

COVID 19 PREVENTION: WASH, WEAR AND WARN COMPLIANCE AMONG MALAYSIANS

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Introduction

The novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is the major public health burden in the world. The global community's morbidity and mortality rates are progressively rising as a result of this disease. Malaysia entered the third wave of outbreak in early October 2020 with the highest number of cases coming from Sabah (8,082), Selangor (3,357), Kuala Lumpur (2,853), and Kedah (1,940) from September 1 to October 19. In facing the third wave of COVID-19 in Malaysia, the role of each individual in society is crucial to prevent the spread of this disease. The ability to practice disease prevention is an important element in preventing this pandemic from spreading further. The public is called upon to exercise 3 W's (wash, wear and warn) to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Objective

This study aims to assess the compliance of Malaysians towards COVID-19 preventions.

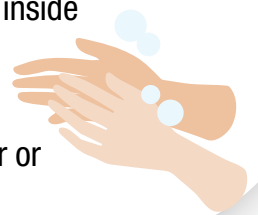


Methodology

Research design	Cross-sectional study
Respondents	Malaysians aged 13 years and above (a total of 20,567 participated in this study)
Study duration	The study was carried out between November 2020 until February 2021. Data collection process was conducted for three weeks starting December 28, 2020 (during CMCO) to 17.1.2021 (during MCO 2.0)
Sampling	Snowball Technique
Data Collection	This study used the online survey method. Data collection was conducted for three (3) weeks. Questionnaire link was disseminated through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegrams and Facebook. Respondents who have answered the questionnaire are encouraged to send the link to their family, friends and any social media groups they are part of. Health Education Division, MOH and Health Education Officers of each state and district were asked to assist in disseminating the questionnaire link to the relevant social media groups to ensure it reaches every layer of society in Malaysia.

No	Statements	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
		<i>n</i> (%)				
1	I maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from others if I go out to public places	10942 (53.2)	7825 (38.0)	1555 (7.6)	210 (1.0)	35 (0.2)
2	I maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from others if I meet up with people outside of my household (friends, family and neighbours)	7904 (38.4)	7429 (36.1)	3974 (19.3)	970 (4.7)	290 (1.4)
3	I wear a face mask if I go out to public places.	17286 (84.0)	3148 (15.3)	93 (0.5)	26 (0.1)	14 (0.1)
4	I wear a face mask if I meet up with people OUTSIDE of my household (friends, family and neighbours)	8945 (43.5)	5284 (25.7)	3947 (19.2)	1320 (6.4)	1071 (5.2)
5	I wash my hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer frequently.	10184 (49.5)	8241 (40.1)	1823 (8.9)	293 (1.4)	26 (0.1)
6	I avoid shaking hands or hugging people when I greet them	11888 (57.8)	6173 (30.0)	1602 (7.8)	435 (2.1)	469 (2.3)
7	I cough or sneeze into a tissue or the inside of my elbow.	11309 (55.0)	6518 (31.7)	1844 (9.0)	522 (2.5)	374 (1.8)
8	I try to avoid touching my eyes, nose and mouth with my hands without washing my hands first.	6802 (33.1)	7914 (38.5)	4521 (22.0)	1065 (5.2)	265 (1.3)

- 76.7% of Malaysians obtained high scores in practising COVID-19 preventions
- Only 1.5% of Malaysian obtained low scores.
- Among all the preventive behaviours that have been practised by Malaysians, the highest was wearing a face mask (84.0%)
- Avoiding shaking hands or hugging people (57.8%)
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or inside the elbow (55%)
- Physical distancing (53.2%)
- Wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser (49.5%)



COVID-19 preventive behaviours among Malaysians become less compliant when they are with FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBOURS.



- Only 38.4% of respondents stated they ALWAYS practice physical distancing
- Only 43.5% of Malaysian ALWAYS wear a mask when meeting with friends, family and neighbours.

Chi-Square Test revealed significant association of COVID-19 Preventive Behaviour Score with gender ($\chi^2 = 116.20$, $p < 0.001$), age group ($\chi^2 = 990.48$, $p < 0.001$), ethnic ($\chi^2 = 174.83$, $p < 0.001$), marital status ($\chi^2 = 358.08$, $p < 0.001$) and occupation ($\chi^2 = 579.22$, $p < 0.001$). Female (78.7%), age 60 and above (87.5%), Chinese (84.8%), widow/widower (82.8%) and respondents working in public sector (80.3%) was associated with higher COVID preventive score.

CONCLUSION

Wearing a face mask, maintain physical distance and wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser frequently are the new norms that must be adhered to by individuals. These findings reflect that society has accepted the new norms in their daily lives.

WASH



WEAR



WARN



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