

Abstract

Preparedness, Risk Perception, Concerns, and Risk Acceptance Among Hospital Health Care Workers in Facing the Emerging COVID-19 Outbreak in Najran Hospitals, Saudi Arabia, at the Early Phase of the Pandemic

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Abstract

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic extended to reach most countries in the world during a few months. The preparedness of health care institutions and health care workers (HCWs) is crucial for applying effective prevention and control measures.

Objective: This study aims to assess HCWs' and institutional preparedness in facing the new emerging COVID-19 infection at the early phase of the pandemic and to explore HCWs' risk perception, concerns, and risk acceptance.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among hospital HCWs in King Khalid and New Najran hospitals, Saudi Arabia, at the early phase of the pandemic, during March and April 2020.

Results: Overall, 563 completed questionnaires were received (n=382, 67.9% from King Khalid and n=181, 32.1% from New Najran). The majority were female participants (78.6%); nurses constituted 74.7% of the sample. The age range of the participants was 20-63 years, with the mean age of physicians and nurses being 36.5 (SD 9.15) years and 31.8 (SD 7.48) years, respectively. Among participants, 65.8% attended training programs for COVID-19 infection, of whom 69.9% were satisfied with this training. Almost all (97.4%) of the participants reported reading the official circulars assigned for guidelines, case definition, and infection control measures regarding COVID-19 infection; 97.1% received basic infection control training; 98.9% checked for the best-fitted size of an N95 mask; and 89.4% were influenza vaccinated. Of the participants, 82.6% reported that they have sufficient knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic, 82.0% reported being confident that they can protect themselves and their patients when dealing with COVID-19 cases, 92.9% reported that they understand the risk of COVID-19 infection for patients and health care staff, and 83.2% reported agreement of accepting the risk of getting the infection being a part of their job. The study participants attained a mean 20.26 (SD 2.60) knowledge score on a scale of 26 maximum points (77.9%); of them, 74.5% attained 20 points or more (>75%), indicating good working knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic. Exploring the participants' perception about the preparedness of their institutions toward the COVID-19 pandemic, 70.8% agreed that institutional precautionary measures to COVID-19 in the workplace are sufficient, 71.6% agreed that all personal protective equipment is provided and always available in the workplace, and 90.6% mentioned that the staff in their institutions have had adequate training. Exploring risk perception and the affective aspect of the pandemic on HCWs, 79.0%, 35.2%, and 64.2% of the participants felt that they, their families, and the Najran community are at high risk of getting an infection of COVID-19, respectively, and 54.7% and 55.1% were concerned about their personal and family health, respectively.

Conclusions: The findings revealed good knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic among HCWs in Najran hospitals, Saudi Arabia. Concerns and worries were expressed regarding working with the highly infectious patients with COVID-19. Participants

appreciated important aspects of institutional preparedness. Experience gained from the previous Middle East respiratory syndrome–related coronavirus outbreak may explain good knowledge, risk acceptance, self-efficacy, and good and rapid institutional preparedness at the early stage of the pandemic.

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KEYWORDS

COVID-19; knowledge; concern; health care workers; institutional preparedness; Saudi Arabia

Abbreviations

HCW: health care worker

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