

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures, and beliefs on use of herbal products as protective measure against COVID-19 infection

**Nurliyana Najihah Binti Mazlan¹, Raja Ahsan Aftab², Nor Safwan Hadi Nor Afendi¹,
Santhanathan A/L S. Rajendram¹, Sreenivas Patro Sisinthy^{1*}**

¹Faculty of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Royal College of Medicine Perak,
Universiti Kuala Lumpur, 30450, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

²Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

*Corresponding Author E-mail: ss.patro@unikl.edu.my, sspatro@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

To assess the knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms, and belief on herbal supplement as protective measure against COVID-19 infection among general public in Malaysia. A cross sectional survey questionnaire was conducted among 423 respondents that comprised of three (3) different sections consisting as Section A (demographics characteristics of the respondents). Section B (evaluation of respondent's knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms) and Section C (evaluation of respondent's belief about use of herbal products during COVID-19 pandemic). Overall, a good knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms, and moderate belief on herbal supplement as protective measure against COVID-19 infection was observed. Mean knowledge score was found to be 10.38 ± 1.56 whereas mean belief scores were 36.6 ± 6.52 . Also, a significant association was observed between respondent's occupation ($p = 0.029$) with knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms. Furthermore, the relationship between respondent's knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measure and symptoms, and respondent's belief on herbal supplement as protective measure against COVID-19 infection was insignificant ($p = 0.053$). A good knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms, and moderate belief on herbal supplement as protective measure against COVID-19 infection.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, Awareness and belief, COVID-19 prevention, Herbal supplements.

INTRODUCTION:

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) transmits through the respiratory droplets of infected people. Sneezing, coughing, or contact with fomites in the immediate vicinity of an infected person can spread respiratory droplets to healthy people within one meter¹. Health and economic status are significantly impacted by COVID-19, which is associated with high morbidity and death globally². Many other acute respiratory diseases, such as SARS and MERS, share similarities with the clinical symptoms and indications of COVID-19. Fever (98%), tiredness (44%), and dry cough (76%) are the common clinical signs of COVID-19³.

World health organization (WHO) suggests the public to use alcohol-based, hand cleansers to clean or wash hands, and other necessary precautions in limiting the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. To effectively stop the virus from spreading, public health professionals advise social isolation⁴. In line with WHO protocols, Malaysia like rest of the world have also taken up several measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 virus. For successful implementation of these protective measures, requires commitment from general public in adhering to these measures. However, the adherence is mainly depending on people's knowledge towards COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms⁵. Although, Malaysia has been very proactive in creating public awareness campaigns in limiting the spread of COVID-19 virus, there is limited data studies to suggest the current knowledge levels of COVID-19 preventive measures and symptoms among general public.