

BACKGROUND

December 2019 marked a new era of a biological disaster by an outbreak of a virus in China, known as COVID-19. In early 2020, World Health Organization identified it as a global emergency of public health concern.

Globally, as of 2021, there have been 77,920,564 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1,731,901 deaths, reported to WHO.

Across the globe, India stands in top two with 10,094,801 cases.⁷ According to Ministry of Family Health Welfare (MoFHW), total active cases are 2, 81,919 with 9,71,7834 Lakh recoveries and 1,47,092 Lakh fatalities with over 9,97,396 Lakh tests performed till date. Recently in December 2020, a new variant of SARS-CoV 2 virus (Variant under Investigation (VUI)-20212011) has been reported by the United Kingdom Government to the World Health Organization (WHO).

BACKGROUND

Therefore, from the ongoing stats, there is a need to design educational programs to increase the compliance of dental students with universal precautions to minimize this infection.

This is done by understanding and determining their behavior. In this study, students from various dental colleges were questioned in order to evaluate their general levels of knowledge, attitudes, and perception in regards to COVID-19.

With this background, the present study is an attempt to educate the level of knowledge, their attitude and perception among dental students in Andhra Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

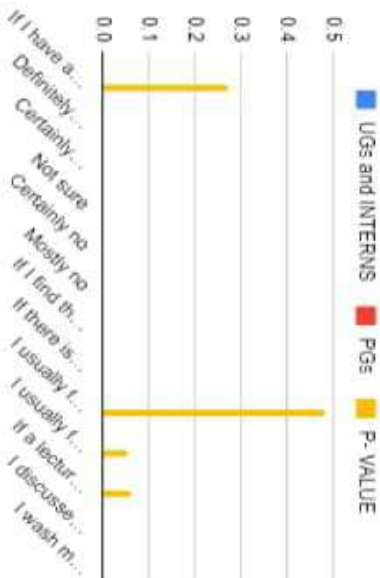
Online questionnaire-based cross-sectional study.

The sampling method used here was Simple Random sampling method that was applied to all the 15 dental colleges in Andhra Pradesh and randomly four colleges were chosen which are to be included in this present study.

Out of the total 250 students enrolled in this study, 1 incomplete response was recorded which is excluded.

DATA COLLECTION

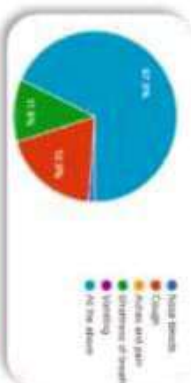
A modified questionnaire with questions compiled from previous study – COVID-19: Knowledge, Attitude and Preventive Behaviors of Medical and Dental Students⁸ was used in this study which was administered through Google forms. Prior permission was obtained by the main corresponding author of the stand article and approval was granted. The questionnaire comprised of 4 sections :



| KNOWLEDGE | | | | P VALUE |
|---|-----|-------|-----|---------|
| UG | NO | PG | NO | |
| YES | NO | YES | NO | |
| 82% | 79% | 18% | 20% | 0.001* |
| Do you think that COVID-19 can be treated using antifungal drugs? | | | | 0.093 |
| 85.3% | 77% | 14.7% | 23% | |

| ATTITUDE | | | | P VALUE |
|--|-------------|------------|----|---------|
| UG | NO | PG | NO | |
| If I find that I contacted a person with the virus, I agree to be isolated at home for a certain period until it is proven that I am free from the disease | | | | 0.001* |
| Definitely yes | 124 (91.9%) | 13 (19.4%) | | |
| Certainly yes | 54 (80.6%) | 7 (43.8%) | | |
| Not sure | 9 (56.3%) | 3 (21.4%) | | |
| Certainly no | 11 (78.6%) | 12 (10.6%) | | |
| Mostly no | 5 (29.4%) | 11 (8.1%) | | |
| If there is an available lab test for detection of COVID-19, I am willing to do it | | | | 0.001* |
| Definitely yes | 49 (75.4%) | 16 (24.6%) | | |
| Certainly yes | 11 (73.3%) | 4 (26.7%) | | |
| Not sure | 14 (66.7%) | 7 (33.3%) | | |
| Certainly no | 5 (41.7%) | 7 (38.3%) | | |
| Mostly no | 124 (91.2) | 12 (18.8%) | | |

| PERCEPTION | | | | P VALUE |
|--|-------------|------------|----|---------|
| UG | NO | PG | NO | |
| I discussed COVID-19 prevention with my family and friends | | | | 0.001* |
| Definitely yes | 146 (89.0%) | 18 (11.0%) | | |
| Certainly yes | 22 (57.9%) | 16 (42.1%) | | |
| Not sure | 17 (70.8%) | 7 (50.0%) | | |
| Certainly no | 5 (50.0%) | 5 (50.0%) | | |
| Mostly no | 13 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | | |
| I wash my hands regularly and for a enough period. | | | | 0.001* |
| Definitely yes | 142 (88.2%) | 19 (11.8) | | |
| Certainly yes | 25 (67.6%) | 12 (32.4%) | | |
| Not sure | 22 (66.7%) | 11 (33.3%) | | |
| Certainly no | 7 (63.6%) | 4 (36.4) | | |
| Mostly no | 7 (60.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | | |



DISCUSSION

In accordance with WHO, majority of Based on the results in this study, participants are aware of wearing masks, and proper hand washing are one of the most key preventive measure which are the guidelines given by WHO and also the Indian Ministry.

In our study, 81.3% of the participants were aware that those with other health problems are most likely to die from COVID-19 infection which is in line with a study conducted among medical students in Jordan which showed 95.0% of medical students also say that people with chronic illness are highly susceptible to being infected by the virus.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we observed both UGs and PGs in Andhra Pradesh have good and moderate knowledge about COVID-19 and none were poor. The study participants also possessed good attitudes and preventive behaviors. There were no observable factors influencing the knowledge, attitude and preventive behavior among the study participants.

Students with greater knowledge about this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will have better attitudes towards this disease and will get involved in more preventive behaviors programs with "Health for All" being the beauty of our profession.