

TECHNICAL REPORT

# Knowledge, Practice and Perception

of Infection Control During COVID-19  
Outbreak in Malaysia.

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### *Knowledge, Practice And Perception Of Infection Control During COVID-19 Outbreak In Malaysia*



The following persons had contributed in the proposal, planning, logistics, analysis, write-up, discussion, conclusions and/ or drawing recommendations for this report.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the opinions  
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## Executive Summary

This project was carried out to determine the knowledge on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) disease and its symptoms, practice of preventive measures of COVID-19 and perception of effectiveness of these prevention measures in Malaysia. Understanding the level of knowledge and preventive measures practised is not only important to identify the key areas of public health and health literacy to strengthen, but also essential in enforcing the correct practices among public. The knowledge and practice among health care workers (HCW) is also crucial as they are the frontliners against this disease and need to be able to protect themselves, and facilitate in educating patients regarding disease prevention measures.

This project was conducted in three phases, during the initial period of Movement Control Order (MCO), the phone call survey among public and web-based survey among Ministry of Health (MOH) staff was conducted from 23rd March 2020 to 24th April 2020. A web-based survey focusing specifically on Physical distancing was conducted during Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) from 19th June to 19th July 2020. For the phone survey, randomly generated numbers were dialled using Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) method by trained Research Assistants. All MOH staff, with valid official email address, were invited to join the web survey via email from the MOH postmaster. The web-based survey on physical distancing applied non-probability sampling; unrestricted, self-selected and snowballing method. The link for the web-based survey was shared through social media platforms.

Generally, the public knowledge of COVID-19 was found to be moderate, with around 80% of people able to identify the major symptoms of this disease. The practice of various recommended preventive measures went undertaken by most of the people, each between 70% to 95%, highest being avoidance of any travelling, and lowest being the use of public hand sanitizers. Only 6% of people reported not taking any preventive measure.

Over 80% of the MOH staff had good general knowledge on the disease and its transmission, but lower knowledge on the main symptoms of COVID-19. Majority of the MOH staff practiced recommended COVID-19 preventive measures, ranging between 88.8% to 99.7%, highest being avoidance of social gathering and physical distancing of 1 meter and lowest wearing mask at public places. This is similar to the findings of their perception of the preventive measure effectiveness, whereby most of the items scored more than 80% by the respondents, with the used of hand sanitiser reported the least.

Most of the respondents, both among the general public and MOH staff reported positively to practices of preventive measures should they have any symptoms of COVID-19, ranging between 87% to 99%. High scores were also found similarly on the perception on preventive measures effectiveness, as reported by most of the MOH staff, should they have any symptoms of COVID-19. However, we noticed that there were gaps between the practices and perception of its effectiveness should they have any symptoms of COVID-19. This gap should be tackled with targeted and specific health messages so that the importance of these practices are well understood and will continue to be practiced in future.

More than 95% of public were aware of the practices and have positive attitude towards the importance of practising physical distancing. More than 90% agree physical distancing measures help to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in community, however only 68% agree that it helps to avoid loss of life. Almost all the respondents answered that they practiced physical distancing measures as advised by MOH but more than 50% had difficulties to practice physical distancing at certain public places like wholesale or wet market, shopping malls, supermarket/hypermarkets and grocery stores.

Education on COVID-19 must continue to be carried out and intensified for all, including MOH staffs. Clear information on COVID-19 must be given to both the general public and healthcare workers to avoid confusion. Physical distancing must continue to be emphasized with procedures in place in common areas to enable it. These education measures are not only important in reducing the transmission of the disease, but also reduce the fear and anxiety among public.

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