

## Knowledge about COVID-19 among Saudi Arabian residents at the onset of the Pandemic

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### Background:

The wide and accelerated spread of COVID-19 and its detrimental health and economic impact have prompted governments throughout the world to exert comprehensive protective measures to mitigate such effects. Recognizing the considerable positive impact of knowledge and awareness on individuals behaviors, Saudi Arabia was one of the few countries that responded promptly to constrain the spread of the pandemic among its population and invested profoundly in awareness campaigns to educate the public about the virus.

### Objectives:

The purpose of this study is two folds: First, to evaluate the level of knowledge about COVID-19 among the public before the first case was confirmed in Saudi Arabia. Second, to investigate associations between the level of knowledge about COVID-19 and several individual characteristics such as being a healthcare provider.

### Methods:

We conducted a cross-sectional survey ( $n = 737$ ) to measure the public's knowledge about COVID-19 in the early stages of the pandemic. An online closed-ended survey was administered to measure participants knowledge level and demographics. Multiple regression analysis was performed to study the associations between knowledge and participants characteristics.

### Results:

Overall, an above-average knowledge level about COVID-19 among participants was observed. Multiple linear regression

modeling showed nonsignificant associations between being a healthcare provider and knowledge about COVID-19 and between the age of the participant and knowledge of COVID-19. Only the sex of the participant (0.47,  $p < 0.01$ ) was a significant predictor of knowledge about COVID-19.

### Conclusion:

In pandemics such as COVID-19, early and comprehensive interventions to raise awareness among the population are instrumental and necessary to expand the level of knowledge, which has a direct influence on adhering to recommended preventive measures. However, there is a gender gap in knowledge about COVID-19 that must be examined to inform future health interventions and policies.

### Keywords:

Cross-sectional Study; COVID-19; Knowledge; Behavior; Coronavirus

### Biography

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