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COVID-19 Awareness Among Undergraduate Medical Students of the UWI. St Augustine Campus

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Introduction

- The urgency for heightened levels of Coronavirus Disease of 2019(COVID – 19) awareness among medical students is attributed to their estimated face-to-face or indirect participation in the COVID-19 pandemic and similar pandemics¹.
- The unavailability of updated pandemic information is a major challenge faced by medical students during COVID – 19.
- It is hoped that the data accrued in this study, will serve to guide the draughting and implementation of policy for the inclusion of a pandemic preparedness component in the University of the West Indies Medical Education Curriculum.

Objective

- To determine whether the level of awareness is based on age and level of education.
- To determine the extent of knowledge that Undergraduate Medical students of UWI ST Augustine have on COVID 19, its effect on preparedness as future frontline workers and the reliability of their sources of information

Methodology

- Study Design- Cross sectional study .
- Study Population- Medical Students from Year One to Five
- Study Sample- Random Sampling
- Sample Size- estimated sample size of 137 persons after Population Correction.
- Data Collection- A questionnaire containing 20 questions was disseminated randomly via an online Google form to the Medical Students of Year One to Year Five to their respective class group chats.
- Data Analysis - Descriptive analysis was done to report percentages using SPSS. Chi-square test was done and the asymptotic value was found to determine the significance between relevant variables.
- Ethical Approval- Obtained from the Campus Research Ethics Committee of The UWI St. Augustine Campus on May 5th, 2022.

Results

Table 1: Demographics and responses of the participants, 2022

Characteristic	Participants (n=137) No. (%)
Sex	
Male	34 (24.8%)
Female	103 (75.2%)
Age	
Group I (19-26)	127 (92.7%)
Group II (27-35)	10 (7.23%)
Year of Study	
Year 1	46 (33.6%)
Year 2	37 (27%)
Year 3	24 (17.5%)
Year 4	18 (13.1%)
Year 5	12 (8.8%)

Table 3: Chi Square Test for Year of Study and

Awareness scores	Value	*df	Asymptotic Significance (2 sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.006 ^a	32	.371
Likelihood Ratio	42.811	32	.096
N of Valid Cases	137		

^adf-degrees of freedom

Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Age and Awareness

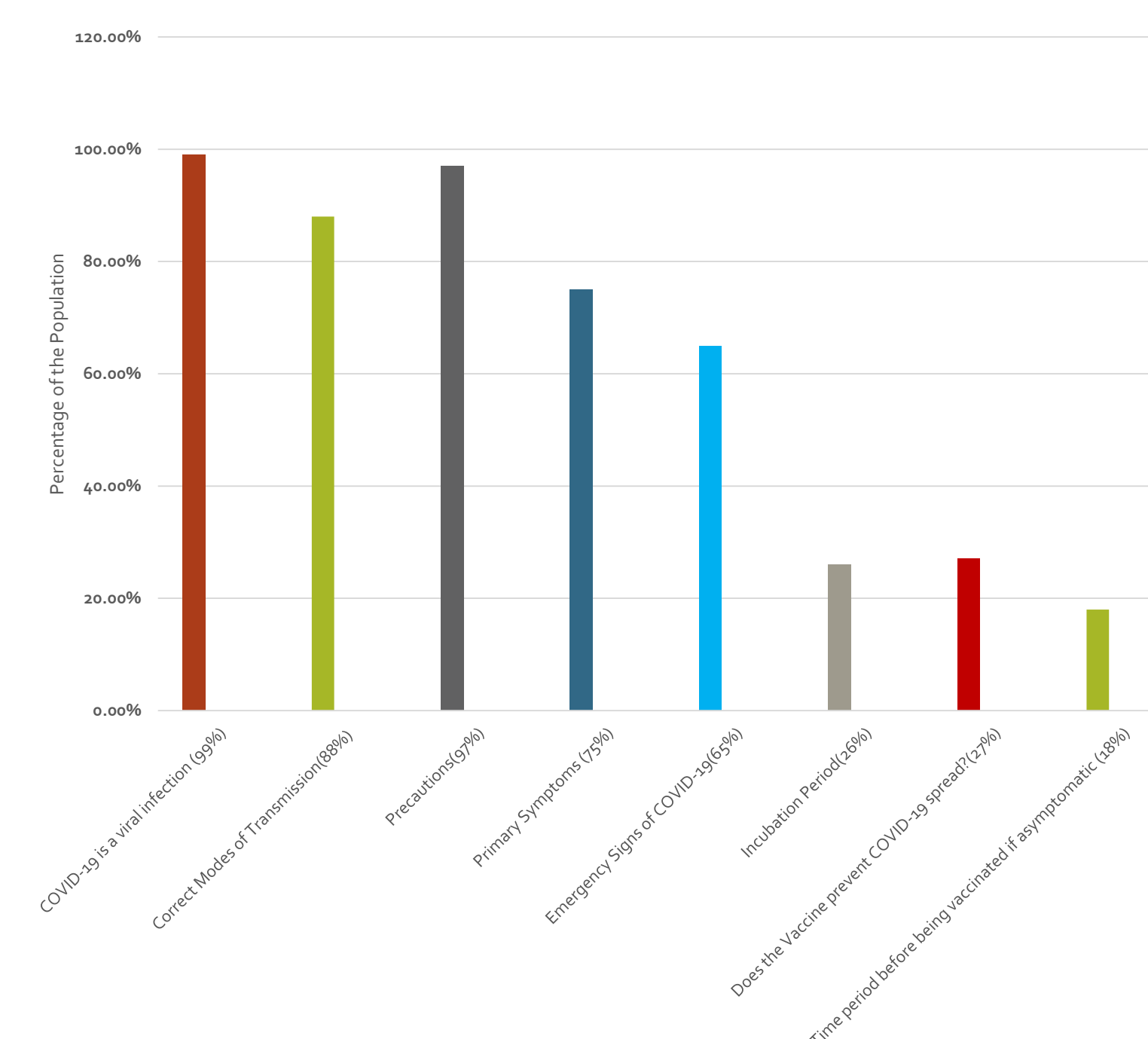
scores	Value	*df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	134.742 ^a	96	.006
Likelihood Ratio	95.730	96	.489
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.830	1	.176
N of Valid cases	137		

^adf-degrees of freedom

Table 2: Different sources used by participants to gather information on COVID-19

Questions	Participants (n=137) No%
Are you aware of the COVID-19 Virus and its global outbreak?	
Yes	137 (100)
No	0 (0)
As a medical student, how did you become aware of COVID-19?	
Newspaper articles	52 (38.0)
Ministry of Health Website	57 (41.6)
Ministry of Health Press Conference	86 (62.8)
Friends and Family	77(56.2)
Medical professionals	66(48.2)
Social Media	118 (86.1)
Television	81(59.1)

Fig.1 Displays the Level of Awareness Among Medical Students of UWI St Augustine



Discussion

- There was no significant difference between age and the Awareness scores evident by the asymptotic significance of 0.006 .
- However, a significant difference was seen with both the Year groups and the Awareness scores.
- This is indicated by the asymptotic significance of 0.371 and the varying levels of knowledge among Year groups 1 Year 5 student, 2 Year 3s and 2 Year 2s obtained a perfect awareness score of 9
- Results indicated medical students are only moderately prepared, where 54.7% stated they were not prepared. This supported a finding in the literature review where the students were deemed unprepared due to possessing limited knowledge.^{2,5,11,12,15,17,18}

Conclusion

- The undergraduate medical students of The UWI St Augustine Campus, Faculty of Medical Sciences, MBBS, showed that higher years had higher levels of awareness than earlier years.
- However, older individuals did not possess higher awareness than younger individuals.
- Hence it was concluded that while awareness was linked to level of education, there was no link to age.

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