allowed essential services to operate over the entire

population of India[6]. The battle against Covid-19 is still unending in India. Till 12th April 2021, India has 13.5 million confirmed Covid positive cases .(7)

With the second wave set in, the number of cases are increasing rapidly.

The disease, Covid-19 causing respiratory illness (like the flu) with main clinical symptoms such as a dry cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty in breathing is highly contagious and was classified as a class B infectious disease [8]. Although the overall mortality rate varies from 0.7% to 10.8% [9], Covid-19 tends to be severe and portend a poor prognosis in patients with advancing age and underlying co-morbidities [10] As transmission of this disease occurs through respiratory droplets of symptomatic and asymptomatic patients, isolation is the only best way to contain the pandemic.

The most important factor in preventing the spread of the virus locally is the empowered citizens with the

right information and taking advisories being issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India regularly. People's observance of the prevention measures is essential for controlling the spread of Covid-19, which is affected by their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) towards Covid-19 in accordance with kap theory. The "KAP theory" is a health behavior change theory wherein the change in human behavior is divided into three successive processes, namely, acquisition of right knowledge, generation of attitudes and adoption of behavior (or practice) [11] Therefore, we conducted a survey to investigate the KAP towards Covid-19 among the female population during the rapid rise period of the Covid-19 outbreak with the objective of assessing the KAP regarding Covid 19 among the female population of India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a cross sectional study conducted via random sampling technique from 21st to 31st March 2021. Information published in literature including publications available on WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [12,13.14.15] were used, A 15 item interviewer administered questionnaire was developed and used. Participants aged more than 18 years who could understand the content of the survey and willing to participate were included. Consent was taken of all.

Questionnaire and scoring:

The questionnaire consists of three parts. Each section has five question, with three options as answers (right/ wrong/Don't Know-for knowledge and attitude). A correct answer was given 1 point and an incorrect/don't know answer was given 0 point. Overall scores ranged from 0-5.

The knowledge section consisted of questions regarding clinical symptoms, prevention, and control of disease (K1-K5). Individuals scoring 5 were categorized as good, 3-4 as average whereas below 3 were booked under poor knowledge. Table 1

Evaluation of the attitude was done through the questions (A1-A5) comprising questions assessing their viewpoint on social distancing, control of Covid-19 and lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid -19. Those scoring 5 were categorized as having positive attitude,,3-4 as average whereas

below 3 were marked as having incorrect attitude. Table 2

Regarding the assessment of their practices, questions regarding usage of face mask, hand hygiene practices and other preventive measures were used. Practices were graded as very cautious (score 5), cautious grade 3-4 and indifferent if scored less than 3. Table 3

Analysis of all data collected was done and results obtained.

RESULTS

In the present study, 500 women were enquired using the questionnaire. Assessment of knowledge was done. Most participants knew that frequent hand washing and use of masks was an effective way to prevent the spread of virus. Clinical symptoms and mode of transmission had least correct answers.

Only 52 % women had a knowledge score of 5, most had a score of 3-4 indicating average knowledge. Table 1.

Most of the population had good or some knowledge about the disease since the health authorities and mass media had been consistently disseminating Covid 19 related information. Further enquiry also revealed that the women did not understand the technical details of various masks or sanitizers. Newer updates as a result of research and analysis of disease by experts also caused confusion among the masses. 95% had heard of the vaccine.

Participants were asked questions to assess their attitude. Over 30 % believed that Covid 19 disease was only a hype and not really as bad. Positive attitude (score of 5) was seen in only 56 %, though 80% agreed schools should remain closed for another few months. 89 % suggested vaccine should be taken by those eligible Table 2

Analysing the practices toward Covid 19 disease using the five questions. 95% said that they used face mask when going out but there was still percentage of participants who were not practicing proper hand hygiene always as a routine and were getting tired of restrictions and wished to move around freely. Table 3

DISCUSSION Covid 19 is relatively new virus that has had devastating effects worldwide. Uncertainties and limited information about this disease makes it

critical for health department to plan appropriate measures to control it. There has been limited data till date regarding population knowledge, attitude and practices toward Covid 19 and assessment of may help the planning and guidance.

The findings of our study show that though there is awareness about the disease and also general willingness for participants to make behavioural changes in the face of Covid 19 pandemic yet the practices are lacking.

Positive attitude also observed in other kap studies.(10,12).The authors attributed the positive attitude to the drastic measures taken by the government in mitigating the spread of virus and providing information.

CONCLUSION

More attention through mass media is required to bring a change in their attitude and practices. Only a collective effort of all citizens will help defeat the pandemic.

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Table 1.Responses Of Knowledge Related Questions

	KNOWLEDGE RELATED QUESTIONS	CORRE CT	WRON G	DO NOT KNOW
1	Covid 19 is a communicable disease and transmits through droplets	92	4	4
2	The main clinical symptoms of Covid 19 are fever,dry cough and bodyache	80	16	4
3	Wearing face masks and frequent hand washing reduces the spread of Covid 19 infection	98	1	1
4	To prevent infection by Covid 19 one should avoid going to crowded places	95	5	0
5	Vaccine will help to prevent spread of infection	95	1	4
Score	5=Good 52 %	3-4 Average 30 %	< 3 Poor 18%	

Table 2 .Responses Of Attitude Related Questions

	ATTITUDE RELATED QUESTIONS	CORRE CT	WRON G	DO NOT KNOW
1	Complete lockdown and graded unlocking was a good decision	75	22	3
2	Limit on the number of people at a place should continue	73	22	5
3	School,colleges and religious places should remain closed	80	20	0
4	Vaccine should be taken by those eligible	89	6	5
5	This disease is a hype and not really as bad	58	31	11

Score	5=Positive 56 %	3-4 Average 24 %	< 3 Incorrect 20 %
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Table 3.Responses Of Practices Related Questions

	PRACTICES RELATED QUESTIONS	CORRECT	WRONG
1	Do you avoid going to crowded places?	75	25
2	Do you wear face mask when leaving the home?	95	5
3	Do you practice proper hand hygiene	73	27
4	Are you avoiding handshakes and touching surfaces	79	21
5	Do you sanitize objects brought home from outside	76	24
Score	5=Very cautious 50 %	3-4 Cautious 32 %	< 3 Poor 18 %