STUDY OF AWARENESS, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE TOWARDS COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN PUNE CITY

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Abstract

Covid 19 has spread at a very fast pace across the globe and has claimed many lives. In India too it has been observed that cases have been increasing in spite of efforts to break the chain. In order to do so it is important that the citizens are aware, follow the rules and adhere to the practices that may help in controlling the pandemic. This study was conducted in Pune city to check the awareness, attitude and the practices followed by the citizens. An online questionnaire was floated on social media platforms and responses were gathered. A sample size of 72 has been reached for this study. It has been observed that the people are aware and do have a positive attitude, however fall short in following the practices.

Key words : Covid – 19, pandemic, attitude, awareness, practices.

Introduction

In December 2019, in the Hubei Province of China, Coronavirus infection 2019 (curtailed as COVID-19) was first recognized after an episode of pneumoni-like manifestations in the city of Wuhan. On December 31, 2019, the China World Health Organization (WHO) country office was informed of the same. According to Young, Charles (2020), the Chinese health experts detected this new strain of coronavirus on January 7, 2020. The virus earlier named as nCov, belonged to the same family that had caused serious respiratory outbreaks of SARS in Asia 2002 and that of MERS in 2012 in the Middle East.

The spread of Covid 19 epidemic from China to other countries has been at a fast pace, with 26 nations being infected by February 15, 2020. A public health crisis of universal concern was announced by WHO on January 30, 2020, calling all nations to collaborate together to forestall the swift spread of the virus.

In light of this serious condition of COVID19 spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 pronounced COVID-19 a pandemic, highlighting the more than 118,000 instances of the coronavirus sickness in more than 110 nations and domains around the globe and the continued danger of further worldwide spread. Unfortunately there is neither oral medicine to cureCovid 19 nor a vaccine to prevent the disease spread.

Globally 8860331 cases with 465740 deaths have been reported by the World Health Organization as on June 23, 2020 (WHO website). In India there have been 425282 cases from January 30, 2020 to June 22, 2020 and the deaths due to Covid 19 have been 13699 (WHO website). Also in Pune the first

case of Covid 19 was detected on March 9, 2020 and as on June 23, 2020 the number has increased to 16,907.

It has been observed that the spread of Covid19 and its time-course is alarming, and it is very obvious that this pandemic is predicted to continue in future as well. As the world battles the health and economic crisis that arises due to covid 19, Covid 19, has had its profound negative impact on the developing countries like India (Buenaventura RD, Ho JB, Lapid MI, 2020).

According to the Novel Coronavirus Pueumonia Emergency Response Epidemiology Team COVID-19, 2020, Covid 19 is extremely contagious, and its key symptoms consist of fever, dry cough, fatigue, myalgia, and dyspnea. Most individuals with COVID-19 are asymptomatic or exhibit mild symptoms. To curtailand control the infection many countries across the world have introduced lockdowns and social distancing. India too has witnessed the first lockdown announced by the Prime Minister Mr. NarendraModi from March 25, 2020 50 April 14, 2020. The second period of lockdown continued from April 15, 2020 to May 3, 2020. As an increase in thye number of Covid cases was observed, the third phase of nationwide lockdown started from May 4, 2020 to May 17, 2020. It was further extended to May 30, 2020 in some areas where the numbers of cases were very high and in other parts certain relaxations were given. However during this period to control the surge in number of infections, interventions like maintaining social distance and isolation infected patients were introduced to slow down the transmission of the disease. According to Schueller E, Klein E, Lin G, Tseng K, Balasubramanian R, Kapoor G, et.al (2020), interventions like repeated washing of hands, reducing mass get-togethers, contact tracing, and quarantines were able to slowdown the transmission and decrease infections.

The Covid 19 pandemic has hit the whole Indian sub-continent. Some significant methods have been adopted to control the transmission of COVID-19 in India. Depending on the situation these vary from implementing the Janata curfew, lockdowns, procedures for essential services and stringent hygienic procedures. These measure cause interferences in the routines followed by the citizens. However according to Sylvain Brouard, PavlosVasilopoulos, Michael Becher (2020), the success of these important health measures depend on the willingness of the citizens to conform to the rules and regulations.

Hence the aim of this study is to assess awareness of Covid 19 among citizens, their attitude and practices followed by individuals to cooperate with the government by following the rules laid in order to end the pandemic.

Method

Data was collected from Pune city using online platform. Since there is a lockdown it was not feasible to do a sampling survey, therefore the data was collected online. Aquestionnaire was created using a Google forms, which was circulated on social media platforms. This link was shared Jond re-shared and reposted on various online platforms. The questionnaire was designed in two parts. The first part captured the demographics of the respondent like age, gender, education, occupation etc. while in the second part questions to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices followed by the respondent were asked. Statements were framed and a 5 point Likert scale was used to measure them.

The Likert scale measured from Strongly disagree =5, Disagree =4, Neutral / Neither Disagree nor agree =3, Agree = 2 and Strongly agree =1.

Results

This survey was conducted in Pune city and a total of 72 respondents participated in this survey. Out of which 21 were males which accounted to 29.17% of the sample size and 51 were females which was 70.83%

From the data below it is also observed that out of 72 respondents 68 respondents fall in the age group between 15 to 49 years which is 94.44% of the sample size. The respondents above the age of 50 are only 5.56% i.e. 4 respondents.

Demographic Profile		Count	(%)
Gender	Male	21	29.17
	female	51	70.83
Age	15-29	25	34.72
	30-49	43	59.72
	50-64	3	4.17
	65 and above	1	1.39
Education	High school and above	10	13.89
	Undergraduate	10	13.89
	Graduate	15	20.83
	Post Graduate	37	51.39

(n=72) Source: Primary Data

It is also observed that the respondents who have completed graduation and above are 72.22% which amount to 52 respondents and the respondents whose education level is below graduation is 27.78% i.e. 20 respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions and a Likert scale was used to measure the responses. Out of these questions, 5 statements were formulated to check the awareness, 3 questions to measure the attitude and 5 statements were formulated to measure the practices adopted by the respondents to fight the pandemic.

STATEMENTS (AWARENESS)	MEAN
[AW1 I am aware of the present situation of pandemic outbreak of Covid 19 in the country]	4.447368421
[AW2 I am aware that Fever, cough, difficulty in breathing are the main symptoms of COVID19]	3.789473684
[AW3 I am aware that Covid 19 virus spreads through respiratory droplets of infected people]	4.578947368

[AW4 I believe early detection of symptoms and immediate treatment can help most infected patients recover from the disease]	4.631578947
[AW5 Effective ways to reduce the spread of virus are Isolation / quarantine of the people infected and symptomatic treatment]	4.605263158

(Source: Primary data)

In the above table mean of awareness has been calculated. It has been observed that the mean of 4 Awareness statements (AW) out of 5 is more than 4. Hence we can conclude that the respondents are aware of the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.

STATEMENTS (ATTITUDE)	MEAN
[ATT1 To prevent the spread of Covid19, individuals must avoid going out of the house if not necessary and remain indoors]	4.473684211
[ATT2 Normal, non-infected and asymptomatic people must wear face masks every time to prevent COVID-19 infection]	4.315789474
[ATT3 Every individual must wash their hands regularly with soap / handwash and sanitize them in order to prevent COVID-19infection]	4.605263158

(Source: Primary data)

In the above table of Attitude, it has been observed that the respondents had a positive attitude towards breaking the chain of the virus. This is evident from the mean calculated of the 3 statements, which amount to be greater than 4. Hence it can be concluded that the respondents are positive towards stopping the spread of Corona virus in Pune city.

STATEMENTS (PRACTICE)	MEAN
[P1 I wear a face mask every time I step out of the house.]	4.631578947
[P2 As I have not visited my friends and relatives during the lockdown I am going out to meet them since the lock down has been relaxed.]	2.394736842
[P3 I am happy inviting my friends and relatives at home since the lockdown has been relaxed.]	1.842105263
[P4 I wash my hands regularly with soap / handwash and sanitize them in order to prevent COVID-19 infection.]	4.578947368
[P5 I step out of the house every day to buy vegetables and grocery.]	2.157894737

(Source: Primary data)

The means of Practice statements are very interesting. It has been observed that the respondents have the awareness of the pandemic and also there is a positive attitude to break the chain of the virus. However, very surprisingly the means of P2, P3 and P5 are less than 3. This means that though the respondents have been wearing a mask while going out of the house and washing hands frequently they have not been practicing the rules laid by the government authorities of not stepping out of the house unnecessarily. The mean of P2 is 2.39 is less than 3, that of P3 is 1.84 and that of P5 are 2.15. This means that the respondents have been stepping out of the house unnecessarily as well.

Conclusion

The findings of this study put forward that the there is an awareness of the corona virus pandemic and the attitude to fight the pandemic is also positive. However since the lockdown is relaxed it is observed that the respondents have been venturing out though wearing a mask and have been washing hands regularly. It is necessary that social distancing needs to be maintained in order to break the chain of the virus and the citizens should be practicing it seriously.

The aim of the authorities should aim to encourage a positive attitude among people which is observed in this study and also maintaining safe practices need to be enhanced.

India in the near future shall win this fight against the pandemic under the combined efforts of the Central and state government.

This study has been conducted on a limited sample and more studies in the urban areas among the less educated and low economic statuses also need to be conducted. These studies can also be extended to rural areas.

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