Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of COVID Appropriate Behaviour in Small Scale Retailers in Rural Central India

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Abstract

Background: The pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) emerged and affected most of the world in early 2020. Various restrictions and lockdowns were placed to prevent the transmission of the virus. Consumer buying practices have changed and also in Small Scale Retailers have adopted ways to prevent the transmission of the virus. Various guidelines have been issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to limit the transmission speed of the virus especially pertaining to retailers in the geographical region of mostly rural areas. The present study will help us to determine the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) of Small Scale Retailers regarding covid appropriate practices in the workplace.

Objective: To study and evaluate the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Covid Appropriate Behavior in Small Scale Retailers in Rural Central India.

Methodology: An anonymous, self-administered, web-based, survey via Google forms containing demographic details like age, gender, education, socio-economic status etc would be conducted after an explanation about the project, and informed consent (on Google forms) is acquired from the Small Scale Retailers in Wardha district. The adapted version of the questionnaire will be given in Hindi and Marathi, so as to make it convenient for the participants. The results will be then analysed statistically and the answers will be recorded, tabulated and would be graphically represented.

Results: The study plays a vital role in assessing the behaviour of the Small Scale Retailers and the practices followed by them to avert the transmission of the covid-19 virus and provide insights for further recommendations.

Key words: COVID- 19 • Physical distancing • Small scale retailers • Covid appropriate behavior

Introduction

A novel respiratory infectious illness is caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). It's part of a huge viral family that causes anything from the common cold to SARS and MERS [1,2]. Ever Since its discovery in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, the illness has evolved, and on March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared it as a pandemic, impacting approximately 3 million people in 210 countries [3,4]. In Kerala, India, the first incidence of COVID-19 infection was recorded. A 20-year-old woman presented to the Emergency Department of the General Hospital in Thrissur, Kerala, on January 27, 2020, with a one-day history of dry cough and sore throat, as well as a previous history of a trip to Wuhan, China [5]. The symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19 include breathlessness, coughing, and breathing difficulties [4]. It is a very infectious and fatal illness, with a 7 per cent mortality rate [6]. COVID-19 is mostly transmitted from one individual to another by droplets produced by sneezing or coughing, as well as interaction with surfaces infected people may have touched [2]. Too far, many types of vaccines have been developed to fight against the virus. Frontline Health workers are at a higher risk of infection than the general public because they operate in a setting that exposes them to potentially infected individuals [7,8]. Many Health Care Providers(HCP) worldwide have lost their lives because of COVID-19 [9-11].

Although the detrimental effects of COVID-19 on the economy, employment, and household income are unknown at this time [7] there are unfavorable correlations between the evolution of purchasing habits and

pandemic breakouts. The COVID-19 epidemic has had a significant impact on several sectors of the tourism industry, including tourist transportation, hoteling, retail activities and expenditures, tour operations, and catering [10]. Along with tourism, a great change has occurred in the daily consumer buying practices due to fear of COVID-19 transmission. Market places are regarded as a very important area but however, they were closed or had changed fundamentally in response to COVID-19. Along with consumers, Small Scale Retailers have also adopted ways to prevent virus transmission because Small Scale Retailers can have a very instrumental role in coronavirus transmission through their shops. For this COVID appropriate behaviour in marketplaces should be followed and prevent future waves of the infection.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Government of India) has been providing recommendations on public health practices to be implemented by public sector organizations should follow in order to prevent the virus from spreading [12]. In brief, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) recommends the following best practices: maintaining a physical distance of 1 m between checkout counters; posting signs on the floor to aid consumers in maintaining social distancing of at least 6 feet, and building a physical barrier between workers and consumers to steer clear of "excessive approximation between individuals." MoFHW suggests disinfecting the entire retail space at least once every day and often washing (at all times) the commonly touched surfaces, like ticket vending machines or ATMs (Automated Teller Machines), as cleaning and sanitizing procedures. Furthermore, alcohol-based remedies should be available in key areas [12]. The goal of this observational study is to detail the steps used by Small Scale Retailers in Wardha, India, to limit the spread of COVID-19.

In India, the combat against Covid-19 is currently ongoing. People's compliance with these control measures is important to the project's eventual success, which is highly impacted by their knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) about COVID-19, according to KAP theory [13,14]. Lessons acquired from the 2003 SARS epidemic show that knowledge and attitude about infectious illnesses are related to the amount of fear felt among the public, which can hinder efforts to limit disease spread [15,16]. At this crucial moment, it is important to examine the public's understanding of COVID-19 in order to help with COVID-19 pandemic management in India. We will study the KAP

toward COVID-19 of Indian Small Scale Retailers during the rapid rise phase of the COVID-19 epidemic in this study.

Aim

The primary aim of this study is to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of Small Scale Retailers of rural communities in order to prevent the spread of the covid-19 virus.

Materials and Methods

Setting

The study will be conducted among the Small Scale Retailers in the Wardha City of Maharashtra, India

Period of study

The study will be conducted within a span of 3 months after getting ethical clearance.

Study design

This survey will be carried out as a cross-sectional (KAP) study of descriptive type.

Information will be gathered by filling out a pre- prepared form that includes the following aspects:

✓ Demographic details like age, gender, education, socio-economic status etc.

✓ Methods taken up outside the store/shops such as signs of floor disinfection; disinfection of commonly touched surfaces; steps to avoid overcrowding; the presence of signs that encourage workers and consumers to exercise health safety procedures such as maintaining a distance of 6 feet and wearing of face masks.

✓ Methods taken up inside the store such as indication of the appropriate physical distance between individuals; availability of hand sanitizer, gloves or other personal protective equipment.

✓ Worker such as: wearing a shield or mask, wearing gloves and having physical separator walls of material like acrylate at counters; shop operators: wearing a shield or mask, wearing gloves etc.

✓ Consumer's gender, age group, and whether or not they wear a surgical or homemade mask or a scarf; whether or not they wear a visor/other; and whether or not they wore gloves.

Outcome

Covid appropriate behaviour among Small Scale Retailers.

Site

An anonymous, self-administered, web-based, survey via Google forms would be conducted after an explanation about the project, and informed consent (on Google forms) is acquired.

Study population

All the volunteers who satisfy the inclusion criteria at the respective study site and explained about the study. The study begins once the participant volunteers in the study.

Selection criteria

The following Inclusion and Exclusion criteria will be utilized for the said study:

✓ Inclusion Criteria:

a. Small Scale Retailers and their employees will be included in this study.

b. All participants in this study shall be above the age of 18 years.

c. Provide valid informed consent prior to the study.

✓ Exclusion Criteria:

a. Participants who are not willing to participate in the study.

b. All Medical Personnel will be excluded from this study.

c. Males or Females below the age of 18 will be excluded from this study.

Sample Size

A convenience sample size of 100 shops will be surveyed (120-150 shops) for this study.

Sample Collection

✓ The study would be a cross-sectional study.

✓ An anonymous, self-administered, web-based, survey via Google forms would be conducted after an explanation about the project, and informed consent (on Google forms) is acquired.

Study Protocol

The questionnaire would include demographic details, and knowledge & practices of covid appropriate behaviour would be evaluated through the questionnaire.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be taken from the Institutional Ethics Committee before the initiation of the study.

Measures

In this study three fundamental measures were included:

✓ Level of Knowledge about COVID-19.

✓ Attitude towards COVID-19.

✓ Pragmatism on COVID-19 preparedness in the workplace.

Implications of the study

The result of this study will help to assess the awareness, attitude and knowledge about covid appropriate practices that Small Scale Retailers undertake to avert the spread of the coronavirus.

Methodology in PICOT Format

P (Population): The chosen sample size for this particular is around 100 shops.

I (Intervention): There is no Intervention. It is an observational study.

C (Comparison): The results that will be concluded in this study would not be compared however we would compare it with the available literature.

O (Outcome): The goal of conducting this study is to determine the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices followed by Small Scale Retailers to avert the transmission of the covid-19 virus.

T (Time): This study would be conducted over a duration of 3 months (August 2021-November 2021).

Measurements

To conclude the results, a questionnaire-based statistical evaluation, with analytical tests will be performed on the basis of the data collected from the questionnaires. Primary outcomes variable will be per the form in percentages and proportions of individuals following COVID appropriate behaviour as per guidelines.

Quantitative variables

Primary Outcome: To assess the knowledge of small scale retailers about covid appropriate behaviour

Secondary Outcome:

✓ To assess covid appropriate behaviour among the staff.

✓ To assess covid appropriate behaviour among staff and customers.

Statistical Analysis based on

The data will be analysed using SPSS software and the covid appropriate behaviour will be analyzed across age, gender, education, socio-economic status and covid appropriate behaviour questions and shall be depicted in a suitable graphical manner.

Expected Results

The particular study that will be carried out among the Small Scale Retailers of Wardha would surely play a role in assessing the practices that Small Scale Retailers have adopted and follow to ensure safe buying practices and prevent the transmission of the novel coronavirus. In conclusion, if the accurate effects are identified, certain measures could be taken in order to assess the specific domain that shows a deviation from expected results and this deviation would further help us to create awareness regarding that particular concerning issue. Obtaining the information and spreading the awareness at a higher level such as the study design of this topic, would surely help in the evaluation of the consequences that are currently posing a potential risk of the third wave of coronavirus.

Lacunae

There is a severe lacuna in the current literature on the covid appropriate behaviour among the Small Scale Retailers in India and no data on the Small Scale Retailers specifically. The majority of cases have been focused on the consumer buying practices and not of the Small Scale Retailers which could be a potential factor contributing to the spread of coronavirus.

Discussion

The intent to do this study is to assess local Small Scale Retailers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours following the COVID19 epidemic in India. The current study displays critical results in a variety of areas. Fruits, vegetables, food sellers, General Store / Daily Needs, Pharmacy, Shopping, Bakery, Electronics, Stationary Petrol Station, and Barber will all be studied. Even while the pandemic affects many segments of the population economically, the most vulnerable sectors, such as street Small Scale Retailers, suffer the most. We will send a short questionnaire on knowledge, attitudes, and practice to persons who frequented or worked in public markets in several places around the Wardha region of Maharashtra, India. We accept the methodological restrictions of a survey based on a self-created questionnaire administered to a convenience sample without consideration for the target population's size and makeup. Although no formal sample size calculation was achievable in the absence of pre-existing proof (apart from some online research studies), the number of participants was chosen based on practical and time constraints [17]. The questionnaire was based on current scientific research as well as the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's standards for covid suitable behaviour (MoHFW).

The importance of the study may be seen in the fact that higher-level knowledge and understanding, such as the study design of this issue, would aid in the evaluation of the repercussions that are currently posing a possible risk of the next wave of coronavirus in India. Consolidated efforts from throughout the country boost the Indian population's confidence in overcoming the pandemic. For example, to help Coronavirus viral control efforts [18-20], numerous medical personnel worked day and night and donated a huge quantity of medical items to prevent further spread following the outbreak. Furthermore, Indian citizens' familiarity with COVID-19 may explain their upbeat attitude regarding the epidemic. Regarding this specific topic, despite the fact that an immense amount of study has been done on psychological reactance in an online setting, many studies have overlooked the issue of the present epidemic affecting merchants in marketplaces across India [21-23]. The study is particularly significant because of its practical focus on suppliers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward providing proper behaviour, which is lacking in the literature.

Conclusion

After doing the literature search required for this particular survey, it was seen that only a few studies were focusing on this topic. According to our knowledge, this study will be the first of its type to take place in an Indian setting. The results that would be concluded from this study will help us identify the true attributes of the COVID appropriate practices among the Small Scale Retailers in India.

Conflict of Interest

The particular survey does not engage in any conflict of interest.

Funding

This particular survey does not have any funding requirement.

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