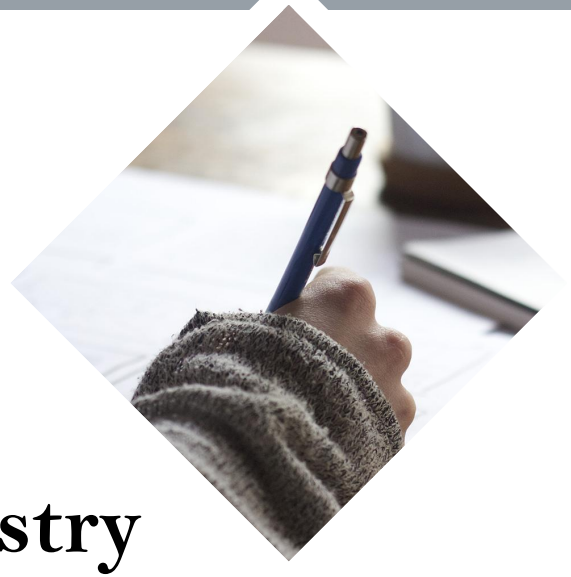


PHC Research at the Palestinian Ministry of Health: Dreams to Reality

O

Dr. Beesan Maraqa, MD,MPH PBFM, Family Medicine specialist

Family Medicine Department/ Public and Family Health/MoH/Palestine

dr.beesan.maraqa@gmail.com

DISCLOSURE

MOH

MINISTRY OF HEALTH – VISION

Comprehensive, integrated, high-quality health system towards sustainable health promotion, response and management

NATIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS (2021-2023)

- Ensuring the provision of comprehensive health services to all citizens towards the resettlement of health services in Palestine.
- Strengthening programs for managing Communicable and Noncommunicable diseases, preventive health care, and community health awareness.
- Institutionalizing quality systems in all aspects of health service provision.
- Providing sufficient, efficient and qualified human resources in the Palestinian health sector.
- Strengthening health governance, including institutional development, strengthening laws, legislation, and coordination across sectors, integration between service providers, strengthening health financing, and strengthening financial protection citizens in the face of health costs.

RESEARCH IN PHC

- Disease trends and risk factors
- Outcomes of treatment or public health interventions
- Functional abilities
- Patterns of care
- Health care costs
- Question our practice

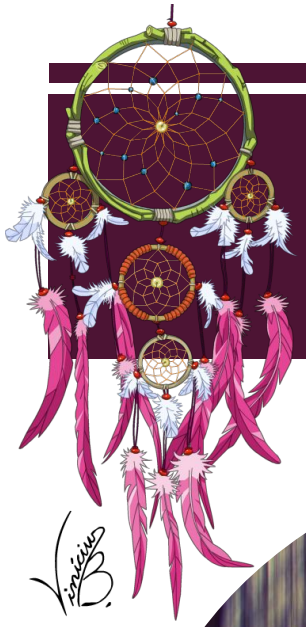
Improve patient care

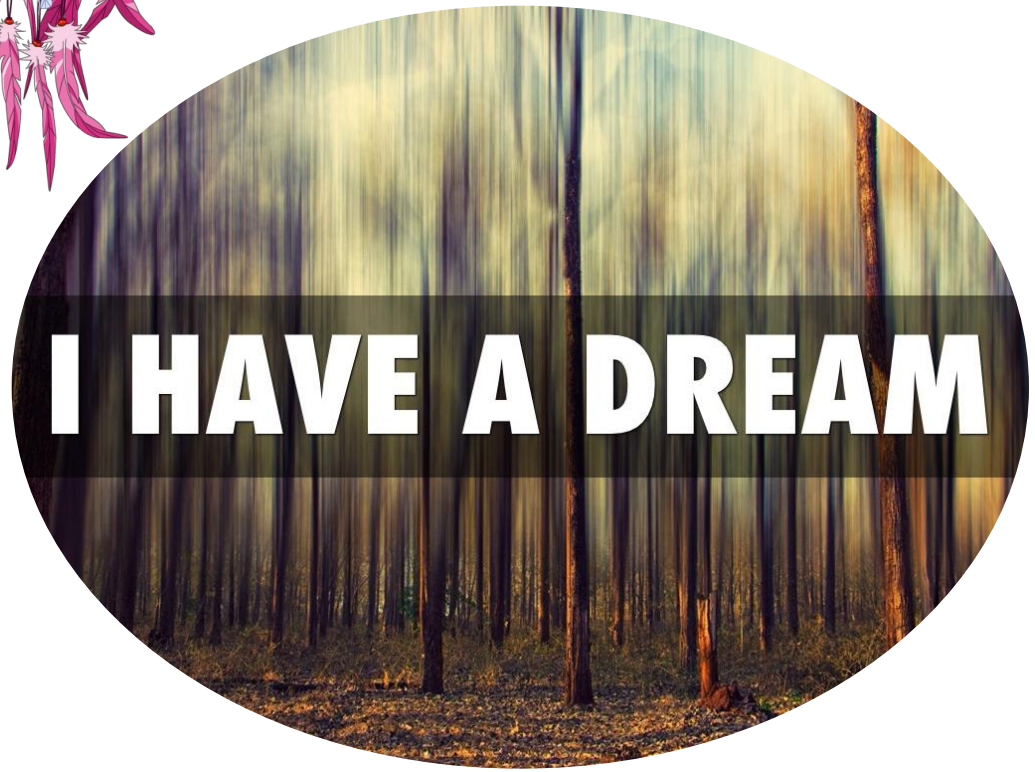
RESEARCH IN PHC - OPPORTUNITIES

- Plenty areas for research
- Commitment
- Team
- Expert (Internal and External)
- Support- Internally & externally
- Networking and collaborations

CHALLENGES

- Research skills
- Ownership
- Fund
- Field work
- Formal approvals
- Utilization of research findings for clinical practice
- Publication – language, expertise, APC.





Think of a research question/s you'd like to work on.

- What is the chance to start?
- What likelihood do you believe you have of producing results that will have an impact on healthcare?
- What are the chances of getting it published?

Sep. 2020

Palestinian Health Care Workers' Stress and Stressors During COVID-19 Pandemic

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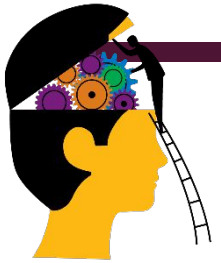

Original Article

Determinants of smoking cessation counseling favorable practice for primary care physicians: A cross-sectional study from Palestine

Beesan Maraqa[1,2*], Zaher Nazzal[2*], Jurouh Jabareen[1,2], Kamal Al-Shakhrah[1]

[1]Primary Health Directorate, Palestinian Ministry of Health, [2]Department of Family and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

*Both authors contribute equally to the work

Abstract

Background: Smoking cessation counseling is not well established in Middle East countries including Palestine. This study assesses the practice of smoking cessation counseling among primary healthcare (PHC) physicians in Palestine and its determinants. **Methods:** Over the period from April to September 2019, general practitioners, family medicine physicians, obstetricians and gynecologists, and dentists working at the PHC Centers in Palestine were approached through a cross-sectional design using a self-reported questionnaire. Proportionate stratified random sampling approach has been used. Sociodemographic, medical background, smoking cessation counseling training, smoking history, practice, knowledge, attitude, and confidence were evaluated. The proportion of favorable practice has been determined and its relationship with all variables has been evaluated. Ethical approval was received from the National University of An-Najah. **Results:** 295 physicians were enrolled in the study with an 86% response rate. 75.3% ($n = 222$) were males with a mean age of 39.9 ± 9 years. The majority were General Practitioners (76.5%, $n = 252$). Most of them (84.3%, $n = 215$) had not received any training. The favorable practice was seen in 36.6% (95% CI 31–41%). Attitude is the main predictor of favorable practice (P value = 0.002, adjusted OR = 1.1). **Conclusion:** Palestinian PHC physicians have a low level of counseling for smoking cessation. Given the efficacy of counseling for smoking cessation and the high level of the tobacco epidemic in the area, health policy to ensure all healthcare personnel-especially physicians-receive training in cessation counseling and call for a public health campaign for control of tobacco should be taken into account.

Keywords: Counseling, Palestine, Physicians, primary health care, smoking cessation

Introduction

The tobacco crisis is one of the world's greatest challenges to public health, killing over 7 million people worldwide. Over 6 million of the deaths have been caused by direct ingestion of tobacco. Some 890,000 have been caused by non-smoking exposure.[1]

Tobacco dependency is a chronic condition that also needs repeated treatments and several attempts to stop. Various types of treatments are recommended and have been shown to be successful in a wide variety of communities, including smoking cessation counseling and pharmacotherapy.[2] Many studies have explored the efficacy of smoking counseling as a smoking cessation strategy, and the findings of systematic analyses have

10 April 2021

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EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOTRAUMATOLOGY
2021, VOL. 12, 1904699
https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2021.1904699

PSYCHO-TRAUMATOLOGY

Taylor & Francis

BASIC RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

Quality of life and post-traumatic stress disorder among adult females with cancer in Palestine: a cross-sectional study

Beesan Nader Maraqa and Muna Ahmead

Faculty of Public Health, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem, Palestine

ABSTRACT

Background: Little research has been conducted on the quality of life (QoL), functional status, and traumatic symptoms related to the diagnosis and treatment of cancer in the Arab region, particularly in Palestine, where the psychological problems in patients with cancer are often neglected.

Objective: The aim of the study was to assess QoL and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms among adult female patients with cancer attending Beit-Jala Governmental Hospital in Bethlehem.

Method: Participants were recruited from 4 April 2015 to the end of July 2015. The sample included 253 female patients with cancer attending Beit-Jala Governmental Hospital in Bethlehem. Data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, including a socio-demographic data sheet, the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 30, and the post-traumatic stress disorder checklist for PTSD symptoms.

Results: The current study showed poor global QoL (57.4%) and poor physical function (48.5%) for female patients with cancer. Insomnia, fatigue, and loss of appetite were the most troublesome symptoms that the participants complained about. The prevalence of PTSD symptoms was 3%. Regarding PTSD symptom severity, 2% reported severe symptoms, 23.3% reported moderate symptoms, and (68.8%) reported mild symptoms, based on a 1991 classification of PTSD symptom severity scores. Finally, Pearson's test revealed a strong, statistically significant, inverse relationship between QoL domains and PTSD.

Conclusion: The study found that the overall QoL of female patients with cancer was low and strongly associated with PTSD symptoms, suggesting that early detection and treatment of these symptoms is critical.

Calidad de vida y trastorno de estrés postraumático en mujeres adultas con cáncer en Palestina. Un estudio transversal

Antecedentes: Se han realizado pocas investigaciones sobre la calidad de vida (CdV), el estado funcional, y los síntomas traumáticos relacionados con el diagnóstico y el tratamiento del cáncer en la región árabe, en particular en Palestina, donde los problemas psicológicos de los pacientes con cáncer a menudo se descuidan.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 24 January 2020
Revised 18 February 2021
Accepted 1 March 2021

KEYWORDS
Quality of life; post-traumatic stress disorder; cancer patients; breast cancer

PALABRAS CLAVE
calidad de vida; trastorno de estrés postraumático; pacientes oncológicos; cáncer de mama

关键词
生活质量；创伤后应激障碍；癌症患者；乳腺癌

HIGHLIGHTS

- Post-traumatic stress disorder is being increasingly diagnosed among patients with cancer, in addition to low quality of life.
- The literature reveals a lack of studies in Palestine assessing these problems in female patients with cancer.
- A cross-sectional study including 253 patients with cancer using three self-reported questionnaires was conducted.
- Job loss circumstances and

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Vaccine- Elsevier

Original Research

Palestinian Health Care Workers' Stress and Stressors During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Cross-Sectional Study

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DOI: 10.1177/2150132720955026
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SAGE

Beesan Maraqa[1*], Zaher Nazzal[2*], and Therese Zink[3]

Abstract

Background: COVID-19 is thought to be the most significant public health threat the modern world has encountered. Health care workers (HCWs) face enormous pressure due to work overload, negative emotions, exhaustion, lack of contact with their families, and risk of catching the infection and death. **Aim:** This study aims to assess the level of stress perceived by HCWs and possible associated factors during the COVID-19 outbreak in Palestine. **Methods:** A cross-sectional sample of 430 frontlines HCWs was conducted using an online self-reported questionnaire. HCWs' stress from the COVID-19 outbreak, factors that increase stress, and the activities that reduced stress were assessed. Chi-square test was used to compare between a categorical variable and the study outcome; associations are presented as odds ratios (OR) and confidence intervals (95% CI) with 0.05 significance level. Al-Najah National University institutional review board granted ethics approval. **Results:** Most respondents (74.0%) reported high-stress levels during the outbreak. Fear of transmitting the virus to family was the most stressful factor (91.6%). HCWs who did not have training on the outbreak response were more likely to have high-stress levels (OR = 2.7 [95% CI = 1.7-4.4], $P < .001$). Those with high stress reported being disappointed (OR = 2.4 [95% CI = 1.5-3.6], $P < .001$), and strongly considered taking sick leave (OR = 3.9 [95% CI = 1.9-7.9], $P < .001$). **Conclusion:** HCWs are under tremendous stress, given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding the psychological impact of the outbreak on HCWs and the activities that mitigate the stress is crucial to guide policies and interventions that can maintain psychological well-being.

Keywords

health care workers, stress, Palestine, stressors, COVID-19

Dates received 7 July 2020; revised 9 August 2020; accepted 10 August 2020.

frontiers in Medicine

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 05 January 2021
doi: 10.3389/fmed.2020.576820

Mixed Method Study to Explore Ethical Dilemmas and Health Care Workers' Willingness to Work Amid COVID-19 Pandemic in Palestine

Beesan Maraqa[1,2], Zaher Nazzal[3*] and Therese Zink[4]*

[1] Primary Health Directorate, Ministry of Health, Ramallah, Palestine, [2] Family Medicine Residency Program, Faculty of Graduate Studies, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine, [3] Department of Family and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine, [4] Department of Family Medicine & School of Public Health, Brown University, Providence, RI, United States

Background: The high potential risks involved in working in a healthcare setting during a pandemic and the associated fear that may affect health care workers' (HCWs') willingness to work are important to understand to eliminate potential barriers to working. This study aimed to assess Palestinian HCWs' willingness to work and the related factors as well as to explore their ethical dilemmas during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Materials and Methods: Quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) data were collected. Frontline HCWs ($n = 550$) received an online survey link via closed institutional networks. Frequencies summarized the data, and chi-square compared variables and outcomes. Odds ratios (ORs) and multivariable analysis examined predictors for willingness to work. Fifteen HCWs (physicians, nurses, and lab and radiology technicians) were purposefully sampled and agreed to interviews to explore their thoughts, motivations, and worries. Thematic analysis focused on ethical dilemmas to enhance the breadth and the depth of the study.

Results: Almost 25% of surveyed HCWs were not willing to work during the pandemic.

OPEN ACCESS

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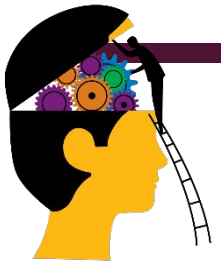

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COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among health care workers in Palestine: A call for action

Beesan Maraqa [a], Zaher Nazzal [b,*], Razan Rabi [c], Nafez Sarhan [d,e], Kamal Al-Shakhra [a], Mai Al-Kaila [a]

[a] Ministry of Health, Palestine
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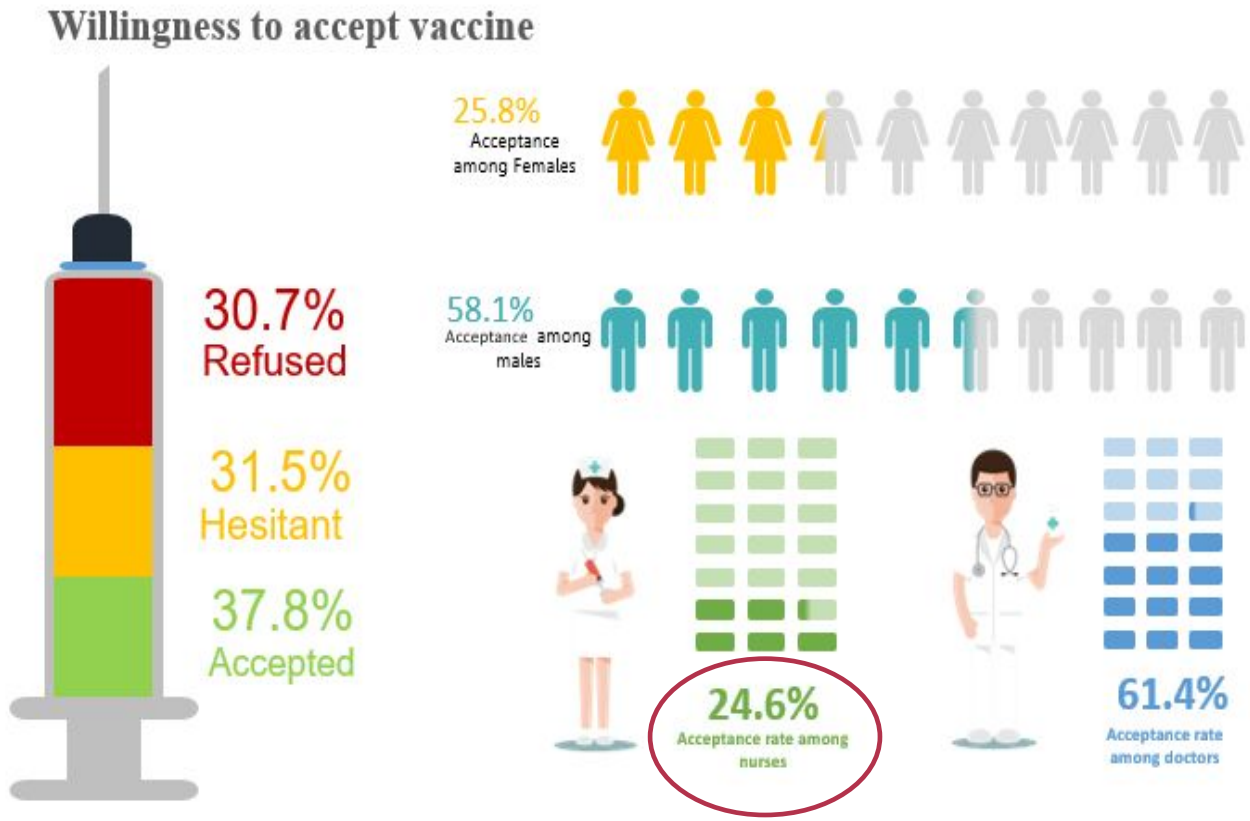
COVID-19 vaccine
Vaccine hesitancy
Attitudes
Healthcare workers
Palestine

ABSTRACT

With the planned COVID-19 vaccine, vaccine hesitation is a great challenge, particularly for healthcare professionals. In this study, we examined the acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine by health care workers, their concerns about it, and the reasons that might prevent them from getting vaccinated. We conducted a cross-sectional study using an anonymous online survey from December 25, 2020, to January 6, 2021. The questionnaire consisted of demographic characteristics (age, gender, profession, sector, medical history, and general health), COVID-19 related knowledge, and personal history of influenza vaccination. The intention to get the vaccine once it is available was directly asked, and attitudes towards the diseases and the vaccine were studied using a four-point Likert scale statement based on the health belief model's constructs.

The study included 1159 HCWs; 62.9% were females, and 52.5% were between the ages of 30–49 years. The intention to get vaccinated was only 37.8% [95%CI: 35.0%–40.6%], while 31.5% were undecided, and 30.7% planned to refuse it. Higher levels of intention were reported among males (OR; 2.7, 95%CI: 2.0–3.7), younger ages (OR 1.7, 95%CI: 1.1–2.8), physicians (OR; 2.9, 95%CI: 2.0–4.0), HCWs at non-governmental settings (OR; 1.4, 95%CI: 1.1–1.9), those who previously received the influenza vaccine (OR 4.0, 95%CI: 2.3–7.1), and those who had higher COVID-19 related knowledge (OR; 1.7, 95%CI: 2.3–7.1). In conclusion, vaccine acceptance among HCWs was much lower than expected, which would greatly diminish the role of vaccination in reducing the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the community.



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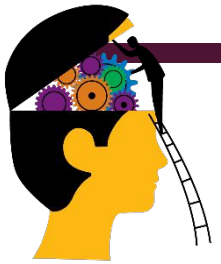
MAY 2021
DOI: 10.1016/J.YPMED.2021.106618



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POPULATIONS AT RISK ACROSS THE LIFESPAN – POPULATION STUDIES

PHN PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING WILEY

Factors affecting nurses' intention to accept the COVID-9 vaccine: A cross-sectional study

Razan Rabi MD, Intern[1] | Beesan Maraqa MD, PBFM, Consultant[2] | Zaher Nazzal MD, ABCM, Consultant[3] | Therese Zink MD, MPH Professor[4]

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Correspondence
Zaher Nazzal, MD, Consultant Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine, Box 7,707.
Email: znazzal@najah.edu

Abstract
Objective: To measure COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and related factors to uncover nurses' concerns and fears.
Design: A cross-sectional study.
Sample: The study included 639 nurses; 83% were women and 80% under 50 years.
Measurement: A self-administered questionnaire was used. It included demographic characteristics, COVID-19-related fears and concerns, COVID-19 vaccine perceived benefits, and intention toward getting the vaccine.
Results: Forty percent of the nurses planned to get the vaccine when available, 41% would take it later when adequate protection and safety were presented, and 18% would never take it. Significant factors associated with vaccination intention were as follows: age (adjusted OR 1.42, 95% CI: 1.02–1.99); lack of knowledge about the vaccine (adjusted OR 2.6, 95% CI 1.81–3.8); concern about long-term side effects (adjusted OR 2.0, 95% CI

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MARCH 2021
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Original Qualitative Research Report

Exploring the Perceptions of Nurses on Receiving the SARS CoV-2 Vaccine in Palestine: A Qualitative Study

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SAGE

Souad Belkebir[1], Beesan Maraqa[2], Zaher Nazzal[1], Abdullah Abdullah BSN[3], Ferial Yasin[2], Kamal Al-Shakhrah[2] and Therese Zink[4]

Abstract
Background: Uncertainty about vaccination among nurses are major barriers to managing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic worldwide.
Purpose: To explore nurseś perceptions about receiving the SARS CoV-2 vaccine to inform the upcoming Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) vaccination efforts.
Methods: Four focus groups were conducted with nurses between January 18 and 30, 2021, before MOH launched vaccinations in Palestine. Participants working in government and private facilities were invited to participate and completed an online or paper form to provide demographics, review the study purpose, and give consent. Meetings were facilitated in Arabic either online via the Zoom platform or face-to-face using the same interview guide. Transcripts were translated into English and coded using a template analysis approach.
Results: Forty-six nurses, with a median age of 29.5y (range, 22–57) from across Palestine participated. Three major themes

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF NURSING RESEARCH.
NOVEMBER 2021
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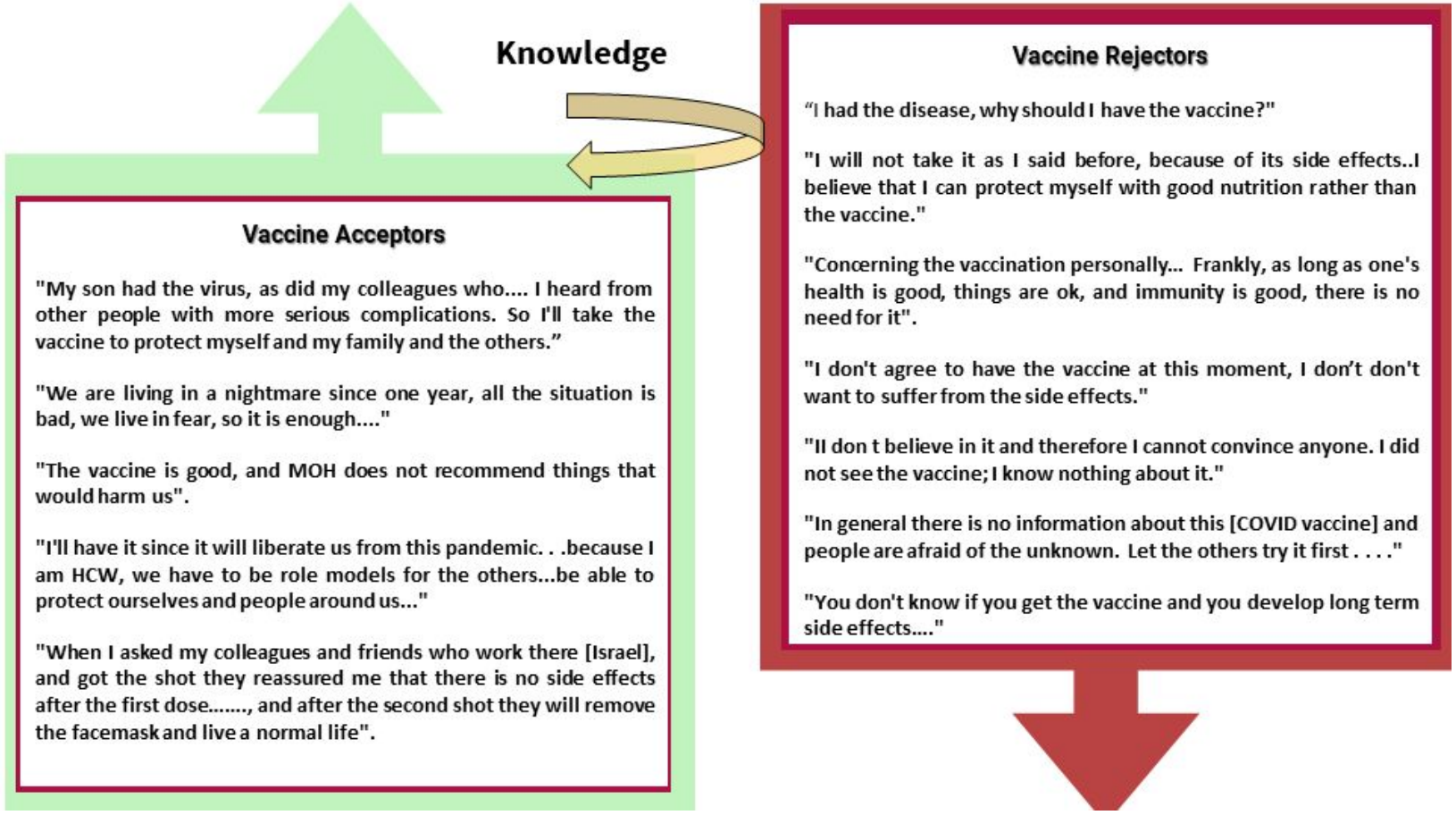
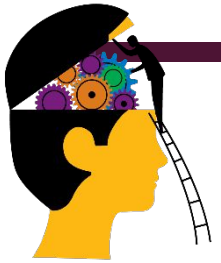
NURSES' CONCERNS REGARDING THE SARS COV-2 VACCINE IN PALESTINE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY





June 2021

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in the Palestinian population: A primary health center-based cross-sectional study

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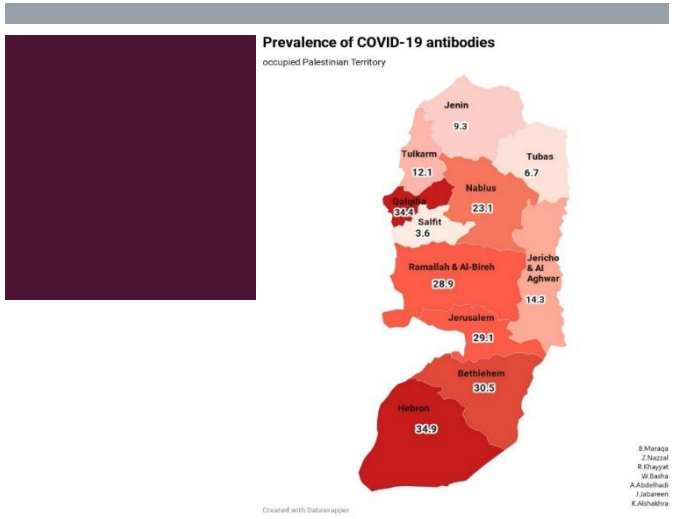
Abstract

This study aimed to assess the prevalence of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) total antibodies in the north, middle, and south regions of West Bank and the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 specific antibodies (IgA, IgM, and IgG) in the Palestinian population. This was a cross-sectional study. The serological and epidemiological data of 1269 persons were assessed. Participants were selected randomly among primary health care center attendees in Palestine between November 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. All serum samples were tested for total antibodies using an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test. IgM, IgG, and IgA-specific antibody titers were measured using ELISA. The overall prevalence (with 95% confidence intervals [CIs]) of SARS-CoV-2 total antibodies and specific antibodies were estimated. A multivariate regression model was used to assess the predictive factors for SARS-CoV-2-specific antibodies. The overall seroprevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies was 24·0% (95% CI, 21·7%–26·5%). Seroprevalence was significantly higher among people living in south West Bank (adjusted Odds ratio [aOR],



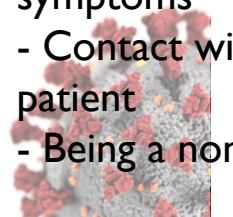
1299 blood samples

Main Results

24% Seropositive for total antibodies

2-3X

- Living in the South of West Bank
- Having COVID-19 like symptoms
- Contact with COVID-19 patient
- Being a non-smoker



Guidelines and Application Form

for

The Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office Special Grant for Research in Priority Areas of Public Health, 2020 - 2021

(includes a Special COVID-19 Call for Proposals)

World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

منظمة الصحة العالمية
المكتب الإقليمي لشرق المتوسط

State of Palestine
Ministry of Health
Minister's Office

دولـة فـلسطين
وزارة الصحة
مكتب الوزير

حضرة الباحث الدكتور زاهر نزال جامعة النجاح
والدكتور وليد باشا والدكتورة بيسمان مرقه والدكتور بيسان والدكتور جروح جبارين والدكتور عبد الرحمن عبد الهادي والدكتورة رشا الخياط،،،

تمت الموافقة على البحث المقدم من طرفكم بعنوان:

Prevalence of novel coronavirus antibodies (SARS- COV—2 Seroconversion) among Palestinians a nationwide, cross-sectional serological study.

على ان يتم الالتزام بالشروط والمعايير التالية:

1- الالتزام بوضع وزارة الصحة كشريك في البحث العلمي
2- الالتزام باخلاقيات البحث العلمي و السريه التامه
3- تحديد البيانات المطلوبة ومصدرها من خلال ارسال كتاب للجنة على الايميل dr.mustafa.qawasma@gmail.com
4- تحديد الباحث الرئيسي والباحثين المشاركين على ان يتم الاخذ بعين الاعتبار كل من ساهم في هذا البحث من وزارة صحة او غيرها.
5- يجب الاشارة عند نشر البحث الى وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية كمصدر للمعلومات
6- يجب اخذ موافقة لجنة البحث العلمي على نتائج البحث قبل النشر.
7- يمنع اعطاء المعلومات المقدمة من وزارة الصحة بهدف هذا البحث مع اي جهة او اشخاص وذلك تحت المسؤولية.

شروط اضافية:
الوزارة لا تتحمل أي اعباء مالية عن الدراسة المقدم من الدكتور زاهر نزال جامعة النجاح

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الإحترام والتقدير،،،

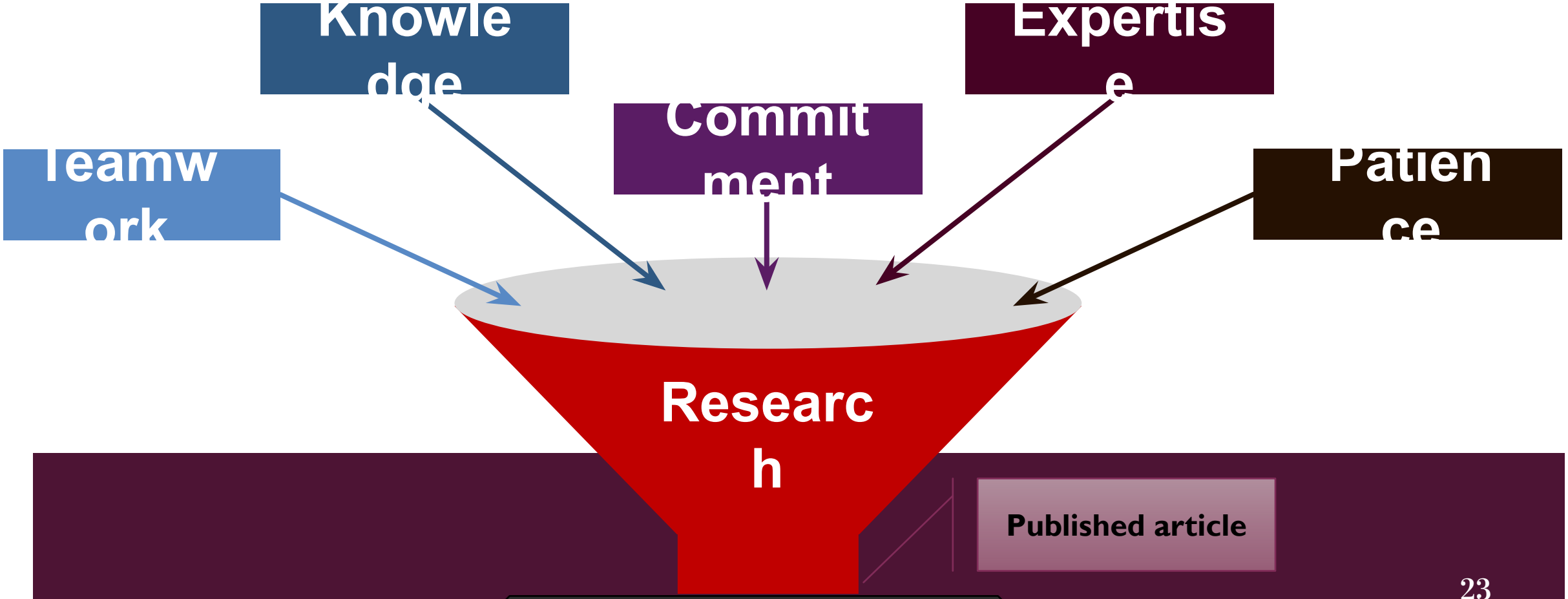
الدكتورة مي سلام الكيلة
وزيرة الصحة

Ministry of Health - Nablus- Tel.: 09/2384771/6 - Fax : 09/2384777
Ministry of Health -Ramallah- Behind Palestine Medical Complex
Tel.: 02/2964183 - Fax : 02-2964182
Ministry of Health - Gaza- Tel. : 08/2846949 - Fax : 08/2826295

TIPS TO CONSIDER

- Choose a hot topic (Novelty)
- Rigorous literature review
- Feasibility
- Discuss your idea with expert
- Team
- Obtain all necessary approvals
- Do not forget Ethics (IRB)

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT



The Simple Truth

Thank You