The change in perceptions, attitudes and practices towards preventive measures of COVID-19, is it behind the recent increase in the number of cases among university students in Malaysia?

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Based on DOSM, the number of COVID-19 cases started to spike since December 2023 after a long period of having a low number of cases over the last 2 years. This increase in the number of cases left us wondering what stands behind it and what are the causing factors. Therefore, we decided to study the perceptions, the attitudes, and the practices of COVID-19 preventive measures among the university students in Malaysia. We assumed that there has been a little bit of relaxation and ignorance about the preventive measures which might have led to the current increase in the number of positive cases. **Materials and Method:** Our study was cross sectional study based on a structured online questionnaire. The sample size was 383. **Results:** A total of 383 responded to the survey of whom majority of the respondents were female (76%) and from private university (63%). Most of the students have good perception (57.7%), good attitude (71.3%) and good practice (63.2). Moreover, a significant association was found between student's practices towards COVID-19 preventive measures and COVID-19 infection in the past 6 month (p=0.047) and a significant association between student's attitudes towards COVID-19 preventive measures and being a private university student (p=0.002). **Conclusion:** There is some level of relaxation in perceptions, attitudes, and practices towards COVID-19 preventive measures among university students in Malaysia. We need to emphasize always the importance of COVID-19 preventive measures through mass media and social activities which involve youths and University students.