

A Serological Surveillance Study to Assess a Change in The Fear of Contagion Among Undergraduate and Post Graduate Physiotherapy Students

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: An exponential rise in covid 19 cases has affected education in 220 countries around the world. Schools & Colleges have been functioning virtually and more recently in person in limited numbers. Physiotherapy is a hands-on field requiring adequate skill acquisition & Practice. The fear of contagion is preventing them from attending regular colleges hence we decided to conduct serological tests to reduce the fear and resume in Person College.

Methodology: We conducted a Quasi-experimental study in collaboration with department of microbiology on physiotherapy students of a tertiary health care center during the start of the second wave of the Corona virus pandemic in India when the students were apprehensive in attending regular postings and lectures. They were assessed for their knowledge of COVID 19, Fear of contagion and uncertainty of the future after which 10 ml of their venous blood was drawn. The blood was tested for S1RBD Igg2 antibodies and Neutralizing antibodies test. Once the reports of the serosurveillance was received the fear scale was administered again.

Results: A total of 54 students participated in the study. The mean age of the students was 21.66 ± 2.33 years. The majority of students had not been previously infected by covid 19 virus (91.4%). The mean covid 19 knowledge score was 10.24 ± 1.83 and the overall accuracy rate for the knowledge test was 85.33%. 38.4% had a higher level of fear and 36.1 % had a higher level of tolerance of uncertainty before the serological tests were done. The serological tests showed S1RBD antibodies present in 48 students and Gene script antibodies in 50 students. The higher level of fear reduced from 38.4% to 12.4%. The fear significantly reduced due to presence of antibodies against COVID 19.

Conclusion: Developing strategies during the pandemic to respond positively to students worries and fears helps in opening up on in person education across the countries. Following proper safety guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID 19 and following proper vaccination schedules will help in reducing fear and also help in bringing back normalcy in the field of education especially among physiotherapist.

Keywords: COVID-19, Physiotherapy students, Serology

