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Perception and Attitude toward COVID-19
pandemic among the Health Science
Undergraduate Students in Mangalore

Introduction

To achieve ultimate success against the ongoing encounter against COVID-19 globally, people's commitment to the control measures is necessary. Public education is one of the most important measures that can help control the disease. The present study assessed the perception of the health science students regarding COVID 19 and COVID 19 vaccination and studied their attitude towards the pandemic.

Methodology

In this cross-sectional study, 440 health science students at Kasturba Medical College and Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Mangalore were assessed about their perception and attitude regarding COVID 19 disease and Vaccination. The sample size was calculated assuming 50 % of the Undergraduate Medical and Dental students have a pragmatic attitude towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Applying the population proportion to size strategy, a total of 248 MBBS students, 96 BDS students and 96 Allied Health Science students would be included in the study. Ethics permission was obtained before the commencement of the study. The data was collected using a pre-validated questionnaire consisting of sections on general information, perception about the disease and vaccination and attitude towards the vaccination. The collected data was entered in and analysed 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 (interquartile range), and proportions. The Independent t-test / ANOVA or Mann-Whitney U test / Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to compare the difference in perception and attitude between medical and dental students. The statistically significant level was set at 0.05.

Results

The majority of the participants (93.18%) were willing to undergo voluntary testing for COVID-19, in case they were symptomatic. In case of disease. About 70% of the participants wanted to get isolated at their own house, while 15.23% of them wanted to get isolated in a hospital set-up. Non-MBBS students felt that they were at a higher risk of getting infected due to the place where they live (house, hostel, etc.), while MBBS students agreed strongly to the fact that if they take enough preventive measures, they will be able to stop the spread of the virus, and that it is their responsibility to protect the people at risk. Non-MBBS students also felt that by following the introduced preventive measures, the spread of the virus cannot be contained. Non-MBBS students considered their attitude towards the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccine as strongly favourable and positive, as compared to the MBBS students.

Conclusion

The study participants have an overall positive and favourable perception and attitude towards the COVID-19 disease. The questionnaire was able to successfully assess the approach of the participants towards the pandemic, which was assessed to be pragmatic and constructive. There were a few responses that were indicative of the fact that there lies a communication and trust gap between the authorities handling the pandemic and the study participants.

Keywords

Perception, Attitude, Pandemic, COVID 19, Students, Vaccination