

Knowledge, attitudes, and adherence to preventive measures of medical students regarding COVID-19

Ayşe Gül Yücesan¹, Vidan Sena Ateş¹, Yeşim Yasin¹, and Figen Demir¹

¹Acibadem University

June 1, 2021

Abstract

Background Medical students are at the core of pandemic response as prospective health professionals. This study aimed to assess medical students' knowledge, attitude, and practices toward the COVID-19 pandemic and measure their level of adaptation to infection control measures. **Methods** In this descriptive study, data was collected via an internet-based questionnaire delivered to students through e-mail between 19 August-14 September 2020. Participants were students enrolled in medical school in Istanbul, Turkey. Descriptive statistics and Chi-Square test were used to analyze data. **Results** Among 245 subjects enrolled in the study, the mean age was 21.8 ± 1.7 , and 58.0% were female, 49.0% were preclinical (1-2-3rd) grades. Most of the respondents (85.3%) thought they have enough knowledge; 97.6% knew about transmission routes. 31.8% of students used the World Health Organization website, 22% of the students used official government websites, and 20.0% of students used the news as a primary source for covid-related information. More than half of the students (60.8%) felt more anxious and nervous than usual due to pandemic, with female predominance. Over 85.0% of students fulfill infection control and preventive measures, such as wearing masks, washing hands, maintaining social distancing, and avoiding being in crowds. 68.2% of the students were following current guidelines prepared for COVID-19. We observed more frequent behaviors in students who report more anxiety and nervousness than usual. Most of the students (84.9%) expressed that they would be vaccinated when the vaccine is developed. **Conclusions** Mostly, medical students were well-informed with expected levels of knowledge, attitude, and preventive measures towards COVID-19. Anxiety-reducing interventions are urgently needed for medical students. Furthermore, pandemic management should be included in the medical school curriculum to increase knowledge, awareness, and protective behavior.

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