Knowledge regarding COVID-19 among Final Year Medical, Dental and Allied Health Sciences Students of University of Peradeniya

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COVID-19 is a highly contagious viral disease which has spread across the world within a short duration of time. Due to the risk of rapid transmission of the virus, healthcare students must have sufficient knowledge regarding its spread for their protection as well as empowering the society with this knowledge. This study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding COVID-19 among undergraduate final year students of the faculties of Medicine, Dental Sciences, and Allied health sciences. A questionnaire was developed using available information regarding clinical features, diagnostic protocols, and disease prevention. A descriptive web-based survey was conducted among 240 participants, via Google forms. The response rate was around 55.8%. Most of the participants were females (67.5%) and the mean age of the sample was 25.15±1.5 years. Distribution among the faculties was: Medicine 62.5%, Allied Health Sciences 20.8%, and Dental sciences 16.7%. Of the participants, 72.1% were able to recognize the proper scientific name of the virus. Many of participants had incomplete knowledge (97.9%) regarding the transmission modes of the virus (droplet of saliva 57.5%, discharge from nose when infected person cough or sneezes 15.8%, contaminated surfaces or objects 0.4%) as well as testing procedures (95%). Knowledge regarding the COVID-19 prevention methods was high (85.1%) among the participants, but most of the respondents had incomplete knowledge regarding the correct hand hygiene practice methods (97.9%). Only 2% of the participants identified hand washing after exposure to body fluids as a correct answer. Most of the participants had good knowledge (57.9%) regarding the laws and guidelines about the COVID-19 prevention. There is no significant difference in knowledge between study programs. Students should be more aware of the virus transmission methods and hand hygiene practices, which could be improved through online sessions, to complete the knowledge regarding COVID-19 infection.

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