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Knowledge and Awareness on the Role of Hand Sanitizer in Prevention of COVID 19 - A Questionnaire Survey

M. Kavya Shree¹, Leslie Rani S², Brundha M. P.³

'Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Saveetha University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India; Lecturer, Department of General Pathology, Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Saveetha University, Chennai, India; Associate Professor, Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Saveetha University, Chennai, India.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Hand hygiene is now regarded as one of the most important elements of infection control activities. This is not only because of the magnitude of the problem but in terms of the associated morbidity, mortality, and cost of treatment. Alcoholbased hand sanitizers used in healthcare settings will provide better hand hygiene. Hand sanitizers are used properly with a high concentration of alcohol and can ensure the best results within seconds. But it also causes dryness of the skin.

Objective: The study aims to assess the knowledge of the general population on hand sanitization and also to evaluate the importance given for hand hygiene in controlling the spread of disease.

Materials and Method: A cross-sectional Questionnaire survey was initiated in the Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu. Nearly 100 people responded. Statistical analysis was done using the SPSS software version 22. Descriptive statistics were expressed using frequency and percentage. Chi-square tests were used to find the association between the variables.

Result: The result varies according to the age groups but almost (57%) prefer hand sanitizer rather than soap and water for hand hygiene, using Chi-square tests; p-value = 0.022), it is statically significant.

Conclusion: The conclusion of this article that nearly 80% of people are aware of the importance of hand sanitizer in pandemic conditions is COVID-19, p-value = 0.773 it is statistically significant. They also agree that the usage of hand sanitizer prevents diseases and keeps our hygiene.

Key Words: Hand hygiene, Hand sanitizer, Alcohol-based, COVID-19, Pandemic, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Hand hygiene is one of the methods which can reduce the spread of pathogenic microorganisms among people. Hand Hygiene includes the usage of soaps and water, hand sanitizer, etc. Among these two, sanitizer is the most reliable material which can be used by everyone. It can be easily carried along with us and it has a lot of advantages. COVID 19 (Coronavirus Diseases-2019) pandemic is becoming a deadly disease and sparing many lives irrespective of age. As there was no vaccine ^{1,2} has been found, to prevent the disease masks, hand hygiene practice, self-isolation are encouraged. It is important to practice hand hygiene because we might get in contact with contaminated surfaces and also from direct contact with patients through respiratory drop-

lets from coughs and sneezes or indirect contact via surfaces, which may then facilitate the transmission and spreading of the disease ^{3,4}. SARS-CoV2 outbreak settings showed that providing efficient hand washing facilities reduced transmission, usage of handwash among participants is the most important ^{5,6}. Centre for Diseases Control and prevention promotes Hand hygiene through the usage of hand sanitizers⁷. Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol or contains a "persistent antiseptic" should be used ⁸. WHO highlighted the importance of hand hygiene and they launched guidelines to be followed for hand hygiene. Coronavirus can easily affect immunocompromized patients like Diabetes Mellitus people⁹. Hand Hygiene is widely used among medical participants as well as people working in the hospital to prevent cross infections ^{10,11}.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Leslie Rani S, Lecturer, Department of General Pathology, Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Saveetha University, Chennai, India; Phone: 9360293308; Email: leslieranis.sdc@saveetha.com

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Some articles say that hand sanitizers are available in two forms, one is alcohol and the other is non-alcohol. The World Health Organization (ABHS) in line proved that the hand sanitizer has a fast reaction and antimicrobial activity offering protection against the bacteria and viruses 12,13,14,15. Alcohol rubs kill all types of microorganisms and it is antibiotic-resistant 16,17,18. Alcohol-based sanitizer restricts the viral development and enhances the surface proteins that break the chain of transmission of coronavirus. Also, the quality of alcohol is the key factor that decides the biocidal possibility of the sanitizers/rub19. There is a statement that usage of alcohols based sanitizer, some time can cause contact allergy diseases but some articles oppose this statement. Alcoholbased hand sanitizers have been used for more than 10 years, without reporting any allergic reactions to the product in Switzerland land ²⁰. Accordingly, in COVID 19 outbreaks, with the increased demand for hand sanitizer, the WHO formulation can be produced locally in case of the absence or shortage of commercial products ²¹.

Due to the rate of increase in positive cases in COVID 19, usage of the sanitizer will help us to protect from disease. The novel coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) continues to affect the world, within a short period. To manage the extent of this pandemic, there is a need to develop, disseminate, and implement infection control and prevention strategies in both healthcare settings and the community. In the early outbreak, there were general recommendations to frequently wash hands to reduce the spread of infection. The adequacy of preventive measures depends on the quality of surface disinfectants, the composition of hand sanitizer, proper material to manufacture of personal protective equipment (PPE).

The study aimed to make aware of the role of hand sanitizer in COVID 19 prevention. This edifies the different preventive measures, for example, an appropriate choice of surface disinfectants, proper hand cleansing, and empowering the PPE that could be a potential intercession to fight against COVID-19.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was conducted among the general public not below the age group of 20 years, in Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu. A set of 15 questions were framed including the demographic details and also about the Knowledge, awareness, and perception about the role of hand sanitizer in COVID 19 prevention. This approval is from the institutional review board. The questionnaires were enclosed within 1 week when it began to reach 100 responses.

Sampling

In the present study, the sampling method used is a simple random sampling method.

Data collection and tabulation

The number of questions distributed was 10. The close-ended yes or no type of question was asked. The software used for the data collection on the online survey website "google forms".https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18dGAGt-yOejp-mzR86Fn6ZTrfuVQQak27fzx7URGgXDI/edit#responses

The data from the google forms are analyzed and then put into the excel sheet and then tabulation of the data finally and the question comparison is done.

The representation of the data is through the bar graph.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical software used was IBM SPSS V22. The statistical test used is a Chi-square test (p-value). The type of analysis used was descriptive analysis, demographic data.

Inclusion criteria

People from 18-40 years only participated in the survey, because they were aware of the technical mode of usage.

Exclusion criteria

People above 40 yrs were not considered and the people, rural areas were not considered due to illiteracy and lack of opportunities to participate in the survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The vaccination or antiviral drugs for COVID-19 are not discovered to date. Hence, hand hygiene is a mainstay of efforts to prevent the spread of diseases. A Questionnaire-based survey has been conducted to create awareness about the usage of sanitizer in COVID 19 among the urban population.

Figure 1 represents the importance of hand hygiene during COVID-19, 78% says that it prevents spread and 14% of people says it is used for hygiene and 4% says it is used for their pseudo promotion and the remaining 3% don't have any idea. Figure 2 represents there is no significant difference between the age groups and knowledge on the importance of hand hygiene (p >0.05). Hand hygiene is one of the most important factors in pandemic conditions and it helps us to prevent diseases. According to existing reports, hand hygiene is the most important requirement of infection prevention and control (IPC) during the pandemic condition²². The reduced practice of hand hygiene increases the risk of respiratory infection, skin infection, etc²³.

Figure 3 represents the source of usage of hand sanitizer nearly 56% of people said that they use hand sanitizer, 40% say that they use soaps and water, and the remaining 3%people said that they use only water to clean their hands. Figure 4 represents there is a significant difference between the age groups and knowledge about the method of handwash peo-

ple prefer (p <0.05). Most people prefer hand sanitizer to keep hygiene. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are preferable to hand washing over soap and water²⁴. Hand sanitizer can be an alternative to soap and water usage. The mechanism of Alcohol-based sanitizers is to dissolve the lipid membranes of microbes, and thereby inactivate them. Thus, the sanitizer is an alternative when the soap and water are not readily available²⁵

Figure 5 shows 85% of people agree that hand sanitizer can kill the Coronavirus. But the remaining 15% disagree with the statement. Figure 6 represents there is a significant difference between the age groups knowledge about hand sanitizer-kill Coronavirus (p<0.05). 90% alcohol rubs are more effective against viruses than most other forms of hand washing^{26,27}.

Figure 7 shows 82% of people were aware of the forms of hand sanitizer and the remaining 14% was not aware of it. Figure 8 represents a significant difference between the age groups aware of the forms of sanitizer (p<0.05) Hand sanitizer is available in the form of liquid, gel, or foam generally used to decrease infectious agents on the hands²⁸. Alcoholbased hand rubs provide better skin tolerance as compared to antiseptic soap²⁹. There are some existing studies reported that the gel form of alcohol-based hand sanitizer makes the skin dry and leaves the moisture in the skin³⁰ than handwashing with sterile/antimicrobial cleanser and water³¹.

Figure 9 shows that 87% of people were aware of alcohol contained in the sanitizer that prevents infection, alcoholbased sanitizer can only kill viruses and it is recommended to use prevention from diseases and non-alcohol based is not recommended³². Figure 10 represents there is a significant difference between the age groups aware of the alcoholbased hand sanitizer (p<0.05). A study conducted with the WHO-recommended they said that alcohol-based formulations demonstrated a strong destroying effect against emerging pathogens, including ZIKV, EBOV, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV³³. The usage of alcohol-based sanitizers is restricted to children. If the hand sanitizer accidentally comes in contact with the eyes, it can cause eye irritation. If it is left untreated it forms abscess like stye^{34,35}.

Figure 11 represents that 44% of people were aware of the types of hand sanitizers that are antimicrobial and antibacterial but 56% were not aware of it. Antibacterial is more effective than antimicrobial as it can kill all pathogenic bacteria 36. Sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is more effective in destroying the microorganisms than handwashing with antimicrobial soaps due to their ability to inactivate and destroy the microbe in vegetative state³⁷.

Figure 12 represents 61% of people were about the method of usage of hand sanitizer but the remaining 39% was not aware of it. Figure 13 represents there is a significant difference between the age groups and awareness about the method of

usage of hand sanitizer (p<0.05). The method of applying an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is to apply to hands as well to lower the forearm for at least 30 seconds and then allow it to air dry³⁸. Some study says that there is a technique for the usage of hand sanitizer that consists of 6 steps and found that "responsible application" was adequate, as long as people are made aware that they are responsible for covering their entire hands during hygienic hand disinfection. However, some of the children may not know the method of usage of hand sanitizer unless they are educated ^{39,40,41,42,43}.

Figure 14 90% of people carry the sanitizer along with them wherever they go out. This statement shows that survey makes them understand the importance of hand sanitizer in their day to day life.

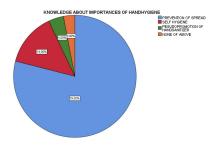


Figure 1: Graph shows the result of knowledge about the importance of hand hygiene. 79% of respondents said that it helps prevent spread, 14% said that it is for self-hygiene, 4% respondents said that it is only for advertisement (pseudo promotion) of hand sanitizer and the remaining 3% choose the options none of the above.

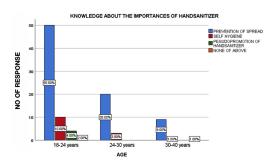


Figure 2: Bar graphs represent the association between different age groups and awareness on the importance of hand hygiene. The X-axis represents different age groups and the Y-axis represents the number of responses. The participants answered the prevention of spread in blue color, self-hygiene in red color, pseudo promotion in green color, and none of the above in orange. Out of 79 respondents who answered to prevent the spread, 50% were from the age group between 18-24 years, 20% were from the age group 24-30 years, and 9% were from 30-40 years. A Chi-square test was used to find the association between the variables and was found to be statistically not significant. Pearson chi-square value is 4.118, the p-value is 0.661.

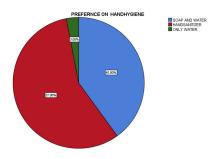


Figure 3: Pie chart shows the result of the preference for hand hygiene methods. 57% respondents prefer hand sanitizer, 40% said they prefer soaps and water, and the remaining said that they prefer only water as a method of handwash.

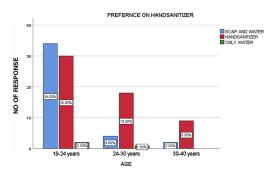


Figure 4: Bar graph representing the association between different age groups and preference on hand hygiene methods. The X-axis represents different age groups and Y-axis represents the number of responses. The participants who answered soaps and water in blue color, hand sanitizer in red color, and only water in green color. Out of 57% of respondents who answered hand sanitizer, 30% were from the age group between 18-24 years, 18% were from the age group between 24-30 years and 9% were from the age group between 30-40 years. Chi-square test was used to find the association between the variable and was found to be statistically significant and Pearson chi-square value is 11.462, p-value=0.022.

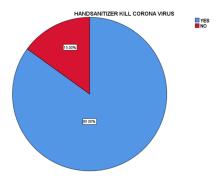


Figure 5: Pie chart shows the result of the knowledge about hand sanitizer kills coronavirus. 85% of respondents agree hand sanitizer kills coronavirus 15% disagree with the statement.

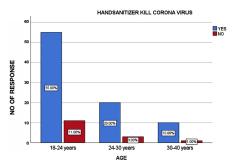


Figure 6: Bar graph representing the association between different age groups and knowledge about hand sanitizer-kill coronavirus. The X-axis represents different age groups and Y-axis represents the number of responses. The participants agreed in blue color, whereas disagreed in red color. Out of 100 respondents who agreed the statement was 55% from the age group between 18-24 years, 20% from the age group between 24-30 years, 10% from the age group between 30-40 years. Chi-square test was used to find the association between the variable and was found to be statistically significant and Pearson chi-square value is 0.514, p-value=0.773.

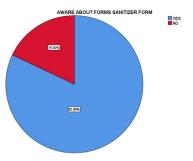


Figure 7: Pie chart shows awareness about the forms of hand sanitizer. (82%) respondents are aware and 16% not aware.

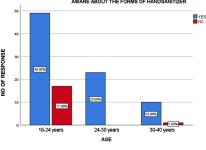


Figure 8: Bar graph represents the association between different age groups and awareness about the forms of sanitizer. The X-axis represents different age groups and Y-axis represents the number of responses. The participants who answered Yes in blue color, whereas No in red color. Out of 100 respondents, 49% of the age group between 18-24 years, 23% of the age group between 24-30 years, 10% from the age group between 30-40 years were aware. Chi-square test was used to find the association between the variable and was found to be statistically significant and Pearson chi value 8.331, p-value =0.016.

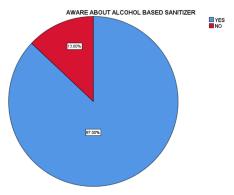


Figure 9: Pie chart shows the result of awareness about alcohol-based hand sanitizer. 87% were aware of the alcoholbased sanitizer and 13% were not aware of it.

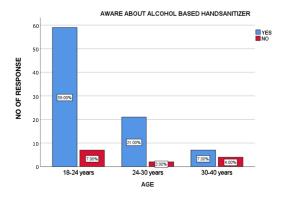


Figure 10: Bar graph representing the association between different age groups and the awareness of alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The X-axis represents different age groups and Y-axis represents the number of responses. The participants who answered yes in blue color and no in red color. Out of 87% of respondents, 59% from the age group 18-24 years, 21% were from the age group 24-30 years, and 7% 30-40 years were aware. Chi-square test was used to find the association between the variables and was found to be statistically significant and Pearson chi-square value 6.020, p-value =0.049.

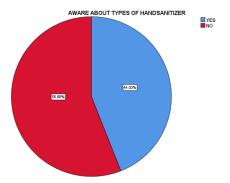


Figure 11: Pie chart shows the result of awareness about types of hand sanitizer. (56%) respondents were not aware of the types of hand sanitizer and 44% aware of it.

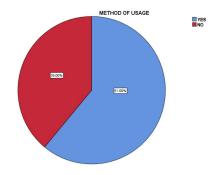


Figure 12: Pie chart shows the result of awareness about the method of usage of hand sanitizer. (61%) respondents aware of the method of usage of sanitizer and 39% were not aware of it

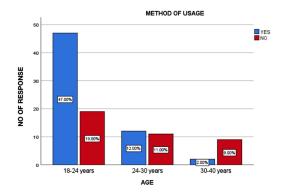


Figure 13: Bar graph representing the association between different age groups and awareness about the method of usage of hand sanitizer. The X-axis represents different age groups and the Y-axis represents the number of responses. The participants who answered Yes in blue color and No in red color. Out of 100 respondents, 47 % from the age group 18-24 years, 12 % were from the age group 24-30 years and 2 % from the 30-40 years are aware. Chi-square test was used to find the association between the variables and was found to be statistically significant and Pearson Chi-square value is 12.124, p-value = 0.022.

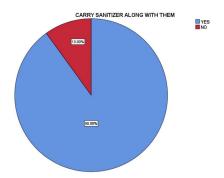


Figure 14: Bar graph shows the result on awareness about hand sanitizer carry along with them (90%) respondents said wherever they go they will carry hand sanitizer but the remaining 10% disagree with the statement.

LIMITATION

The survey is conducted with a limited number of people. It concentrated only on urban people not on rural people. This is due to a shortage of time, so more suggestions or opinions from people were not collected. The future scope of this study is that everyone knows that hand sanitizer is used among the entire ages group but it is not recommended for children that are below 4 yrs, hand hygiene is important for everyone so there should be upcoming studies which emphasize the hand sanitizer usages among children.

CONCLUSION

The present studies show that people have some knowledge and awareness of the role of hand sanitizer in the prevention of COVID-19. Almost everyone is aware of the hand sanitizer and its role in their day-to-day life as Hygiene is very important to everybody whereas hand hygiene prevents diseases. Providing a comprehensive, targeted, yet simple to execute a hand hygiene program significantly reduced the incidence of health care claims and increased employee workplace satisfaction.

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Conflict of interest

Nil

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