

Attitude, Practice, and Knowledge of Riyadh Population Towards Social Distancing and Its Impact on COVID-19 Incidence.

Abdulaziz M. Aljuhni, Abdulhameed Kashkary,, Khalid E. Alswayed, Sattam A. Alzahrani, Naif A. AlThakfan, Khalid A. Amahmoud , Mahmoud. A. Mahmoud

Background

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread throughout China and received worldwide attention. Social distancing considers as one of the comprehensive techniques to prevent the dissemination of many communicable diseases. The impact of Social distancing and quarantining plays a crucial role in the control of infectious diseases.[1] However, no accurate studies that represent the knowledge, attitude and practice of the Riyadh population towards social distancing. Immediately after the Saudi Ministry of Health identified the virus, the Saudi government issued strict rules such as social distancing to prevent the spread of the disease.

Methods

An observational cross-sectional study conducted in Riyadh city, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The questionnaire was validated and reviewed by three highly-qualified consultants in public health and community medicine. The questionnaire was developed by the authors, according to most and recent guidelines for the community, provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Saudi Ministry of Health (MOH). The questionnaire composed of total **40 questions which include sociodemographic, knowledge, attitude and practice questions**. According to the answers a scale has been established for each of the following in order to categorize the level of knowledge, attitude, and practice of the participants into three ordinal categories **good, fair and poor**.

Objectives

To identify the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of the Riyadh population towards social distancing.
To estimate Riyadh population adherent to Ministry of health regulations regarding COVID-19

Results

A total of 407 participants 54% (220) of whom are females and males 46% (187). All participants are 18 years and above and non-healthcare providers. Out of all the sample, only 3.2% (13) got infected with SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19).

The majority of the participant have fair level of knowledge, and good level in both practice and attitude.

In regression analysis, female have higher level of **knowledge** compared to other variables. People especially females and students who live in the center of Riyadh city with diploma or masters or higher degrees appear to have higher level of **attitude** in compare to others.

Females and widows tend to have higher level of **practice** with in compare to being unmarried and study in high school.



Discussion

Our findings on the level of knowledge, attitude and practice are similar to other studies conducted in different countries such as in Malaysia [2], Nigeria [3] and Jordan.[4]

The majority of the respondents they have learned the correct way of acting against this pandemic mainly from the news and the social media. However, some wrong information from social media may influence their level of knowledge.

Other papers studied the psychological effects of COVID-19 Stigma.

Interestingly, third of their participants believe after a person is infected with COVID-19 it should remain private.

This type of study can contribute to further investigation to identify the population behaviour and identify potential risk factors that can be controlled in a future health crisis.

How to improve ?

Our research study is done only in Riyadh city the capital of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), we hope from future researchers to apply it in all cities of KSA, in order to obtain more accurate results.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that the population of Riyadh city have an acceptable level of knowledge and a positive attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic.

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