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Research Article

**EVALUATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF
PAKISTAN'S NURSES TOWARDS COVID-19 DURING THE
CURRENT OUTBREAK**Yasira Siddique¹, Shagufta Emmanuel², Neelam Zia³¹Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore²Children Hospital Lahore³Post Graduate College of Nursing Punjab, Lahore

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Abstract:

Introduction: COVID-19 started in December 2019, like a viral outbreak in Wuhan city of central Hubei province of China. **Objectives:** The main objective of the study is to analyse the knowledge and attitude of Pakistan's nurses towards COVID-19 during the current outbreak. **Material and methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore during June 2020 to November 2020. An online semi-structured questionnaire was developed by using google forms, with a consent form appended to it. The link of the questionnaire was sent through e-mails, WhatsApp and other social media to the contacts of the investigators. **Results:** All the participants were above 18 years of age. The study included only those participants who understood English and had access to the internet. Hence, by default individuals with a higher level of education were included in the study. The highest qualification of more than 90 % of the population was graduation and above. Approximately, all of the population were healthcare professionals. **Conclusion:** It is concluded that during this coronavirus pandemic, most of the educated people and health professionals are aware of this infection, possible preventive measures, the importance of social distancing and government initiatives were taken to limit the spread of infection.

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INTRODUCTION:

COVID-19 started in December 2019, like a viral outbreak in Wuhan city of central Hubei province of China. A cluster of about 40 cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology was reported, some of the patients being vendors and dealers in the Huanan Seafood market there. World Health Organization (WHO) along with Chinese authorities started working together and the etiological agent was soon established to be a new virus and was named Novel Corona Virus. Meanwhile, on 11th January China announced its first COVID-19 related death of a 61-year-old man, exposed to the seafood market [1].

Over a period of few weeks, the infection spread across the globe in rapid pace. Looking at the stretch of countries this outbreak spread to, WHO declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30th January 2020 [2]. Amidst the increasing deaths in China, the first death outside China was (of a Chinese man from Wuhan) reported in the Philippines on 2nd February. On 11th February, WHO announced a name for the new coronavirus disease: COVID-19 [3].

The state of lock-down in many parts of the world, which are contributing largely to the global economy has led to the halting of services and products. This has led to a break in the global supply chains and thus, affected the global economy brutally. Transport has been affected globally. Import of steel, iron, inorganic chemicals, etc. from China and other countries has been grossly affected. Transport business even at national levels has ceased due to lock-down in different countries [4]. Most company employees are working from home, which has its financial disadvantages. Educational institutions have been shut down. The uncertainty and postponement of examinations is also a stressor for young minds [5].

Along with the economic impacts, the ever-increasing morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19 is the biggest setback. The WHO report revealed the mortality rate to be between; however, it seems that the mortality statistics are underestimated. The anxiety and concerns in society are globally affecting every individual to variable extents [6]. Recent evidence suggests that individuals who are kept in isolation and

quarantine experience significant distress in the form of anxiety, anger, confusion and post-traumatic stress symptoms. The knowledge and attitudes of the public are expected to largely influence the degree of adherence to the personal protective measures and ultimately the clinical outcome. Hence, it is important to study these domains in the Indian population [7].

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to analyse the knowledge and attitude of Pakistan's nurses towards COVID-19 during the current outbreak.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This cross-sectional study was conducted in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore during June 2020 to November 2020. An online semi-structured questionnaire was developed by using google forms, with a consent form appended to it. The link of the questionnaire was sent through e-mails, WhatsApp and other social media to the contacts of the investigators. The participants were encouraged to roll out the survey to as many people as possible. Thus, the link was forwarded to people apart from the first point of contact and so on. On receiving and clicking the link the participants got auto directed to the information about the study and informed consent. After they accepted to take the survey they filled up the demographic details. Then a set of several questions appeared sequentially, which the participants were to answer.

The data was collected and analysed using SPSS version 19. All the values were expressed in mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS:

All the participants were above 18 years of age. The study included only those participants who understood English and had access to the internet. Hence, by default individuals with a higher level of education were included in the study. The highest qualification of more than 90 % of the population was graduation and above. Approximately, all of the population were healthcare professionals. The mean age of the participants was 29.09 ± 8.83 years. Among the participants, 51.2 % were females and 48.6 % were males. More than 80 % of participants were from urban areas.

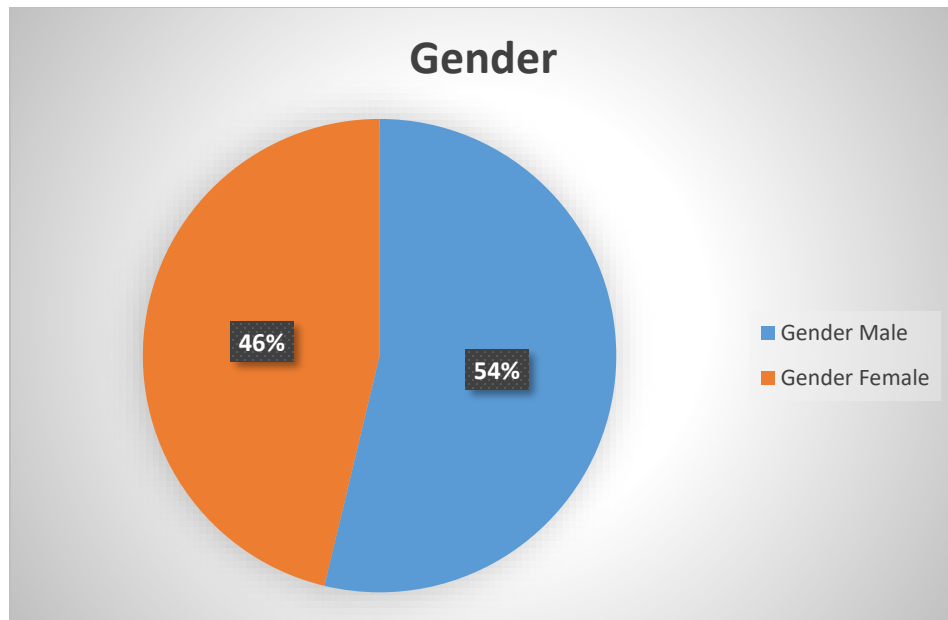


Figure 1a: Gender Distribution of participants

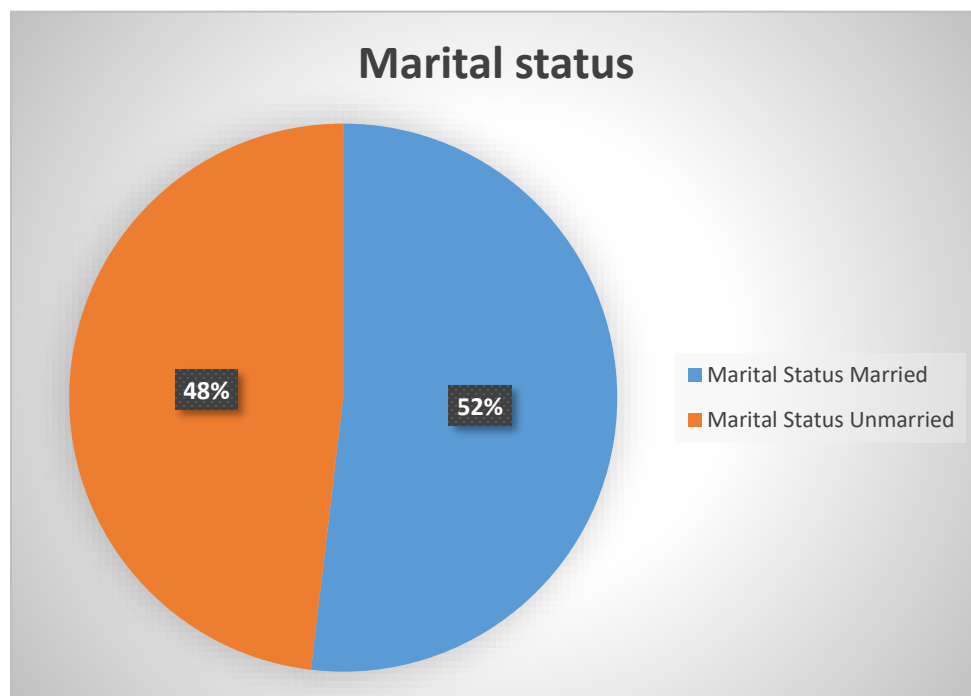


Figure 1b: Marital status of participants

Table 01: Anxiety related to COVID-19 pandemic.

S.No	Items	% of responses who feel anxious
1	From the last week, how often do you think about Novel Coronavirus Pandemic?	82.2
2	From the last one week, how often you feel paranoid about contacting the novel Corona Virus infection?	37.8 %
3	From the last week, how often you avoid partying?	90.1
4	From the last week, how often you avoid social contact?	82.1
5	From the last week, how often you avoid large meetings and gatherings?	89.1
6	From the last week, how often you avoid ordering food online?	76.7
7	From the last week, how often you have talked to your friends about the corona Pandemic?	80.7
8	From the last one week, how often you have had difficulty sleeping by being worried about the Coronavirus pandemic?	12.5
9	From the last week, how often you feel affected by the posts on social media about corona Virus infection?	36.4
10	From the last week, how often do you feel affected by the talks of Novel Corona Virus Pandemic on the newspaper and news channels?	46.1

DISCUSSION:

All epidemics and pandemics have their unique characteristics in terms of causality, progression and control measures. It is crucial to provide health education and create awareness during such situations for effective prevention of disease spread. It has been seen in a previous study that health professionals often have better awareness, positive attitudes towards epidemics/pandemics and they often experience low levels of anxiety). But, a study from Ethiopia reported, poor knowledge and erroneous beliefs of healthcare professionals, during the Ebola virus outbreak in 2015 and it urged for intense training of the healthcare professionals [8]. In a study conducted in Trinidad and Tobago in 2016, following the H1N1 epidemic, it was seen that a significant proportion of the general public was unaware of the seriousness and measures of prevention of the epidemics. A similar study, evaluating the knowledge, attitude, and perception of Ebola virus infection among secondary school children of Nigeria, found that most of the participants had inadequate knowledge and carried a negative attitude towards the outbreak [9].

Most of the participants in our study were educated - either graduate or post-graduate and (%) were healthcare professionals. The participants had a moderate level of awareness regarding the mode of spread, symptoms, and yet adequate awareness about the preventive measures. It was possibly due to the government and media emphasizing more on the preventive measures. Educated and especially healthcare people get more sensitized by these information's [10].

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that during this coronavirus pandemic, most of the educated people and health professionals are aware of this infection, possible preventive measures, the importance of social distancing and government initiatives were taken to limit the spread of infection. However, there are increased worries and apprehensions among the public regarding acquiring the COVID-19 infection.

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