

DOES MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE COVID-19 MESSAGE FATIGUE?

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(NMRR-19-802-46635)

INTRODUCTION

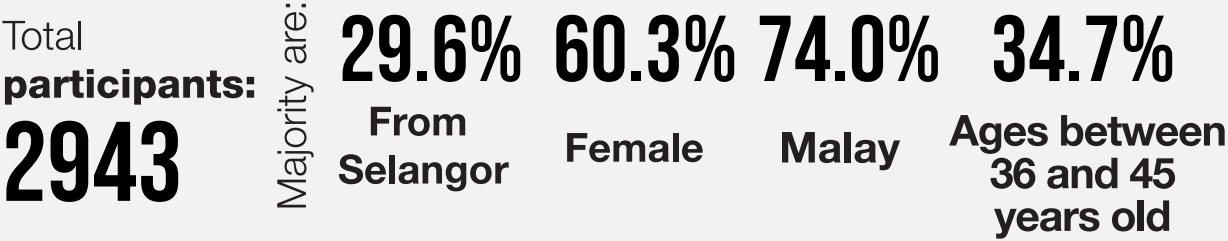
- COVID-19 prevention messages are vital for disease mitigation measures during this pandemic. However, the continual and repetitive nature of COVID-19 messaging may generate fatigue.
- So et al., (2017) define message fatigue as a state of exhaustion and boredom after prolonged and repeated exposure to similar messages over time.
- Related to message fatigue or “an expected and natural response to a prolonger public health crisis”, has shown to express itself as hopelessness and decreased motivation to engage in preventive behaviors against COVID-19 (WHO 2020).
- Therefore, this study assessed the COVID-19 message fatigue among Malaysian adults.

MATERIALS / METHODS

- Study design**
An online cross-sectional study
- Study population**
Malaysian citizen, 18 years and above
- Sampling technique**
Convenience snowballing sampling technique (distributed by email, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms).
- Data collection duration**
March – April 2021
- Study instruments**
 - Using a modified Message Fatigue Scale. The original version was developed by So et al. (2017) and has been successfully applied in different health contexts, including safe sex, anti-obesity (So et al., 2017), and COVID-19 prevention messages (Ball and Wozniak, 2021).
 - The scale consisted of 17 items with four main dimensions: overexposure, redundancy, exhaustion, and tedium. All items were measured on seven-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree then collated into three categories; agree, unsure and disagree.

RESULTS

Demography



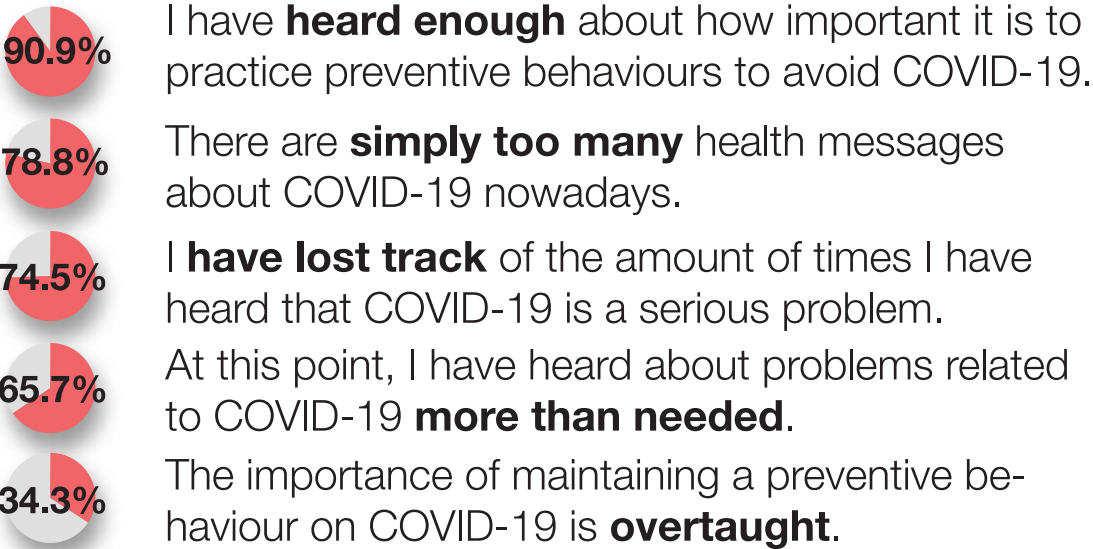
Message Fatigue

Table 1: Mean score of message fatigue by dimension

| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|------|--------------------|
| Message Fatigue | 69.3 | 22.4 |
| Over Exposure | 25.2 | 6.1 |
| Redundancy | 17.2 | 5.9 |
| Exhaustion | 14.1 | 7.6 |
| Tedium | 12.6 | 7.1 |

Perceived Over Exposure

Perception that one has been exposed to a class of messages beyond desired.



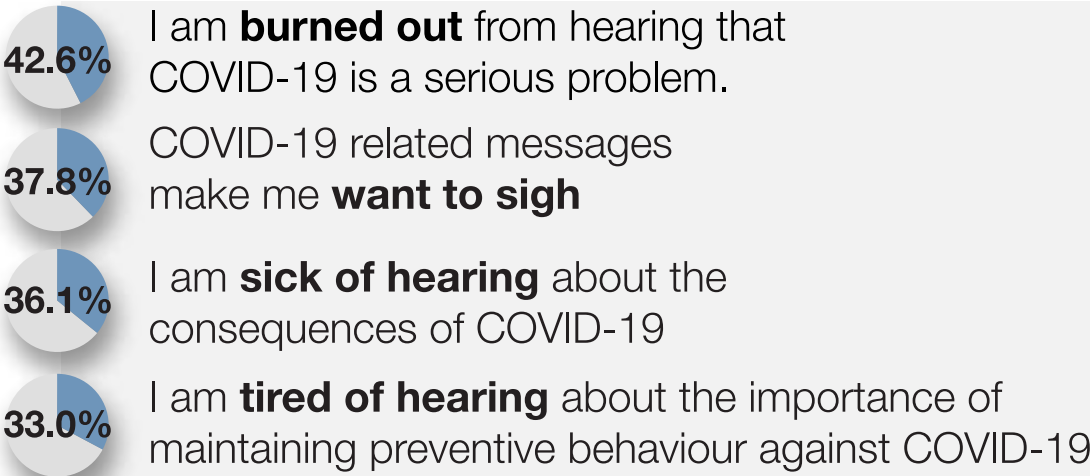
Perceived Redundancy

Perception that the messages are repetitive and overlapping.



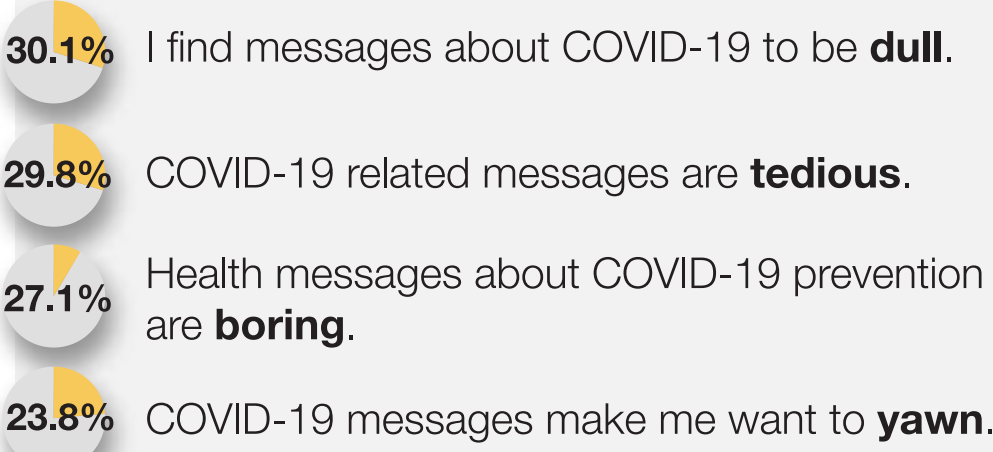
Exhaustion

A feeling of being burned out with the messages.



Tedium

Lack of enthusiasm towards the message.



DISCUSSION

- When comparing the dimension of message fatigue, overexposure showed the highest score, followed by redundancy, exhaustion and tedium (Table 1)
- In terms of responses by items, the majority of participants had heard enough about COVID-19 (90.9%), perceived too many COVID-19 messages (78.8%) and lost track of the number of times they heard about COVID-19 (74.5%).
- Some of them also agreed that COVID-19 messages are predictive (69.9%), sound identical (60.9%), and repetitive (59.3%).
- On the other hand, feeling tired from hearing about COVID-19, the consequences, and the importance of sustaining preventive behaviour were reported in 42.6%, 36.1%, and 33.0% of participants.
- The results also showed that about 27.1% agreed that COVID-19 preventive messages are boring.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that COVID-19 message fatigue occurs, as people have grown tired or fatigued of receiving statistical data, being bombarded with repeated messages, and changing SOP’s.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express our gratitude to the Director General of Health Malaysia for giving permission to publish this poster.

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