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Scientific Paper Presentation

Assessment of the Knowledge and Reported Practice of Covid-Appropriate Behaviour in a Selected Urban Community in Delhi

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Abstract

Life is getting back to “new normal” with chaos giving rise to an order. Crowds are building up, public places are being thronged and festivals are relished as earlier. Kerala being the first State to report zero cases amongst all other states suddenly witnessed a surge in Covid-19 cases and, and was later responsible for 64.2 percent cases of India. Such instances reinforce the need to follow and implement Covid-appropriate behaviour. So, this community-based study was conducted to assess the awareness and insight of general population regarding Covid-appropriate behaviour using descriptive design. Two hundred (200) samples of selected urban community in the age group 10 to 85 years were taken by convenient sampling technique to assess the knowledge and reported practice regarding Covid-appropriate behaviour. A questionnaire was prepared on knowledge and reported practice based on an Illustrative guide provided by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Structured interview technique was used and data was collected and analysed by using descriptive statistics. Results revealed that 92 percent of sample population had knowledge that hand hygiene prevents transmission of Covid-19 while only 51 percent of them washed hands frequently; 43 percent of respondents knew about mandatory social distancing while only 25.5 percent always maintained social distance; 97 percent of participants were aware of symptoms of Covid-19 while only 66.5 percent claimed that they will report or contact the healthcare centre or health care professional if they have any of the mentioned symptoms of Covid. There was difference between knowledge and reported practice regarding Covid-appropriate behaviour.

Key words: Covid-appropriate behaviour, social distance

Concepts like work from home, masks, quarantine, sanitiser, social distancing, E-classes that are norms today were bizarre idea two years back. In the blink of an eye half of the globe's population was clenched by the deadly claws of a crown-shaped organism of size 0.1 micrometre.

Reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019, Covid-19 quickly became a pandemic with millions of people getting and many of them dying of this disease. The world witnessed the collapse of numerous industries giving rise to unemployment, burdened health care workers, closure of schools and colleges, suspended airlines and a disrupted global supply chain. It was as if a Hollywood fiction thriller movie was being unfolded.

Globally there were almost 229,858,719 confirmed cases of Covid-19, including 4,713,543

deaths at the time this article was written. In India, around 33,563,421 were confirmed cases of Covid-19 with 446,050 deaths as reported by WHO. Domestic sources reported approximately 14,38,250 confirmed cases of Covid-19 including 25000 fatalities.

The socio-economic division in India faded overnight. Due to lack of research and knowledge on Covid-appropriate behaviour entire country suffered great losses in man and material.

Need for Study

Extensive study being done showed that sixty-five percent Indians thought that Covid-19 shall not affect India as it is a warm country. About 65 percent of respondents thought that Covid-19 spreads by eating eggs or chicken and 5.7 percent thought that disease could be cured by consum-

ing cow urine or garlic. Also, 12.5 percent thought that Covid could only happen above the age of 60. Hence it is need of the hour to conduct such many surveys, studies and researches regarding Covid. And who knows, when is Covid again ready to knock down India and launches its third wave.

After months of declining or steady rates of daily Covid-19 cases, in April 2021 India experienced the onset of a massive second wave of pandemic which overstressed its health care system leading to millions of casualties. The second wave was absolute faith on gambler fallacy and not following Covid-appropriate behaviour. So, with the intention of exploring this issue present research was conducted on knowledge and reported practice on prevalence of Covid-appropriate behaviour in order to avoid another catastrophic event.

Significance in Nursing

Latest analysis of data by the International Council of Nurses shows that the number of nurses who died after contracting Covid-19 is 1,500, up from 1,097 and still counting. Significantly, 10 percent of cases globally were among health care workers. As Covid spreads exponentially, health care team just cannot escape the havoc created by this microorganism. The world is already short of 6 million nurses to which shall be added another 4 million as they reach retirement age in next 10 years. Providing comprehensive care from admission till discharge, nurses work relentlessly giving one to one care. Hence, they are more vulnerable to a potentially fatal viral disease.

Conditions even worsened when hospitals were running out of beds, people were dying on roads, public was being forced to find ways to get treatment for sick patients at home, Indian healthcare system almost succumbed. Nurses being heart of health department were under not just physical but mental stress too. In order to lower the wholesome burden on health department we need to sensitise public about Covid-appropriate behaviour.

Problem Statement

Origin of this wave can be easily understood as socio-economic activities had been running at a relatively high levels for several months prior to the wave. During the first wave people suffered due to lack of appropriate knowledge and awareness regarding Covid. This led the authors to undertake a study on assessment of the knowledge and reported practice of Covid-appropriate behaviour among the population of a selected urban community.

Objectives

This study sought to assess:

(i) the knowledge of Covid epidemiology of affected cases by time, place and person. The secondary attack rate was 6.0 percent. Overall, 99.0 percent of 736 districts reported testing and 71.1 percent reported Covid-19 cases.

(ii) assess the reported practice for Covid-appropriate behaviour among the selected urban population.

Review of Literature

A community-based study conducted by Gutu et al (2021) on assessment of preventive behaviour associated factors towards Covid-19 in Ethiopia showed that only 10.7 percent participants out of 634 displayed good preventive behaviour of Covid-19. Respondents who used social media as a source of information were more than two times likely to have good preventive behaviour compared to those who did not.

Similar results were obtained through a cross-sectional survey conducted by Devanshi Choudhury and Ankita Sharma to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice about Covid-19 among bystanders of patients visiting OPD AIIMS, New Delhi. The authors found that participants had good knowledge score but poor practice score. Although participants had positive attitude regarding the preventive practices for Covid-19. Another study by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) formulated and established laboratory surveillance for Covid-19. In this study, surveillance data was analysed to describe the testing performance.

In the present study descriptive approach was used keeping in view the objectives of the study (MoHFW dashboard, 2020). Convenient sampling technique was used for collection of data from 200 participants. The sample size (n=200) was purposely. Prevalence rate was taken from the study mentioned above. The dependent variables in the study were knowledge and reported practice whereas Covid-appropriate behaviour was taken as independent variable. The knowledge and reported practice was measured using questionnaire as a tool (Munro Barbara Hazard, 2005). The validity and reliability of the tool was ascertained by experts. Pilot study was also done to check the validity and reliability of the tool. Informed consent of the respondents was taken and confidentiality regarding details of samples was maintained. Persons in the age group 10 to 85 years residing in selected setting were included. Health care professionals, paramedics and associated health care workers were excluded.

Results

In this survey, 200 individuals participated; their

Table 1: Demographic data (N=200)

S. No	Demographic Variables	Category	Freq	%
1.	Age (in years)	5-25	35	17.5
		26-45	89	44.5
		41-55	53	26.5
		56-70	19	9.5
		71-85	04	2
2.	Sex	Male	108	54
		Female	92	46
3.	Comorbidities	Yes	73	36.5
		No	127	63.5
4.	Vaccination status	Yes	152	76
		No	48	24
5.	Educational status	Illiterate	42	24
		Intermediate	102	51
		Graduate and above	55	27.5
6.	Type of family	Joint	85	42.5
		Nuclear	114	57
		Expanded	1	.05

demographic details are depicted in Table 1.

The study revealed that all (100%) of participants had heard of Covid-19 while 85.5 percent had knowledge that it spreads through air (Fig 1).

The findings related to maintaining hygiene like social distancing, hand washing, saying Na-

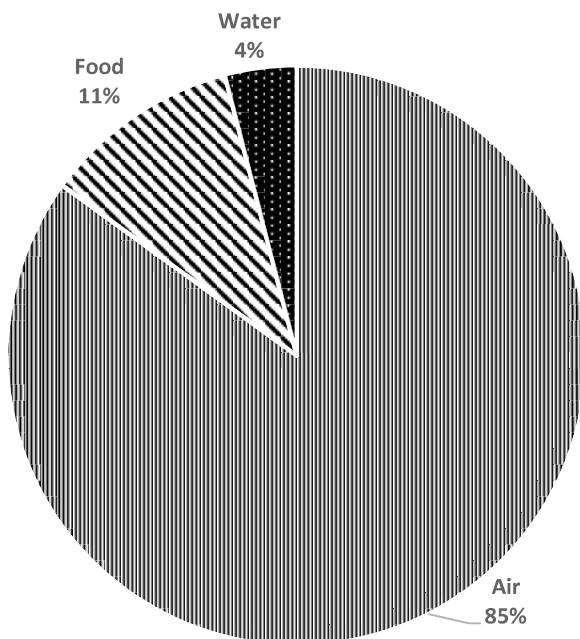


Fig 1: Knowledge about source of Covid spread.

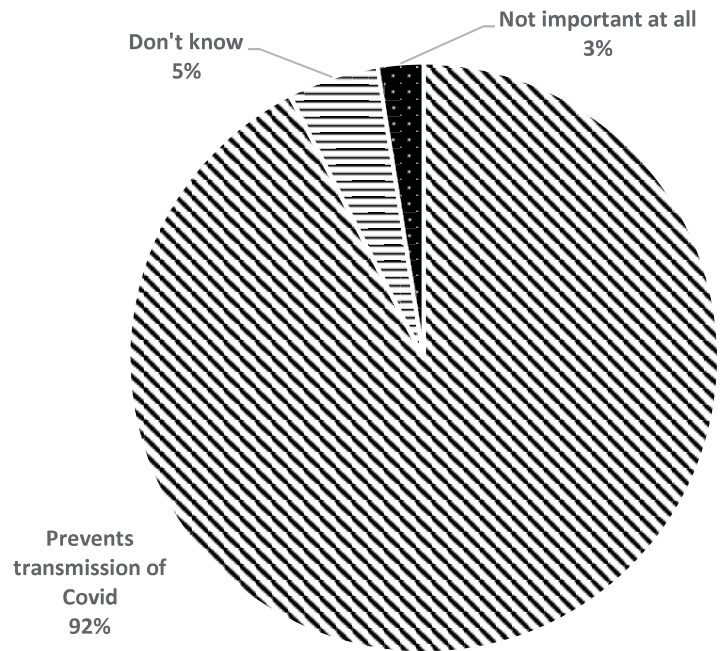


Fig 2: Knowledge about importance of hand hygiene.

maste are shown in Figures 2, 3, 4(a), (b) and (c).

- A significant 86.5 percent agreed that maintaining environmental hygiene plays an important role in reducing the transmission of virus.
- 43 percent knew that social distancing is to be followed in public while only 25 percent reported the practice of this norm.
- 66 percent of the sample population reported the practice of doing Namaste to greet people while 13 percent verbalised the practice of shaking hands during pandemic;

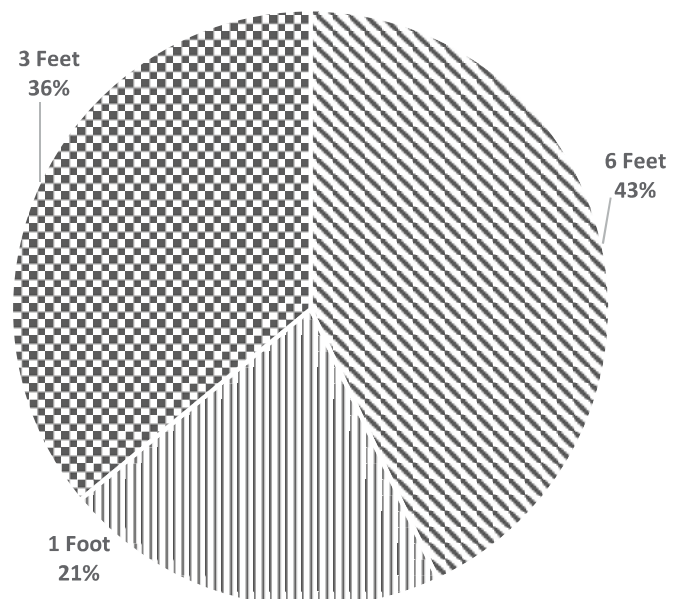


Fig 3: Knowledge about mandatory social distancing.

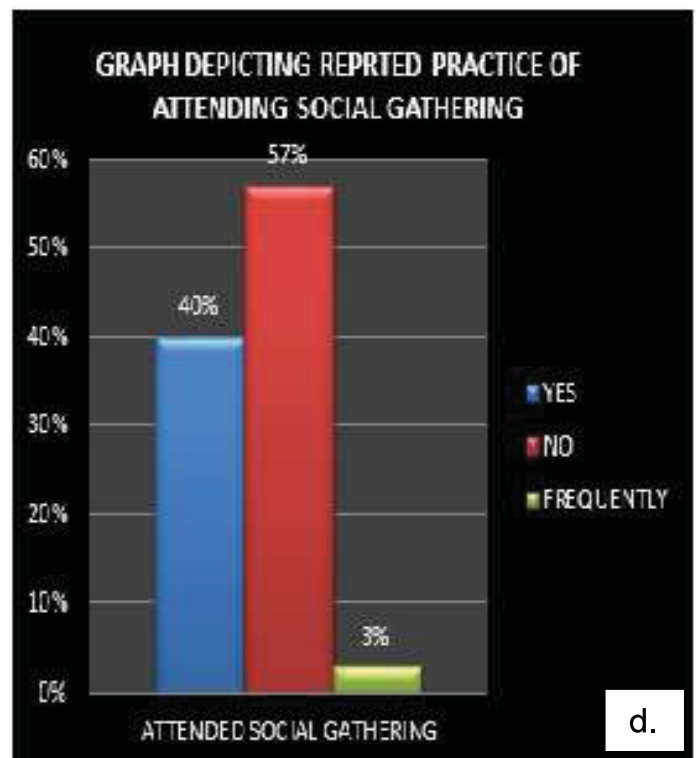
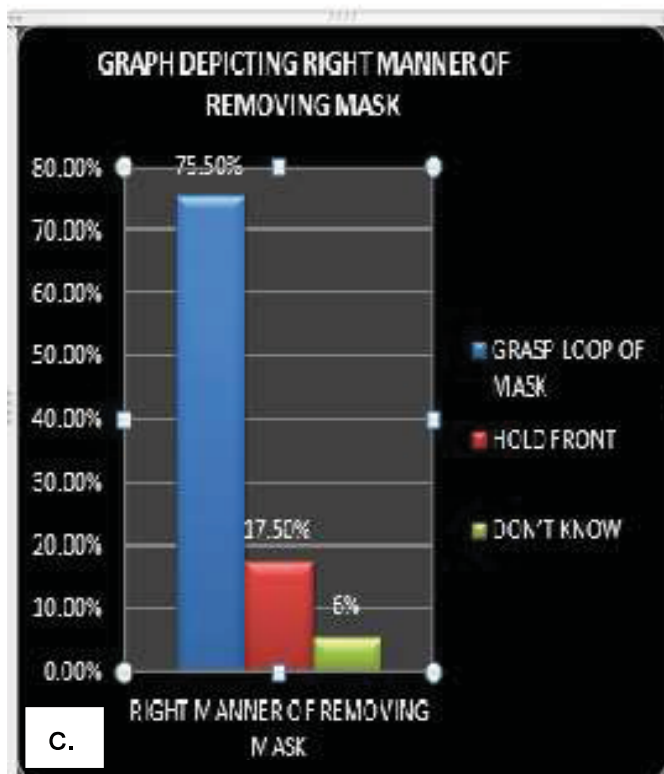
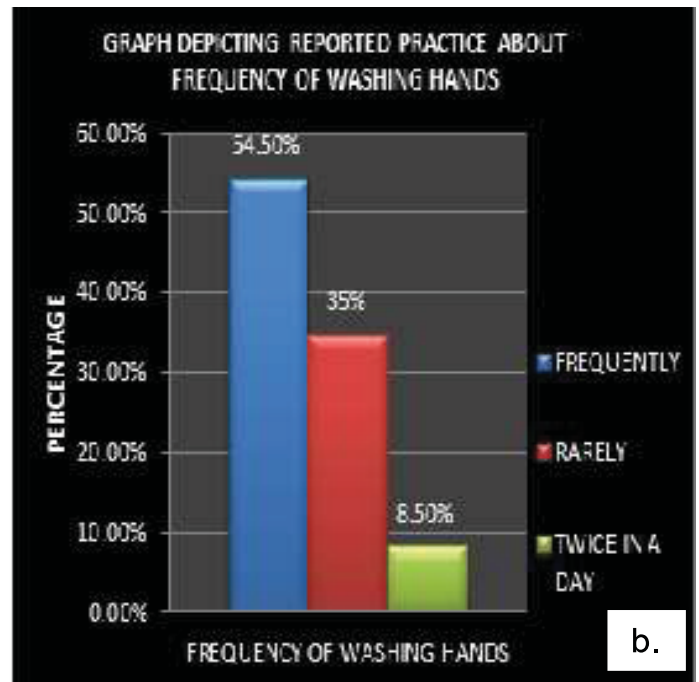
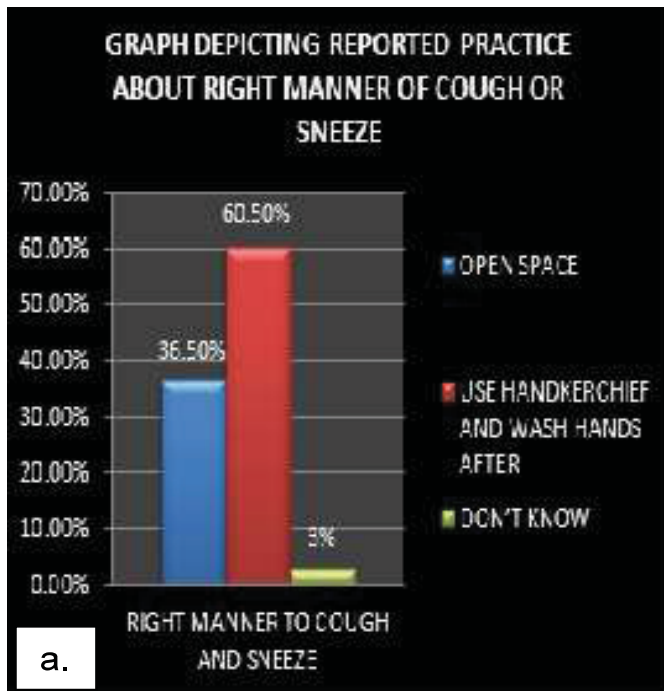


Fig 4: (a) Reported practice on (a) right manner of cough or sneeze, (b) frequency of washing hands. (c) right manner of removing mask, (d) attending social gathering (Figures arranged clockwise).

- 81 percent of population had knowledge that mask should be changed or washed on daily basis while 65 percent reported practicing the same.
- 62 percent respondents knew the correct way of wearing mask.
- Knowledge regarding importance of hand hy-

giene was known to 92 percent of population but only 59.5 percent reported that they frequently washed.

- 60.5 percent stated covering of face with handkerchief while coughing or sneezing (Fig 4a).

In case of non-availability of handkerchief or

tissue, 28 percent reported that they would sneeze or cough by covering their nose with elbow and 88.5 percent had practice of washing immediately or use of alcohol-based sanitiser after coughing and sneezing. About 75.5 percent of samples reported correct way of removing mask (Fig 4c).

- 97 percent of participants were aware of common symptoms provided and 66.5 percent verbalised that they would contact or report to nearest health centre or health care professional.
- 40 percent respondents attended social gathering in past one month (Fig 4d).

Discussion

There was significant difference in knowledge about Covid-appropriate behaviour and reported practice. Although the knowledge and reported practice of majority of population were encouraging but still there is a need for long-term educational interventions especially in knowledge and reported practice of hand washing.

Limitation

- Limited sample size for descriptive study.
- Insufficient sample size for statistical measurements.
- Sample response for reported practices was collected and questionnaire as a tool which may not fully reflect the actual response being practiced.

Recommendation

Study with a larger number of samples can be done to ascertain the Covid-appropriate behaviour and reported practice.

Implication

The usability of this study to the governing body of selected urban community should improve their Information Education Communication and Behavioural change communication activities to reinforce the importance of Covid-appropriate behaviour.

Conclusion

Covid-19 pandemic has become the universally distressing phenomenon. The enormous changes this pandemic has brought in all aspects of an individual's life has long term implications. There was a phase of despair and hopelessness followed by hope and casual behaviour when vaccines came to fore. Nevertheless, the anxiety about unknown facts and fears about this unpredictable disease looms large on humanity. The only way to combat this is to have scientific

knowledge about the correct Covid-appropriate behaviour to be followed stringently which is the only possible way to break the chain of transmission.

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