

KNOWLEDGE, PREVENTION PRACTICES, AND BARRIERS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 INFECTION IN A TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

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Variants of COVID-19 are highly contagious, resulting in a major threat to human life and the global economy. Infection control involves recommended preventive measures, but barriers could hinder following the guidelines. Therefore, the study was conducted to assess the knowledge and preventive measures for COVID-19 and to identify the barriers among undergraduate students at Kaatsu International University (KIU). A descriptive cross-sectional online survey was carried out from August 2021 to May 2022 among 350 undergraduates using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected through a self-administered, pre-tested questionnaire disseminated through social media after obtaining ethical approval (KIU/ERC/21/86). Data were analysed using SPSS version 25, and all hypotheses were tested at the 95% confidence interval (with 0.05 marginal error). Values for the total score of knowledge and preventive practice were defined and modified as poor (<33%), average (34 - 66%) and good (>67%), respectively. Most respondents were female (78.2%), while 52.4% of the sample represented the Western Province. Biomedical science students (40.8%) and 4th-year students (47.8%) had good knowledge of the disease. A significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) was observed between the total knowledge score, degree program, and academic year. 46.7% demonstrated an average level of preventive practices. Only academic year, degree programme, gender and employment status were significantly associated with total preventive practice score ($p < 0.05$). The usage of hand sanitisers was identified as a burden to employed undergraduates ($p < 0.033$). Public transportation (74.5%) was identified as the highest obstacle to following preventive practices, and 50.1% of respondents had difficulty maintaining social distancing. In conclusion, most respondents had poor knowledge of COVID-19, while the practice of preventive measures was satisfactory among the study population.

Keywords: Barriers, COVID-19, Preventive measures, Undergraduates