

Myths and facts of COVID-19 among patients and caregivers in Sibu Hospital

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study explored the common myths and information sources related to COVID-19. **Methods:** This is a cross-sectional study conducted among the patients/caregivers who visited the pharmacy department at Sibu Hospital from 01DEC2022 to 31JAN2023. The self-administered questionnaire with 6 domains was used. It was developed from the article: "COVID-19 Facts and Myths: A Concise Guide for Malaysian Population 2021" and pre-tested in 13 respondents. **Results:** A total of 112 subjects were recruited. They have a median age of 32 (positively skewed), 59.8% (n=67) are Chinese, and 48.2% (n=54) of them received a degree/higher education. About half of the subjects (47.3%, n=53) agreed that "prolonged use of medical masks will trap carbon dioxide and cause poisoning". Further analysis showed that higher age ($p<0.001$), a lower education level ($p=0.001$) and non-healthcare-related workers ($p<0.001$) agreed to this myth. A high proportion of subjects (75.9%, n=85) agreed with the myth that "there is a high chance of COVID-19 transmission through commercial packages". Further analysis showed that 84.6% (66/78) of higher education level (STPM/higher) agreed that COVID-19 can be transmitted through commercial packages as compared to 55.9% (19/34) with secondary level/below ($p=0.001$). The major sources of information are social media (95.5%), friends (92.9%) and family members (87.5%). **Conclusion:** Common myths that are: prolonged use of medical masks will cause carbon dioxide poisoning and that there is a high chance of COVID-19 transmission through commercial packages. Social media was found to be the main source of COVID-19 information.