

A DETAILED RESEARCH STUDY ON THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF ELDERLY TOWARDS COVID-19 IN THE STATE OF KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Kerala, the densely populated state in India is more prone than others for getting infections from outside not only because it is a tourist destination, but also because a large number of Keralites who live abroad or in other states make frequent visits to their native state. Kerala also has the highest proportion of aged individuals in India relative to other states (12.6% (per the 2011 census) vs 8.6%). Not surprisingly, Kerala was the first state in India to get affected by the 2019 novel coronavirus where the elderly population is particularly susceptible. So a research study among elderly is important to save the vulnerable population from this pandemic.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, Pandemic, Vulnerable.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread very quickly and the world needs to prepare for the prevention of the pandemic. Health education programs aimed at improving COVID-19 knowledge are reported helpful to hold optimistic attitudes and maintain appropriate practices. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed that basic disease prevention and control systems are insufficient in terms of human resources and laboratory testing capacity. During this COVID-19 pandemic, it has been observed that older people, individuals with diabetes, hypertension, lung disease, kidney disease and immuno-

compromised individuals are at risk of severe illness and considerably greater mortality with SARS-CoV-2 infection. Therefore a detailed research study among elderly is important to save the vulnerable population from this pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area: State of Kerala

Study Design: Cross sectional study

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Geriatric population above 60 years

Exclusion Criteria: Those who are not willing to participate

Duration: May -September 2020.

Statistics: Data was entered into Excel sheet and statistics was done using SPSS software.

RESULTS

Table 1: Age Distribution.

AGE				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
61-70	56	56.6	56.6	56.6
71-80	30	30.3	30.3	86.9
81-90	13	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Sex Distribution.

SEX				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	70	70.7	70.7	70.7
Female	29	29.3	29.3	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Marital status.

MARITAL STATUS				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	27	27.3	27.3	27.3
Married	48	48.5	48.5	75.8
Separated/Widowed	24	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Education Level (Prim: Primary Level; Secd: Secondary Level; Dip:Diploma).

EDUCATION LEVEL				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Prim.	8	8.1	8.1	8.1
Secd.	27	27.3	27.3	35.4
Dip.	18	18.2	18.2	53.5
Degree	27	27.3	27.3	80.8
Pg	12	12.1	12.1	92.9
Phd	7	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Number of Family Members.

NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	12	12.1	12.1	12.1
2	13	13.1	13.1	25.3
3	1	1.0	1.0	26.3
4	35	35.4	35.4	61.6
5	19	19.2	19.2	80.8
6	12	12.1	12.1	92.9
7	7	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Underlying Disease.

UNDERLYING DISEASE				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
HTN	42	42.4	42.4	42.4
DM	14	14.1	14.1	56.6
CV	8	8.1	8.1	64.6
Cancer	4	4.0	4.0	68.7
Allergy	7	7.1	7.1	75.8
None	11	11.1	11.1	86.9
Others	13	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: APL/BPL.

APL/BPL				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BPL	34	34.3	34.3	34.3
APL	65	65.7	65.7	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

I) Knowledge items towards Covid-19**Causative Agent of Covid19**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	81	81.8	81.8	81.8
NO	18	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Covid-19 Infection Can Be Prevented

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	75	75.8	75.8	75.8
NO	24	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Impact of Early Detection And Visit To Hospital On Covid-19

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	75	75.8	75.8	75.8
NO	24	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Mentioned Atleast One Sign and Symptom of Covid-19

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	99	100.0	100.0	100.0

Quarantine or Self Isolation Prevent Covid-19 Transmission

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	68	68.7	68.7	68.7
NO	31	31.3	31.3	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

II) Attitude items towards Covid-19**Will Go or Call For Consultation If You Have Signs and Symptoms Of Covid-19**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	75	75.8	75.8	75.8
NO	24	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Avoiding Mass Gathering Is Necessary For Prevention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	87	87.9	87.9	87.9
NO	12	12.1	12.1	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Avoid Touching Eyes, Mouth Etc with Unclean Hand Is Necessary

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	75	75.8	75.8	75.8
NO	24	24.2	24.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Facemask Is Necessary For Covid19 Prevention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	81	81.8	81.8	81.8
NO	18	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Physical Distancing Is Necessary For Covid-19 Prevention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	87	87.9	87.9	87.9
NO	12	12.1	12.1	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Covid-19 Is A Result of Punishment of God

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	19	19.2	19.2	19.2
NO	80	80.8	80.8	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

III) Practice items towards Covid-19**Extremely Scared About Covid-19**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	81	81.8	81.8	81.8
NO	18	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Perform Regular Exercise

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	32	32.3	32.3	32.3
NO	67	67.7	67.7	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Keep Dietary Balance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	28	28.3	28.3	28.3
NO	71	71.7	71.7	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Check Signs and Symptoms of Covid-19 Regularly

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	YES	87	87.9	87.9	87.9
	NO	12	12.1	12.1	100.0
	Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Practice Proper Hand Washing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	YES	67	67.7	67.7	67.7
	NO	32	32.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Use Appropriate Face Masks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	YES	67	67.7	67.7	67.7
	NO	32	32.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	99	100.0	100.0	

DISCUSSION

The current study is conducted among elderly people in the state of Kerala. There were 56.6% participants from age group 61-70 years, 30.3% from 71-80 years and 13% from 81-90 years respectively. 70.7% were males and 29.3% were females. 48.5% were married, 27.3% were single, 24.2% were separated/widowed. In the study, 8.1% had only primary level education, 27.3% had secondary level, 18.2% had diploma, 27.3% degree, 12.1% post graduation and 7.1% had PHD. In the study majority (35.4%) have four family members at their home, 19.2% have five members and so on. The major study finding was that only 11.1% didn't have any kind of comorbidities. 42.4% have hypertension, 14.1% have diabetes mellitus, 8.1% have cardio vascular disorders, 4% have cancer, 7.1% have allergy and so on. Majority of the study population belong to APL category (65.7%).

Majority of the population (81.8%) know about causative agent of Covid19, 75.8% know how to prevent the infection, 75.8% know impact of early detection and visit to hospital. Surprisingly, all the population mentioned at least one sign and symptom of Covid-19. 68.7% knew quarantine or self isolation can prevent transmission.

75.8% mentioned that they will go or call for consultation if they have any signs and symptoms. 87.9% know avoiding mass gatherings is necessary and 75.8% know avoid

touching eyes, mouth etc with unclean hands is necessary. 81.8% know that facemask can prevent covid-19 infection, 87.9% know about the importance of physical distancing too. Surprisingly 19.2% believe that covid-19 is due to the punishment of God.

It was found that 81.8% are extremely scared about the infection. Majority (67.7%) don't perform regular exercise and 71.7% don't keep dietary balance too. 87.9% check regularly for the signs and symptoms of the infection, and only 67.7% practice proper hand washing. Shockingly, just 67.7% use appropriate face mask during this pandemic situation.

CONCLUSION

More than half of the population had good knowledge towards prevention and early detection of Covid-19. It was clearly understood that majority of the population have comorbidities which make the population further vulnerable to the pandemic. Majority don't perform regular exercise and don't follow a balanced diet which can further worsen the situation. So there is urgent need for mass counseling sections among the elderly regarding the importance of healthy lifestyle.

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