

Knowledge, Attitude and Practices with regard to the Use of Facemasks in the Prevention of Covid-19 and Other Respiratory Illnesses Among General Public in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study focuses on evaluating the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of the general population in Sri Lanka regarding the use of face masks for COVID-19 prevention. The research was conducted through an online survey from March 2021 to January 2022, involving 157 voluntary participants with majority being females (59.9%). The survey assessed socio-demographic factors, knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to face mask usage. The study revealed that the majority of participants (87.9%) strongly agreed on the necessity of wearing face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating a positive attitude towards face mask mandates in Sri Lanka. Most respondents demonstrated a high level of knowledge (61.1%) regarding face mask usage. Majority (65.0%) of the responders demonstrated a good attitude towards face mask usage. Regarding practices, the majority exhibited moderate adherence (53.5%) to face mask usage. The general public in Sri Lanka demonstrates reasonably positive knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding face mask usage for COVID-19 prevention. However, a significant proportion (78.3%, n=123) reported never using face masks for preventing respiratory infections prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the need for comprehensive education emphasizing the importance of face masks in preventing respiratory infections. It is worth noting that while considerable data is available on knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding COVID-19 among specific occupations in Sri Lanka, limited information is available on these aspects of the general public. Thus, this study attempts to address this void of evaluating understanding, attitude, and behaviour of the general public, related to the use of a face mask.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Face masks, Online survey, Knowledge-Attitudes-Practices, Respiratory infections*