Awareness And Myths About Corona Virus: Selected Study On Engineering Students, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

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\textbf{ABSTRACT}

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a contagious ailment that spreads by a recently exposed coronavirus. A good number of people infected with the COVID-19 virus experienced mild to moderate respiratory illness and got well without requiring exceptional treatment. Aged individuals and those with primary medical troubles like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more expected to develop an audacious illness. A study was carried out in engineering colleges of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. A structured questionnaire was formulated and used to do an online survey of 384 engineering students. The questionnaire included three parts, socio-demographic characteristics, selected myths and beliefs about coronavirus. The data collected were analysed using Microsoft Excel software. About the coronavirus majority of engineering students believed myths are "The study reveals the respondent’s opinion on corona as below, 40.4% believe that coronavirus will die off when temperatures rise in the spring, 5.1% strongly agree that social distancing guards spreading of coronavirus, 29.4% neither agree nor disagree that Home remedies can cure and protect against COVID-19, 27.9% strongly agree.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 has become a universal virulent disease. A piece of scattered information about COVID-19 is progressing all over the world. Some true, some deceptive (\textit{Who}, 2020). The knowledge of this virus is limited in public. Professionals in the medical fraternity and research field are working vigorously to establish the sensory system and the reactions of the infection. Their study also involves how it can be healed (COVID-19, 2020; Dr et al., 2017; Dr and Babu, 2018).

People know the do’s and the don’ts, necessary things to avert coronavirus, the way to reinforce safety, social distancing, and physical exercises to self-isolation (News, 2020; Sheikh et al., 2020; Today, 2020). People know the crucial things about staying home (Reid, 2020). Yet, there are a lot of doubts on how to maintain the wellbeing and disinfect items in the dwellings (GOI, 2020).

Accurate information plays an indispensable role in educating the facts and demystifying the myths of corona and keep it at bay, thus keeping public healthy, robust and secure (Dr et al., 2017; Dr and Babu, 2018). Authentic sources like W.H.O., command Officials, The United Nations (U.N.), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, provide reliable information which is the need of the
Table 1: Demographical Profile Of The Respondents

| Factors               | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Location              |           |            |
| Urban                 | 110       | 26.56      |
| Rural                 | 274       | 73.44      |
| Gender                |           |            |
| Male                  | 201       | 52.34      |
| Female                | 183       | 47.66      |
| Education             |           |            |
| B.Tech I Year         | 54        | 14.06      |
| B.Tech II Year        | 113       | 29.43      |
| B.Tech III Year       | 115       | 29.95      |
| B.Tech Final Year     | 102       | 26.56      |
| Religion              |           |            |
| Hindu                 | 158       | 41.14      |
| Muslim                | 91        | 26.04      |
| Christians            | 88        | 22.91      |
| OTHERS                | 47        | 12.23      |
| Occupation of the     |           |            |
| parents               |           |            |
| Government Employee   | 35        | 9.11       |
| Private employment    | 109       | 28.38      |
| Professional          | 80        | 20.83      |
| Business              | 89        | 23.17      |
| Agriculturist         | 71        | 18.48      |
| Annual income of the  |           |            |
| parents               |           |            |
| Less than 1,00,000    | 79        | 20.57      |
| 1,00,000-3,00,000     | 34        | 8.8        |
| 3,00,000-5,00,000     | 92        | 23.95      |
| 5,00,000-7,00,000     | 112       | 29.16      |
| 7,00,000 and above    | 67        | 17.44      |

Source: Field survey

Myths and false information during the predicament only add on to the difficulty. A principle technique to come to an understanding during this time is to cross-check information. To prevent the alike here’s a list of myth-buster from official sources like WHO, U.N., Government of India and many more.

India is technically progressing and adopting new technology but unable to alter the attitude of our people. Even though modern science is developing swiftly, students still have false beliefs. Myths and Beliefs about health and diseases are passed from one generation to another. Not all traditions and myths are bad. Some are based on years of trial and error and have positive values; while others may be useless or harmful ([livemint, 2020; Times, 2020]). Majority of the people believe that the highest temperatures prevent the spread of contagious diseases like COVID. Tulasi leaves, honey, garlic will prevent the spread of coronavirus, the face masks alone can combat the stretch of corona virus-like. That's why they are not going to hospitals when symptoms like cold, cough, fever exist and not following the guidelines of governments ([BBC, 2020]).

Statement Of The Problem

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Due to existing myths and lack of awareness about the coronavirus, people are not taking proper precautions. This study has been conducted to know the intensity of knowledge of technologically sound engineering students towards contagious diseases concerning the coronavirus. This study also gives information about myths which are customary in the engineering students. This study will provide necessary information about myths which are customary in the engineering students. This study will provide necessary information about the engineering student's awareness of coronavirus. If students have an authentic knowledge of coronavirus, their experience can be exploited as services to craft first-class programmes to create awareness in rural village people and can make India healthy.

Objectives

To study the awareness of engineering students towards coronavirus.

1. To examine the knowledge, awareness of Engi-
| Myths                                      | Strongly agree | agree | Neither agree nor disagree | disagree | Strongly disagree | Total |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| Spraying chlorine or alcohol on skin kills corona viruses in the body | 129 | 33.6 | 56 | 14.6 | 82 | 21.4 | 30 | 7.8 | 87 | 22.7 | 384 |
| Only older adults and young people are at risk | 31 | 8.1 | 58 | 15.1 | 107 | 27.9 | 113 | 29.4 | 75 | 19.5 | 384 |
| COVID-19 is just like flu                   | 38 | 9.9 | 93 | 24.2 | 80 | 20.8 | 60 | 15.6 | 113 | 29.4 | 384 |
| Everyone with COVID-19 dies                | 12 | 3.1 | 50 | 13.0 | 77 | 20.1 | 57 | 14.8 | 188 | 49.0 | 384 |
| Cats and dogs spread corona virus          | 72 | 18.8 | 42 | 10.9 | 10 | 2.6 | 178 | 46.4 | 82 | 21.4 | 384 |
| Face masks protect against corona virus    | 150 | 39.1 | 54 | 14.1 | 62 | 16.1 | 62 | 16.1 | 56 | 14.6 | 384 |
| Hand dryers kill corona virus              | 128 | 33.3 | 52 | 13.5 | 70 | 18.2 | 77 | 20.1 | 57 | 14.8 | 384 |
| Rinsing the nose with saline protects against corona virus | 15 | 3.9 | 39 | 10.2 | 67 | 17.4 | 59 | 15.4 | 204 | 53.1 | 384 |
| You can protect yourself by gargling bleach | 198 | 51.6 | 55 | 14.3 | 45 | 11.7 | 76 | 19.8 | 10 | 2.6 | 384 |
| Antibiotics kill corona virus              | 93 | 24.2 | 38 | 9.9 | 113 | 29.4 | 60 | 15.6 | 80 | 20.8 | 384 |
| Thermal scanners can diagnose corona virus | 204 | 53.1 | 67 | 17.4 | 59 | 15.4 | 15 | 3.9 | 39 | 10.2 | 384 |
| Garlic protects against corona virus       | 168 | 43.8 | 67 | 17.4 | 43 | 11.2 | 46 | 12.0 | 60 | 15.6 | 384 |
| Home remedies can cure and protect against COVID-19 | 107 | 27.9 | 31 | 8.1 | 75 | 19.5 | 113 | 29.4 | 58 | 15.1 | 384 |
| You can catch corona virus from urine and feces | 62 | 16.1 | 56 | 14.6 | 62 | 16.1 | 54 | 14.1 | 150 | 39.1 | 384 |
| Corona virus will die off when temperatures rise in the spring | 155 | 40.4 | 72 | 18.8 | 67 | 17.4 | 60 | 15.6 | 30 | 7.8 | 384 |
| Social distancing protects spreading of corona virus | 204 | 53.1 | 67 | 17.4 | 59 | 15.4 | 39 | 10.2 | 15 | 3.9 | 384 |

Source: Primary data

neering students towards preventing, curing and treating coronavirus.

2. To suggest various ways to improve awareness and curtail myths about coronavirus.

3. To suggest the role of government to educate people with the help of engineering students about the coronavirus and other contagious diseases.

Research Methodology

The primary, as well as secondary data sources, are used to collect the data for this survey. The methodology of the study is a great convenience sampling technique based on the questionnaire method of surveying where a sample of 384 students from different engineering colleges of Guntur district, of Andhra Pradesh. The data are further coded & classified into tables for analysis and presentation considers the graphs and figures followed by the interpretation.

Data Collection Methods

The data can be collected from primary as well as secondary.

Primary Data Sources
Questionnaire online Survey

Secondary Data Sources
Published Research, Internet & Text Books.
Statistical Methods

The data as collected from the respondents are coded, tabulated, analysed and interpreted into logical statements using SPSS and M.S. Office

The above Table 1, shows that 52.34 % (201) respondents are male, followed by 47.66% (183) respondents are female in the study area.

Majority of the respondents 41.14 % (158) respondents belong to Hindu, followed by 26.04 % (91) respondents belong to Muslim, followed by 22.91% (88) respondents belong to the Christian religion.

It is clear from the Table 2 that majority of (33.6%) of the respondents believes that Spraying chlorine or alcohol on skin kills coronaviruses in the body and 22.7% of respondents strongly disagree that Spraying chlorine or alcohol on skin kills coronaviruses in the body.

Majority 29.4% of the respondents disagree that only older adults and young people are at risk, followed by 27.9% of the respondents are neither agree nor disagree, 19.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 15.1% of the respondents agree, and 8.1% of the respondents are agreeing.

The majority (29.4%) of the respondents strongly disagree that COVID-19 is just like flu, followed by 24.2% agree that COVID-19 is just like flu.

Majority (49%) respondents strongly disagree that everyone with COVID-19 dies, followed by 20.1% neither agree nor disagree.

The majority (46.1%) of the respondents disagree that Cats and dogs spread coronavirus, followed by 21.4% strongly disagree that cats and dogs spread the coronavirus.

Majority 39.1% of respondents agree that Face masks protect against coronavirus, followed by 16.1% of respondents disagree that Face masks protect against coronavirus.

Majority 33.1% of respondents strongly agree that Hand dryers kill coronavirus, followed by 20.1% of respondents disagree that Hand dryers kill coronavirus.

Majority 53.1% of the respondents strongly disagree that rinsing the nose with saline protects against coronavirus, followed by 17.4% respondents neither agree nor disagree.

Majority 51.6% of respondents strongly agree that You can protect yourself by gargling bleach followed by 19.8% respondents disagree.

Majority 29.4% of respondents neither agree nor disagree that Antibiotics kill coronavirus, followed by 24.2% respondents agree.

Majority 53.1% of respondents strongly agree that Thermal scanners can diagnose corona, followed by 15.4% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

Majority 43.8% of respondents strongly agree that garlic protects against coronavirus, followed by 17.4% respondents agree.

Majority 29.4% of respondents neither agree nor disagree that Home remedies can cure and protect against COVID-19, followed by 27.9% strongly agree.

Majority 40.4% of respondents strongly agree that Coronavirus will die off when temperatures rise in the spring, followed by 18.8% of respondents agree.

Majority 53.1% of respondents strongly agree that Social distancing protects spreading of coronavirus, followed by 17.4% of the respondents agree.

Findings

From overall research, we found that even state and central governments, electronic media, print media, W.H.O. is educating the public through different modes; still, some myths are prevailing in India. The engineering students are also having some myths about the coronavirus. The study reveals that 40.4% of respondents believe that Coronavirus will die off when temperatures rise in the spring. 43.8% of respondents strongly believe that garlic protects against coronavirus. 53.1% of respondents strongly believe Thermal scanners can diagnose corona. 39.1% of respondents strongly believe that Face masks protect against coronavirus.

Suggestions

How inhabitants perceive their disease and its management concludes their health-seeking activities. As knowledge and awareness are an essential determinant for health. The belief that psychological illness is incurable or self-inflicted can lead to inadequate precautions and treatment or no treatment. Even though the Government of India and W.H.O. promoting information in many ways, including social media still many false beliefs and myths about the coronavirus. A Study on Engineering Students Awareness and Myths about Coronavirus in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

It has been recommended that myths which are there in the brains of engineering students have to be removed and make them aware of reality to make a good quality programme with the help of technology in educating rural village people and people who have false beliefs.

The Engineering students are advised to follow the guidelines of Governments and to be aware of infectious diseases, including coronavirus.
Technical students can play a vital role in educating children by explaining the cause of coronavirus and various precautions to be taken so that coronavirus will not attack. And engineering students can advise children with the help of multiple programs with the help of visuals to pressurise their parents for lockdown and self social distancing and utilisation of sanitiser.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrated that the current level of awareness of coronavirus among engineering students in Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh is quite low. Most familiar myths are “Coronavirus will die off when temperatures rise in the spring, and only hydroxychloroquine sulphate Medicine helps during coronavirus”. Our study exemplifies that the majority of engineering students believe that home remedies and garlic and taking Tulasi leaves will prevent the attack of the coronavirus. In reality, home remedies and Tulasi leaves will raise immunity but not prevents spread of coronavirus 100%. Social distancing and use of sanitisers play a role in preventing the coronavirus. Health education strategies can be planned based on the study to remove false beliefs. Further effective health education campaigns for major contagious diseases are urgently needed.

This study might also be useful for planning policies for the preclusion and control of foremost contagious diseases. An awareness development programs involving a mixture of different health education methods are suggested by removing myths in the minds of engineering students and make them participate in various programs running Govt. of India and Andhra Pradesh government. The best way to defend is to come up with the coronavirus vaccine, which may protect 70-90 per cent from the virus. The importance of social distance and personal hygiene has to be promoted in rural areas through banners, posters, slide shows and sending engineering students door to door along with health workers and making effective programs using technology to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

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Conflict of Interest

I do hereby certify that the above-stated Conflict of Interest, it is informed that no conflict of interest statement is required for this article. The survey was conducted collecting information from engineering students without the help of any organization.

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