

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE RELATED TO COVID-19 AMONG YOUTH: A MEDICAL SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY BASED ON THE VADAMARADCHY NORTH DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT IN JAFFNA DISTRICT

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Abstract

The COVID - 19 Pandemic has become a public health crisis. The general objective of this study is to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of COVID - 19 and the association of socio-demographic factors on it among the youth in the Vadamaradchy North Divisional Secretariat. Mixed method was used in this community based study. Based on stratified random sampling technique, 427 youth participated in this study. Primary data were collected through questionnaire method, case study method and the key informant interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods with SPSS version 26 chi-square test was also performed. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Results reveal that most of the participants (53.4%) belonged to the 24-29 years of age group and among them females were predominantly higher (56.9%). Results show that the vast majority of the youth (95.8%) had adequate knowledge of COVID – 19. Results also highlight that 31% of the youth were afraid to COVID – 19. Results indicate that 81% of the youth had positive attitudes towards the COVID – 19 infected persons. Results also reveal that 35.6% of the youth stated that they do not want to reveal it to others if they have symptoms of the COVID -19. Results show that 66.8% of the youth stated that they were ready for vaccination. Results indicate that the majority of the youth (91.8%) highly followed the precautionary measures for COVID-19. Qualitative data highlighted that the youth perceived COVID – 19 as a stigma. Results show that 58.9% of youth used Complementary and Alternative Medicine for the preventive practices for the COVID-19. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, only 67.7% of the youth had the habit of washing their hands properly when they returned home from outside. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, 98.1% of the youth practised frequent hand washing with soap or liquid hand washing. Gender shows a significant association with preventive practices such as wearing facemask ($p < 0.001$), following precautionary measures ($p = 0.035$) and maintaining social distance ($p = 0.005$). The results of the research study conclude that the majority of youth have adequate knowledge of COVID – 19. However, attitude and practice among youth towards COVID - 19 precautionary measures were not in desirable conditions. Therefore, more health education programs and awareness on prevention and precautionary measures of COVID -19 should be organized for people at community level.

Keywords: *Facemask, Gender, Hand washing, Prevention, Vaccination*