



Awareness about Covid-19: A Study on Indian Academicians and Students

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Research Article

Abstract

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak came to light when China informed the World Health Organization (WHO) on December 31, 2019, of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause in Wuhan City of its Hubei province. On January 9, 2020, the WHO issued a statement saying Chinese researchers have made "preliminary determination" of the virus as a novel Coronavirus. It is becoming increasingly crucial for people to have awareness and knowledge about COVID-19, especially how the virus spreads, and the justification behind measures like social distancing. Especially in times of great anxiety, various conspiracy theories tend to sprout up, and, in response to health emergencies, several dubious ideas on medicine and treatment also come up. This study attempts to assess the knowledge and awareness among Indian citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study adopted a quantitative research method. It collects primary data by undertaking an online survey with the help of a well-structured questionnaire. The respondents were the Indian academicians and students. The survey attempts to assess their level of awareness regarding Covid19, hygiene practices, Government policies and Campaigns, and steps taken for its prevention. A total of 861 respondents participated in the survey. The study reveals that there is a significant gap in information source, poor knowledge levels, and discrepancies in perceptions of COVID-19 among the participants.

Keywords: Awareness, Knowledge, Attitude, Covid-19, pandemic, India

1. Introduction

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. This disease has spread globally and has become an ongoing life-threatening pandemic (Mitchell 2020). The WHO (World Health Organization) declared the coronavirus outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. (WHO, 2020)

While a lot is still unknown about the virus that causes COVID-19, we do know that it is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person, generated through coughing and sneezing. Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, and mouth). While COVID-19 continues to spread communities must take action to prevent further transmission, reduce the impacts of the outbreak, and support control measures. The virus named coronavirus owing to its appearance of the spikes on its surface that resemble a crown (. Wang,

Wang, DW, & Liu 2020). This disease causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS CoV-2), which presents with symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle pain, sputum production, sore throat, diarrhea, abdominal pain, loss of smell, and in severe conditions leading to viral pneumonia and multi-organ failure (Sugiyama, Suto, & Amano 1978). This virus affects the lungs majorly as it attacks the host cells via the enzyme ACE2, which is most abundant in type 2 alveolar cells of the lungs. This virus has a surface glycoprotein called a "SPIKE" which connects to ACE2 and enters the host cells.

The protection of children and educational facilities is particularly important. Precautions are necessary to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in school settings. However, care must also be taken to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. It is important to remember that COVID-19 does not differentiate between borders, ethnicities, disability status, age or gender.

Education settings should continue to be welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environments to all. Measures taken by schools can prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 by students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus while minimizing disruption and protecting students and staff from discrimination. Coronaviruses are said to be zoonotic by the world health organization since the virus can be transferred from animal to human bodies. The studies have shown the viruses have been transferred from cats, and camels to human beings.

There are other coronaviruses that have affected animals but not human beings yet. Some signs of illnesses could be seen when a human body is affected by the virus, which includes respiratory problems, pneumonia, failure of the kidney, and could even result in the death of human beings. Some standard recommendations should be abiding by all the time which includes hand washing on regular basis, covering the mouths so that the virus cannot be transmitted from one body to the other, no coughing or sneezing at public places, etc. The purpose of this study is to tracer the level of knowledge of academicians and students of India regarding the COVID-19.

2. Types of Corona Viruses

Until now seven different coronaviruses have been found according to various cases around the world, and these different kinds of coronaviruses are making humans sick. Some types of coronaviruses were identified some time ago but some cases have just been identified. A Chinese doctor who proposed that the coronavirus will infect humans badly in the future has become its own victim and is dead. Mild to moderate illnesses have been observed in the cases of the coronaviruses. MERS-COV and SARS-COV are the two new types, which humans have never witnessed before, therefore these types are mainly causing pain to the human bodies (Al-Mohaisen 2017)

3. Statement of Purpose

Today, children and young people are global citizens, powerful agents of change, and the next generation of caregivers, scientists, and doctors. Any crisis presents the opportunity to help them learn, cultivate compassion, and increase resilience while building a safer and more caring community. Having information and facts about COVID-19 will help diminish students' fears and anxieties related to the disease and support their ability to cope with any secondary impacts in their lives. This guide provides key messages and considerations for engaging school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, caregivers, and community members, as well as children themselves in promoting safe and healthy schools.

The purpose of this study is to provide clear and actionable guidance for safe operations through the prevention, early detection, and control of COVID-19 in schools and other educational facilities. The guidance, while specific to countries that have already confirmed

the transmission of COVID-19, is still relevant in all other contexts. Education can encourage students to become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses. Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after a closure requires many considerations but, if done well, can promote public health.

4. Material and Methods

An online survey was conducted using self-administered questions. The survey rendered 861 responses. This survey, which was conducted, contained 30 questions with multiple-choice options. All the individuals who answered the survey were informed about the confidentiality of their responses and were also informed about the purpose of conducting this survey. Every individual of India of all age groups was included in this survey. The evaluation of this survey was done electronically.

5. Results

Out of 861 responses, 73.3% were females and 26.7% were males. Respondents included Professor, Asst. Professor, Teacher Educator, Teacher, Student teachers, students, and others of various colleges and schools in India. 84.7% of responses are from Maharashtra, 29% from Karnataka, and 1% from Kerala.

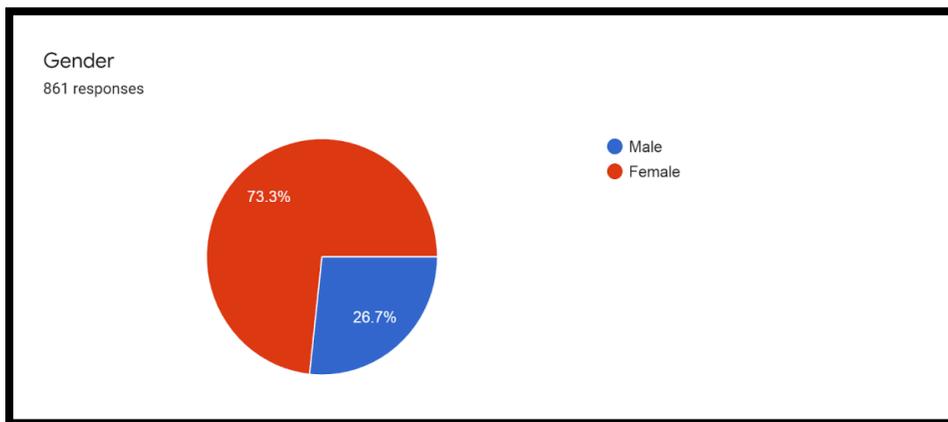


Fig.1. Distribution of Respondents based on Gender

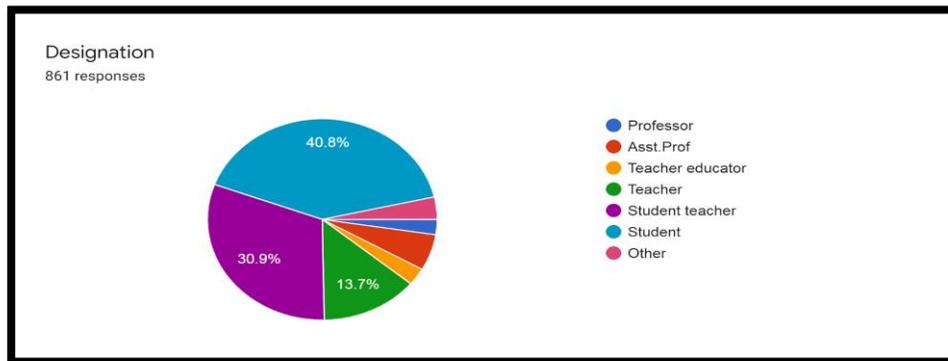


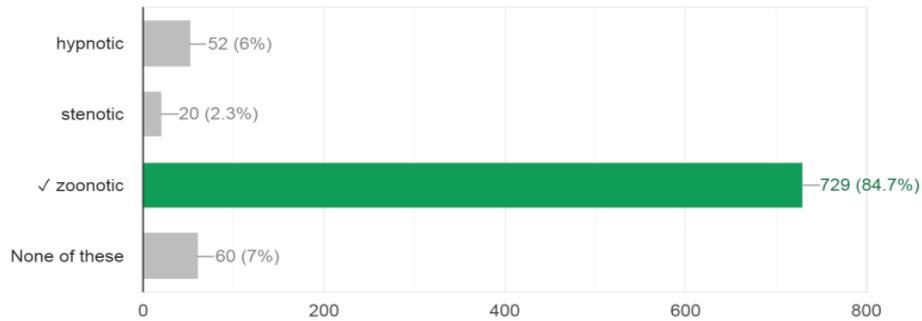
Fig. 2. Distribution of Respondents based on Designation

Out of the total responses, 385 knows about the Coronavirus, 78.7% are aware of number 19 in Covid19. 91.8% knew about the incubation period of Covid19, 62.4% were aware of the CDC guidance on when to release someone infected with the Coronavirus from isolation. 91.8%

knew about the incubation period of COVID-19 which is 14 days, 0.8% opted for 5 days, 0.9% opted for 7 days and 6.5% opted for 21 days.

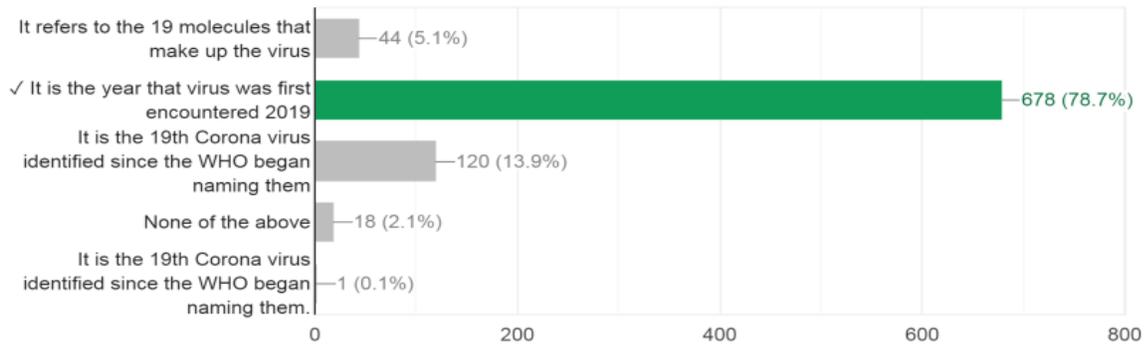
1. A disease that can be transmitted to humans from animals is

729 / 861 correct responses



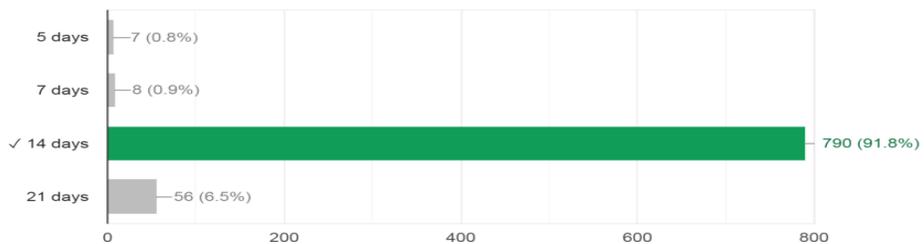
2. What does the number 19 in COVID19 stand for?

678 / 861 correct responses



3. For COVID-19 the period quarantine is _____ from the last date of exposure because this is the longest incubation period (the span of ...ess after exposure) seen for similar coronaviruses.

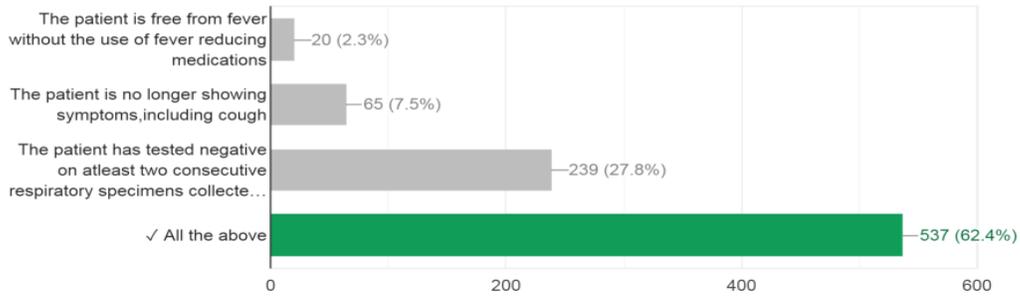
790 / 861 correct responses



62.4% were aware of CDC guidance on when to release someone infected with coronavirus, 27.8% opted for patient tested negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimen collection, 7.5% believe that when the patient is no longer showing symptoms including cough and 2.3% believe that when the patient is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.74.9%believes coronavirus resemblance like sun's corona 6% answered football cleats,9.2% answered barbed wire, and 9.9% Shark teeth.

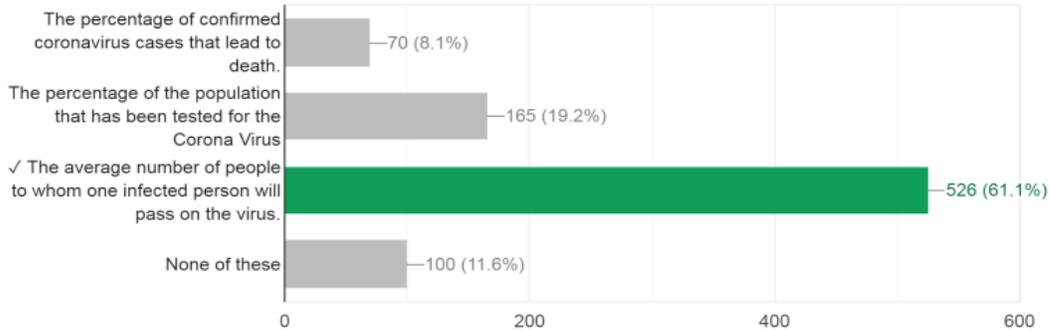
4. Current CDC guidance on when to release someone infected with coronavirus from isolation is made on a case by case basis and includes meeting which of the following requirements.

537 / 861 correct responses



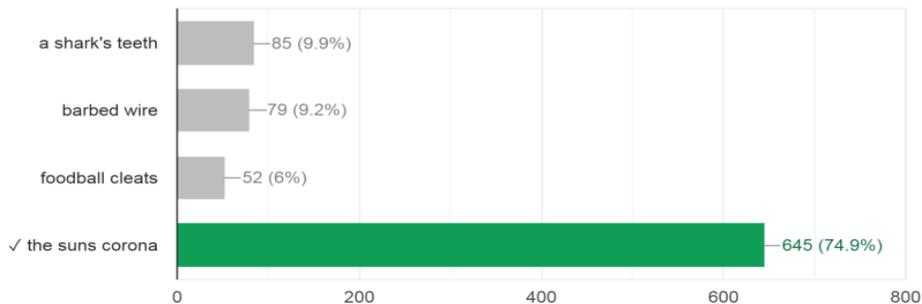
5. Governments around the world have been monitoring the 'R' number to determine when to ease lockdown restrictions. What is the R number?

526 / 861 correct responses



6. Coronaviruses are named for the spikes that protrude from their surfaces resembling _____ They can infect both animals and people and can cause illness of the respiratory tract.

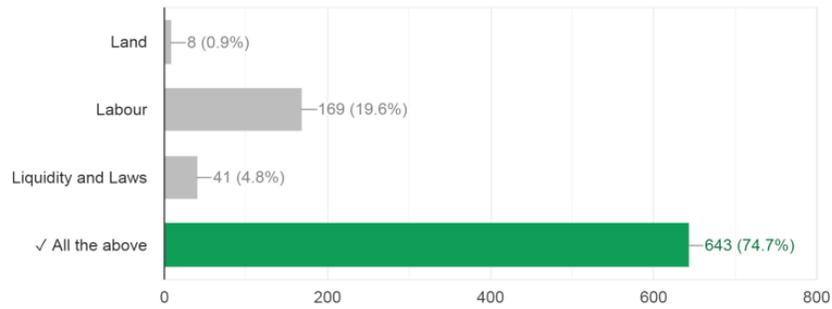
645 / 861 correct responses



74.7% were aware of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan Package whereas 25.5% are not aware of it. 87.3% believed that Rs 20 lakh crores economic relief package is announced by prime minister Narendra Modi through Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, 3.8% believes Rs. 25 lakh crore and 5.2% believes Rs 10 lakh crore through the package.

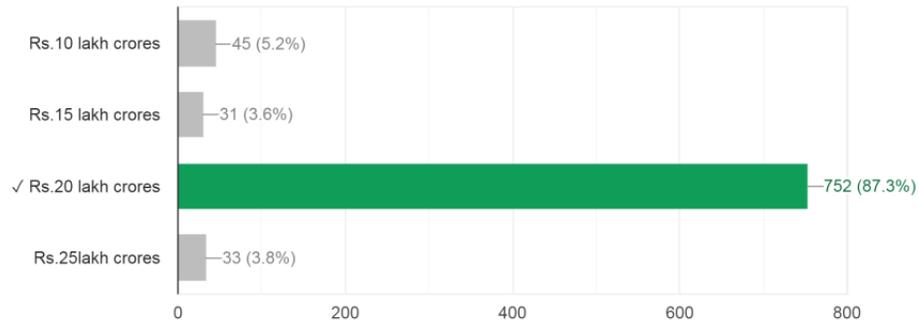
7. On which of the following Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan package is focussed?

643 / 861 correct responses



8. How much economic relief package is announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi through Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan?

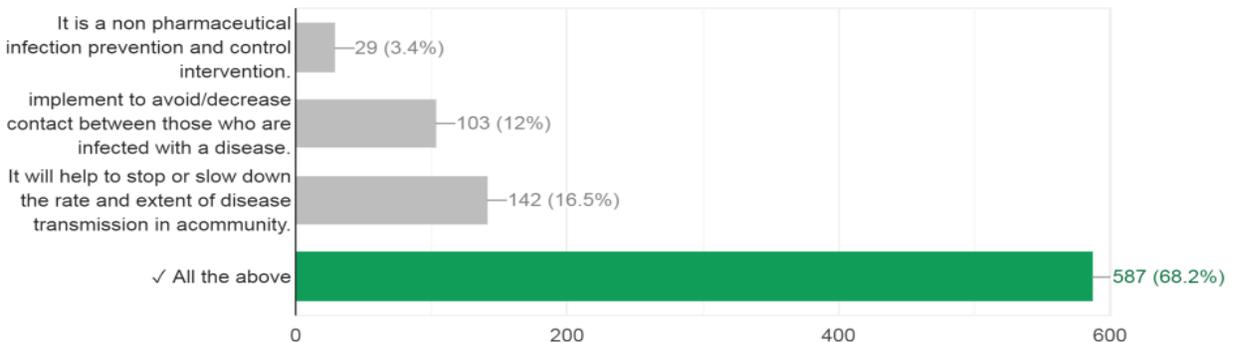
752 / 861 correct responses



Regarding social distance, 68.2% of the people were aware of it and 32.9% is unaware of it. Only 44.7% know the correct definition of coronavirus and 64.9% don't know the correct definition of the coronavirus, only 34.5% of the respondents were aware of the size of the coronavirus.

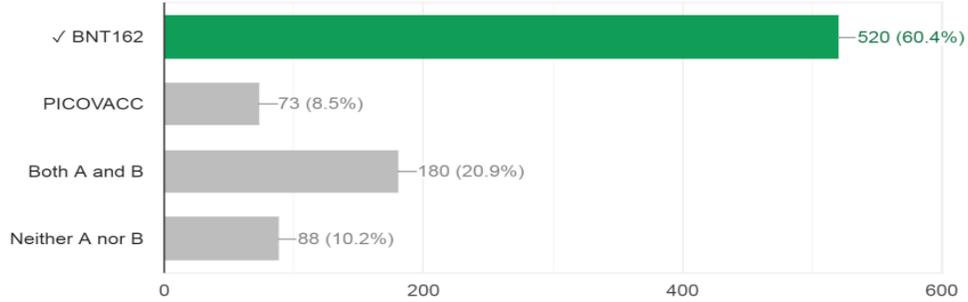
9. Which of the following statements are correct about Social distancing?

587 / 861 correct responses



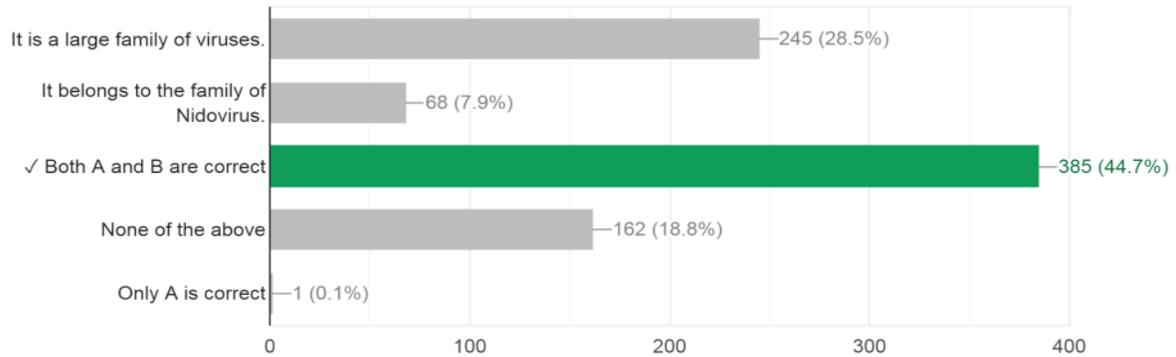
10. Name the vaccine that is jointly developed by the German company BioNTech and US pharma giant Pfizer for COVID-19?

520 / 861 correct responses



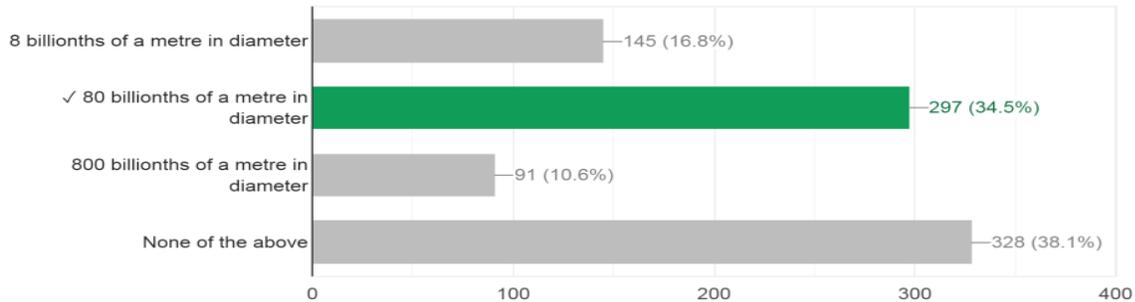
11. What is Coronavirus?

385 / 861 correct responses



12. How big is the Coronavirus?

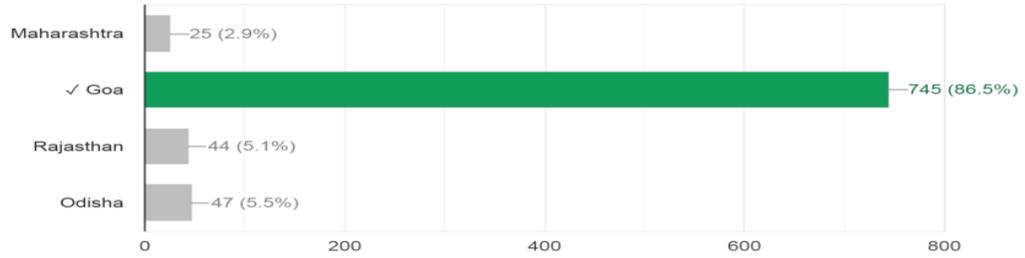
297 / 861 correct responses



Only 28.9% responded correctly about the first state in India to declare Coronavirus an epidemic. 71.2% gave incorrect answers. About 51% are aware of the date released by WHO on pandemic and 49.0% are unaware of the date. 37.7% are aware of the official name of the virus designated by WHO, 57.1% answered covid19, 16% answered SARCov and 3.5% responded corona. 45.6% were aware of the first state in India to carry out rapid antibody testing for COVID 19 and 52.3% are not aware of it.

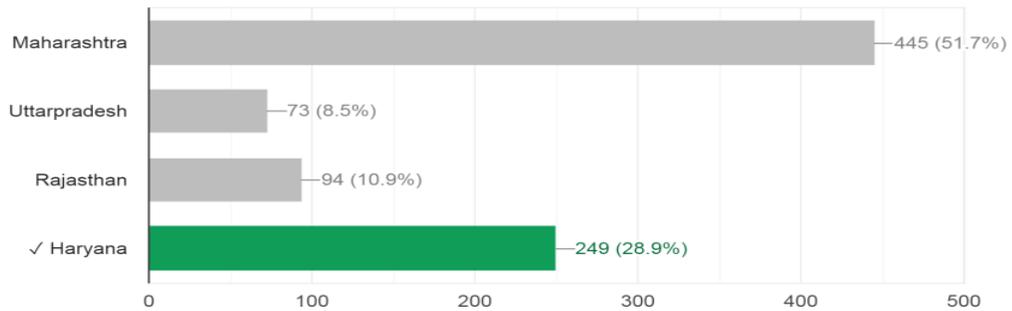
13. During the first phase of pandemic which state became corona free state in India?

745 / 861 correct responses



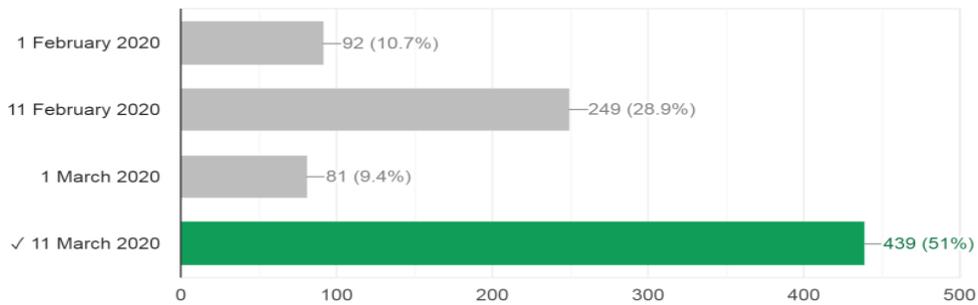
14. Which was the first State in India to declare the coronavirus an epidemic?

249 / 861 correct responses



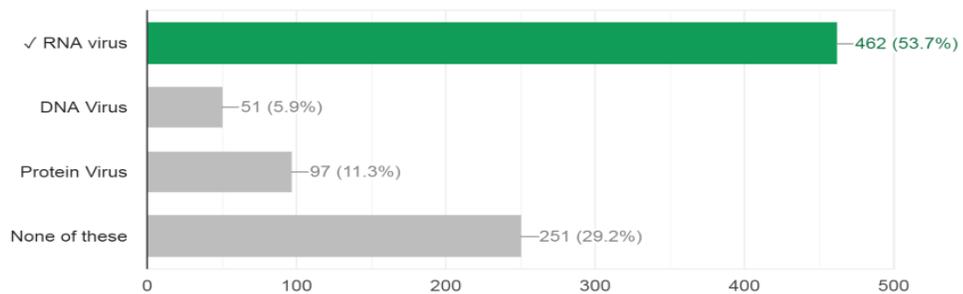
15. The World Health Organisation on _____ declared the disease on "Pandemic" that is causing the Novel Coronavirus 2019 outbreak?

439 / 861 correct responses



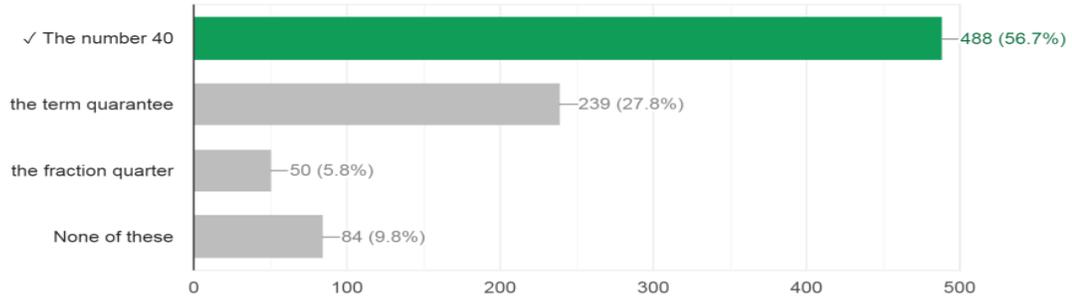
16. Which type of virus is the Corona Virus?

462 / 861 correct responses



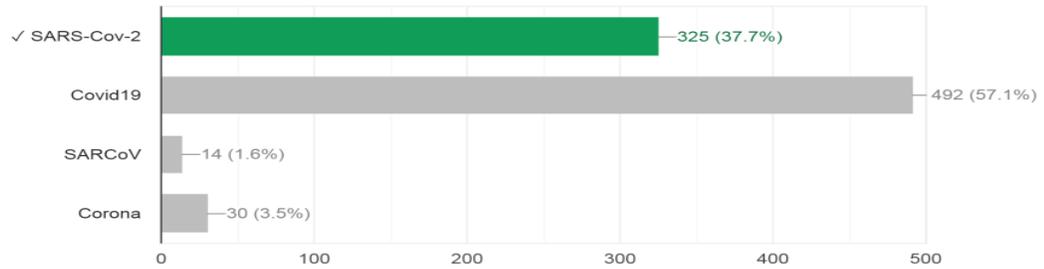
17. The word quarantine comes from

488 / 861 correct responses



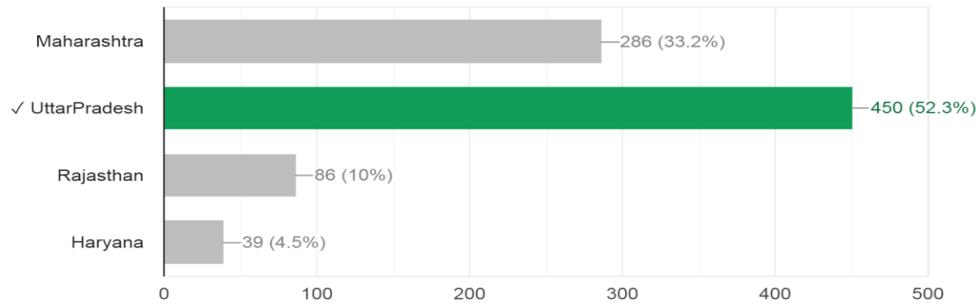
18. What is the official name of the virus as designated by the World Health Organization?

325 / 861 correct responses



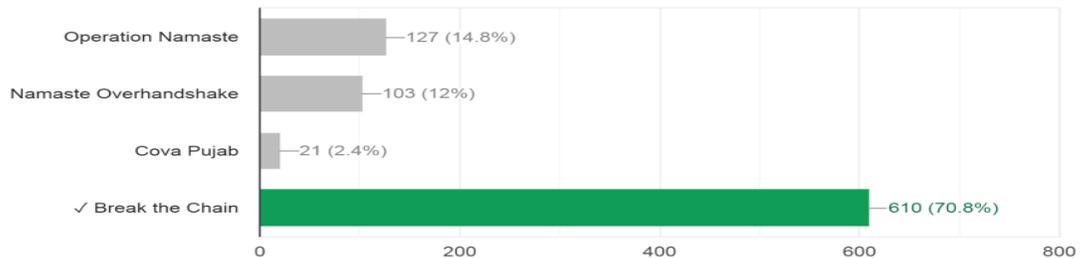
19. Which state became the first state in the country to carry out pool testing for COVID-19?

450 / 861 correct responses



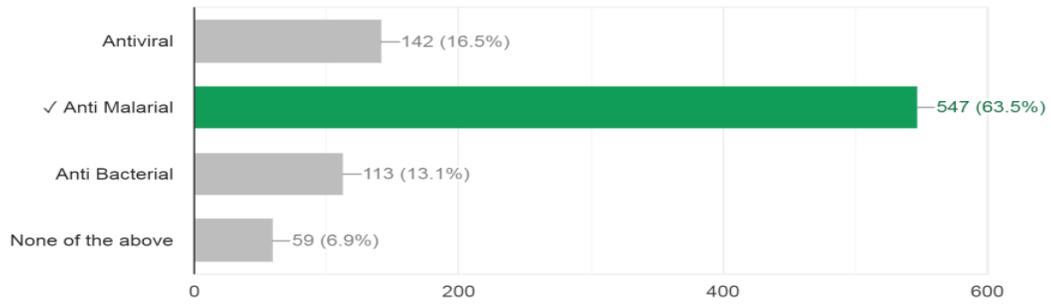
21. Which of the following campaign has been developed by the Kerala Government to spread awareness of the Corona Virus?

610 / 861 correct responses



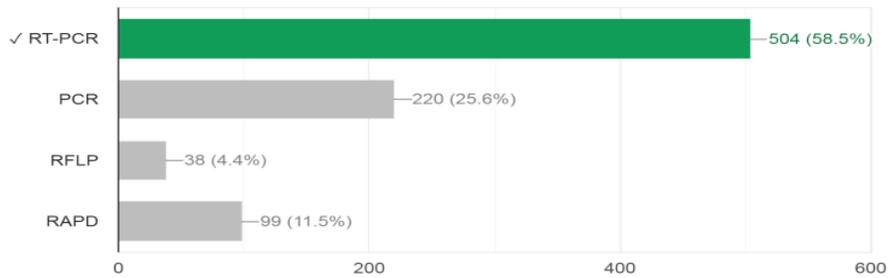
22. Hydroxychloroquine and Chloroquine are which types of drugs?

547 / 861 correct responses



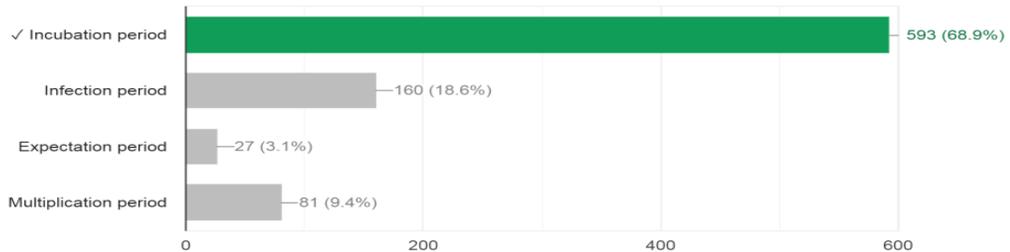
24. The technique used for the detection of Coronavirus includes

504 / 861 correct responses



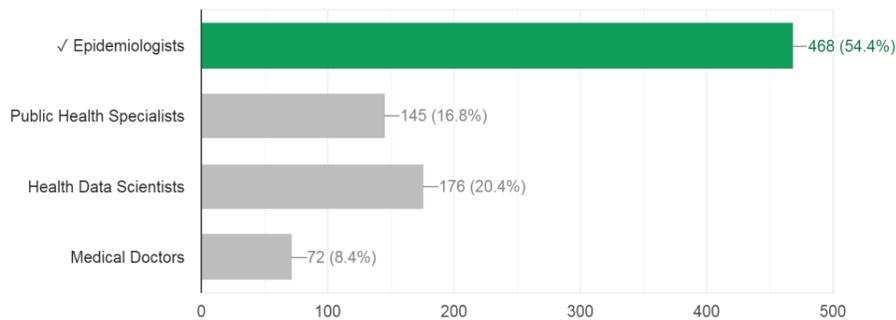
27. What is the period between the contraction of the virus and the manifestation of the disease called?

593 / 861 correct responses



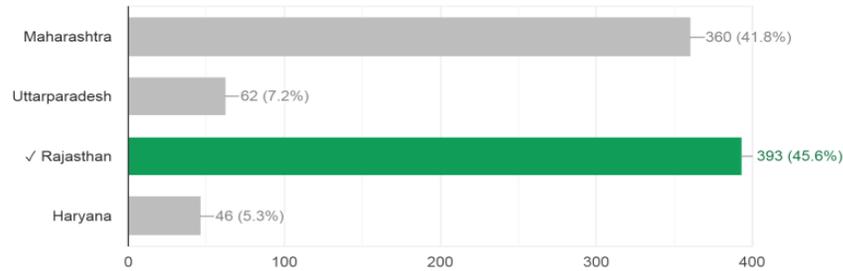
29. Who conducts scientific research about diseases like COVID-19?

468 / 861 correct responses



30. Which was the first State in India to carry out Rapid Antibody Testing for Covid-19

393 / 861 correct responses



The results revealed that a considerable percentage of individuals learned about the pandemic through social media and news and were aware of the mode of spread of the virus and also steps to be taken to prevent it from spreading. But a considerable percentage of people were also not fully aware of the age groups this virus will be affecting.

6. Discussion

The online survey aims at assisting the professionals and the students to evaluate the level of knowledge regarding the information about COVID-19 and its prevention and treatment plan as well as to create awareness regarding the age groups being affected. The disease COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets and personal contact with the infected person. Social distancing and maintaining hygiene with alcohol-based sanitizers is the best way to prevent the spread of this virus as the person remains asymptomatic from the exposure till the first symptom is shown that is for around 2-14 days which is the incubation period of the virus. This virus mainly affects the person with lower immunity levels irrespective of their age that is older people, immune-compromised people, people with chronic conditions, diabetes and people on radiation therapy. The research studies reveal that amongst all the cases registered, around 86.6% of cases were aged 30-79 years. 78.9% of individuals were able to recognize the symptoms of MERS-CoV but only 67.1% knew the recommended preventive hygiene practices. Awareness of disease epidemiology, severity, fatality rate, and treatment was very low.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

We identified a significant gap in information source, poor knowledge levels, and discrepancies in perceptions of COVID-19 among our study participants. As the global threat of COVID-19 continues to emerge, greater efforts through educational campaigns that target schools, colleges, and the wider population beyond borders are urgently needed. Sharing accurate information and science-based facts about COVID-19 will help diminish students' fears and anxieties around the disease and support their ability to cope with any secondary impacts in their lives. The following points may be of benefit for improving knowledge and awareness level of the people regarding COVID 19 and other health-related issues.

- Incorporate relevant health education into other subjects. Science courses can cover the study of viruses, disease transmission, and the importance of vaccinations. Social studies can focus on the history of pandemics and their secondary effects and investigate how public policies can promote tolerance and social cohesion.
- Have students make their own Public Service Announcements via social media, radio, or even local TV broadcasting.
- Media literacy lessons can empower students to be critical thinkers and make them effective communicators and active citizens, which will improve their abilities to detect misinformation.

- Introduce the concept of social distancing (standing further away from friends, avoiding large crowds, not touching people if they don't need to, etc.). Also, focus on good health behaviors, such as covering coughs and sneezes with the elbow and washing hands.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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