

Knowledge and impact of COVID 19 pandemic on residents of Batu Gajah township

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Since the COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia, the government had introduced measures to reduce the number infected including lockdowns, wearing facial masks, frequent handwashing and social distancing. Everyone had to follow and cope with this new lifestyle which affected them socio-economically and mentally. **Objective:** To determine the level of knowledge and impact of Covid-19 on residents of Batu Gajah township. **Materials and methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted in February 2021 on Batu Gajah Township residents in Kinta District, Perak, Malaysia. The sample size calculated was 96 with a precision of 10% for 95% confidence interval, assuming 50% of respondents will have socio economic and mental health issues. As only one week was allotted for data collection, the sample size of 96 was chosen. Prior ethical approval and consent of respondents were obtained. Batu Gajah residents were invited to participate via WhatsApp and Facebook groups. They answered a pre-tested questionnaire (online using google form) which had 12, 10 and 16 questions respectively on knowledge, socioeconomic status and mental health. **Results and conclusion:** In total 109 responded and most of them 104 (95%) had good knowledge on COVID-19. Socioeconomic impact in terms of problem in paying bills was 40 (36.7%); whilst 53 (48.6%) stated they had no other resources to support themselves and 44 (40.4%) had to use their savings to make ends meet. Forty-five respondents (41.2%) stated they were worrying too much; 34 (31.2%) had trouble relaxing, 37 (37%) had trouble sleeping and 14 (12.8%) had thoughts about ending their lives. Overall, 20% had poor psychological health. The association between the socioeconomic status and mental health was statistically significant with p-value = 0.00896. Most of the respondents had good knowledge of COVID-19 with a substantial number affected financially and psychologically by the COVID-19 pandemic.