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Risk perception regarding COVID 19 and Hesitancy towards COVID 19 vaccine uptake among Health Science students in Mangalore

Introduction

Vaccine hesitancy is complex and context specific, varying across time, place, and vaccines. It is influenced by factors such as complacency, convenience and confidence". The objectives of this research were to assess the risk perception of the health science students towards COVID 19 and COVID 19 vaccination using the Health Belief Model and to estimate the proportion of health science students hesitant towards COVID 19 vaccine uptake.

Methodology

This cross-sectional study included the health science students from Kasturba Medical College (KMC), and Manipal College of Dental Sciences(MCODS), Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Mangalore. A sample size of 686 (409 MBBS, 110 AHS and 167 BDS) was calculated considering 22% of the health science students were hesitant to COVID 19 vaccine uptake based on a previous study, with 10% relative precision, 95% confidence interval and 10% non-response error. Institutional Ethics Committee approval was obtained before the commencement of the study. The data was collected using a pre-validated semi-structured questionnaire consisting of the following section: Section A: General participant information Section B: Risk perception towards COVID 19 and COVID 19 vaccination using Health belief model questionnaire; Section C: Acceptance / Hesitancy towards COVID 19 vaccine. The questionnaires were sent through a google doc link. Only the completed questionnaires were considered for final analysis. The collected data was entered in and analyzed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Statistics for Windows Version 25.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp. The results were expressed in mean (standard deviation), median (inter-quartile range), and proportions.

Results

A higher proportion (N=346, 51.2%) of the participants were males. Most of the participants (38.9%) perceived that they were not susceptible to COVID 19, while a large proportion of them (55.6%) perceived they were susceptible to severe disease. The majority of the participants had a strong belief about the safety of the vaccine. Among those who have received the vaccine, 37.6% had vaccine hesitancy. Majority of participants having vaccine hesitancy due to the possibility of sideeffects, history of allergic reactions, indecisive efficacy and safety of the vaccine.

Conclusion

In our study, majority of the participants had received the first dose of covid 19 vaccine and were not hesitant towards it. Major reasons for vaccine hesitancy among some participants were fear of side effects, history of allergic reactions, concern about safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

Keywords: COVID 19,
students,
Health belief,
Vaccine,
Mangalore

