COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

MEDICAL STUDENTS’ RESEARCH FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

FACULTY

PROFESSOR NABIL SULAIMAN
MRS. AMAL HUSSEIN

2014 - 2017
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Medical Students’ Community-Based Research Incorporating Sustainable Development

Faculty:

Prof. Nabil Sulaiman, Department Chairman & Professor

&

Mrs. Amal Hussein, M.P.H. Lecturer
Preface

I am proud of the achievements of our students at many levels. I am particularly proud of their achievement in research. In spite of their heavy learning load to update their basic and clinical knowledge, they were very active in performing research both in the laboratories and in the clinical field.

Medicine can only be advanced by improving our understanding of the disease process, improve methods of early diagnosis, designing new therapeutic approaches and test new therapies. To achieve that, we need to encourage our students to ask the difficult questions and attempt to answer them. This is what our University has been doing in the last few years and is providing unlimited support to the medical students to be involved in research at early stages of their learning. We see them as the future innovative physicians and scientists. Our University is also providing substantial support for the students to present their research findings at national and international meetings. The University's future vision is to strengthen critical thinking and provide suitable atmosphere for both students and faculty to do competitive research. Our vision is to make the Medical School of the University of Sharjah the best academic medical center in the Gulf and Middle East. I am sure with achievements like the projects presented in this research book, completed by our student in the last few years and with the involvement of our faculty and the support of the University administration, we will achieve our objective.

I would like to thank His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council, Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah and President of the University for his support to the research programs. We are also very grateful to Prof. Hamid Al Naimiy, Chancellor and Prof. Maamar Bettayeb, Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies.
I would like to thank our faculty for supervising the research project, particularly Prof. Nabil Sulaiman, Head of Family & Community Medicine & Behavioral Sciences, and Mrs Amal Hussein for providing students with all the needed research skills and for leading the initiative of publishing this book. Special thanks go for the organizations who provide research funds and for the participants who agreed to be part of the studies. Thank you our students, we are proud of you.

Prof Qutayba Hamid, MD, PhD, FRCP, FRS
Vice Chancellor for the Medical and Health Sciences Colleges &
Dean, College of Medicine
November 2018
Preface

It is my pleasure to introduce you the community-based research (CBR) project at the Department of Family and Community Medicine and Behavioral Sciences.

Our department designed CBR in 2007/2008 to address one of the four major themes of the medical curriculum in Sharjah- Population Health. Our major aim is to equip undergraduate students with critical thinking and reasoning competencies. Year 2 students learn essential health promotion knowledge and skills by doing CBR projects. Small groups of students meet to identify a research area relevant to the community need. They formulate specific objectives, develop a suitable research design and data collection tool, collect data, analyze it and present their findings as posters. Through this process students develop multiple skills including critical thinking, team working, literature searching using information technology, organizational skills as well as presentation skills.

A total of 188 projects have been completed since 2007, including 60 projects during the last three years, which are featured in this third edition of our CBR book. Our department’s dedicated faculty members work tirelessly with students using multiple educational strategies including team-based learning and hands-on computer-based data processing, analysis as well as poster development and presentation.

Our medical students are commended for their high-quality output demonstrated by their excellent posters. Several groups have won prizes from local and national conferences and few more have published their projects in health journals. The groups were supervised by our dedicated college faculty as well as clinical faculty at our teaching hospitals. We are grateful to all the supervisors who spent time and energy to contribute to the success of the CBR. We all valued the support and encouragement of the Chancellor, dean of medicine and Vice-chancellors of Medical campus and VC for Research.

I hope that our department’s contribution to future doctors will be noticeable and appreciated by the Ministry of Health, health professionals and community at large. Results of the projects may be used for strategic health planning to improve individual, family and population health.

We, at the department of family and community medicine, are adamant to make a difference to community health in Sharjah and UAE.

Prof Nabil Sulaiman

Professor and Head
Department of Family and Community Medicine and Behavioral Sciences
November 2018
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A. Health Promotion and Behavioral Modification

A-1 Healthy Lifestyle
Physical activity level among secondary school students in Sharjah & factors affecting it

Nahla Alkharraz, Maitha Almazrouei, Aisha Alnaqbi, Loubna Elsaboni, Ahmed Hamadeh, Essam Saad
College of Medicine – University of Sharjah

Research Supervisor: Dr. Nermine Samir

Context: The epidemic of overweight and obesity among UAE’s adolescents observed as lately has been attributed to an imbalance between energy intake and energy expenditure from metabolism and physical activity attained.

Aim: The purpose of this study was to measure the level of physical activity (PA) among secondary school students in Sharjah and the factors influencing it.

Methods: The study adopted a cross-sectional design. 422 secondary school students in Sharjah were selected based on a stratified-random sampling method from 6 public schools that were randomly chosen from a list provided by the Ministry of Education. A self-administered questionnaire tackling the students’ demographics, practices, and perceptions related to PA was used. The international Metabolic-Equivalent of Task (MET) scoring system was employed to quantify each student’s PA level. A score of ≥3 MET-hrs/day was used to define a physically active individual (i.e. < 3 = inactive, 3-8 = moderately active, & >8 = vigorously active). A scale was used to measure the students’ weight & height to calculate their BMI. SPSS 22 was used for data analysis.

Results: Within the total 422 students, 36.3% were physically inactive, 51.6% were moderately active, & 12.1% were vigorously active. There was a significant correlation between gender & MET score (p=0.002), with males being 3.1 times more active than females. The students reported that peer motivation and family support were the two most encouraging factors to engage in PA (70.5% & 60.9% respectively), whereas, lack of time and non-suitable weather were the two most hindering factors (48.6% & 47.8% respectively).

Conclusion: The prevalence of inactivity among secondary school students was unexpectedly high compared to similar studies, especially among females. An interventional program tailored specifically for this age group that would eliminate the hindering factors and enhance the encouraging factors is necessary to reach the efficient level of PA.
Antenatal exercise: knowledge, attitudes, and practice among mothers in Sharjah

Meena AlHadithi, Mahmoud Hassan, Maysar AbuEbaid, Omnia Alnaqbi, Safa Hussein
College of Medicine, University of Sharjah

Research Supervisor: Dr. Muhammad Anwar

Introduction: Research studies have revealed that the better the perception of antenatal exercise by pregnant women is, the greater the results of exercise are. Similar studies have also showed that assessing the practice of antenatal exercise is the best way to reveal any misconceptions and correct any mistakes. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to know how pregnant mothers perceive the usefulness of antenatal exercise, and to describe their practices of antenatal exercise.

Research Question: What are the perceptions, attitudes, and practices towards antenatal exercise among pregnant women in Sharjah, UAE?

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using questionnaires that were distributed to 385 women of any age who were pregnant at any point in their life. The questionnaires contained 26 questions about perception, attitudes, practice in addition to knowledge. Women who correctly answered >70% of the questions were considered knowledgeable. Data was analysed using SPSS software. Results of the study were represented using graphs drawn using MS Excel.

Results: Of the 385 women, 81.6% were Arabs, 55.5% were ≥36 years old, and 56.4% were unemployed. 40.8% exercised and 59.2% did not exercise during pregnancy. Non Arabs, employed women and younger women were 0.2, 1.5 &1.9 times more likely to exercise respectively. Among women who exercised, walking and yoga were the most common types of exercise performed. The most common barriers that women faced towards antenatal exercise were that they lacked time and motivation and that they were worried to harm the fetus. As for the knowledge, 27.5% were knowledgeable and 72.5% had poor knowledge.

Conclusion: There is lack of knowledge among pregnant women in the UAE regarding antenatal exercise. Most of the women who exercised did not meet the recommended guidelines set by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Based on the results of the study, most women had positive attitudes towards antenatal exercise and the perceived benefits were significantly higher than the perceived harms.
Sleep patterns and predictors of sleep disturbances among medical students

Arab Hammoudeh, Aya Fathy, Maryam Alabbar, Mohamad Ghanaim, Nour Alherafi, Tarek Alzain
College of Medicine, University of Sharjah

Research Supervisor: Dr. Ahmed El-Serafy.

Background: Sleep patterns play a significant role in determining physical, psychological, and social wellbeing. Previous studies revealed the prevalence of sleep disturbance among university students and its effect on their health, and academic performance.

Aim: To describe sleep patterns, determine the prevalence of sleep disturbances, and identify the predictors playing a role in altering sleep patterns among medical students in the University of Sharjah (UOS).

Methods: A cross-sectional questionnaire was conducted in the College of Medicine in UOS. 412 students were included in the study. A non-probability quota sampling was followed. A self-administered structured questionnaire including Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS) was used to conduct this study. Data entry and analysis was done using SPSS 21. The predictors of sleep disturbances assessed were stress, study load, caffeine intake, and exercise.

Results: Based on the PSQI results, 62.9% of the sample had poor sleep quality (PSQI score>5). According to ESS, 38.1% of the sample had enough sleep (ESS score 1-6), 13.7% had average sleep (ESS score 7-8), and 48.2% were very sleepy and needed medical advice (ESS >9). The majority (69.7%) of the students who experienced a great deal of stress were 5 times more likely to suffer from poor sleep quality compared to rarely stressed OR=5.131 (95% CI: 2.347, 11.216; P<0.001). 97% of the students claiming their study load had a major effect on their daily lives were 8 times more likely to suffer from poor sleep quality compared to no effect OR=7.784 (95% CI: 1.997, 30.344; P=0.002). Neither caffeine intake nor exercise had any significant relation with poor sleep quality in the sample.

Conclusion: The prevalence of poor sleep quality was high among medical students in UOS. Factors like high levels of stress and major study load contributed to this poor sleep quality. Programs about the importance of sleep and its effects should be provided to medical students to optimize their daily function.
Sleep patterns & disturbances among secondary school students in Sharjah, UAE

Amena Abbara, Obaidah Adi, Ranya Al-Jumaily, Mohamed Jabbar, Rewan Ramadan
College of Medicine, University of Sharjah

Research supervisor: Dr. Adel Elmoselhi

Background: Adolescent sleep has become an increasingly major global concern. Sleep problems have a negative impact on different aspects of adolescent life including the physical, psychological, and social health aspects.

Objective: The main aim of this study is to describe sleeping patterns and disturbances among secondary school students in public schools of Sharjah, UAE from grade 10 to 12.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among secondary school students in Sharjah, UAE during the academic year of 2015-2016. The sample was selected based on multi-stage random sampling method. A self-administered questionnaire that included a PSQI (Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index) scale was distributed. A score more than 5 indicated sleep disturbance. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software version 22.

Results: The sample included 360 students; 53.4% of whom were found to suffer from sleep disturbance (95% CI [47.8%-58.9%]). 57.0% of students who drink stimulants (p=0.017), 55.5% of those who are highly stressed (p<0.0005), 58.8% of those who nap (p=0.010), and 60.1% of those who use social media before sleep (p=0.011) have sleep disturbance. This shows that these factors affect adolescents’ sleep significantly. Furthermore, a large number of females (61.9%) were found to suffer from sleep disturbance compared to males (45.7%) (p=0.004). Average sleeping hours were 7.2h/day, with most students taking less than 15 minutes to fall asleep (57.5%).

Conclusion: Secondary school students in Sharjah, UAE showed a high percentage of sleep disturbance. However, their sleeping patterns were similar to other populations in several aspects. Our results shed some light on important factors that affected their sleep such as gender, stress, stimulants consumption, napping, and use of social media before sleep. Increasing awareness about healthy sleep habits through media, health and public institutions as well as school campaigns is strongly recommended. Future studies are needed to examine further aspects of adolescent sleeping patterns and disturbances in UAE’s society.
Practices, knowledge and attitudes towards physical exercise among females above 21 years in Sharjah

Fathima Kalla, Mohammed Aljanahi, Omar AlAli, Rand Jumah, Sara AlDarmaki
College of Medicine, University of Sharjah

Research Supervisor: Dr. Mohamed ElAdl

Background: Physical inactivity (PI) has become a global bane contributing to 3.2 million deaths/year. Thus, warranting the WHO’S recommendation that adults aged 18–64 should do at least 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity aerobic PA to maintain physical health is of paramount importance. In 2008, according to the WHO, 31% of adults aged 15 and above were insufficiently active internationally, with women being less active than men, 34% vs. 28%.

Objective: To describe the practices, knowledge and attitudes of females in Sharjah towards PA.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted from February-April 2017 amongst a convenient sample of 350 women above the age of 21 within Sharjah. Participants answered self-administered questionnaires regarding practices, knowledge and attitude. Data were analyzed using SPSS 23 software, with PA calculated according to TLAS Godin Scale.

Results: Participants aged between 21-76 years (mean 32.4 ±10.0), with a percentage of 61.7% were found to be physically inactive. The most frequently reported form of exercise was easy walking (61.6%), a type of mild intensity activity. Furthermore, women with a bachelor’s degree or beyond were more active compared to women with a school diploma, 51.1% and 32.1% respectively (p=0.033). Mothers of 4 children or more had lower levels of PA (17.5%) compared to those who have fewer children (36.0%) (p=0.006). Non-Arabs were found to be more active (44.3%) than Emiratis (29.6%) or Arabs (28.8%) (p=0.004). The most common barriers to PE reported by women were lack of time due to family (41.7%), work or study (53.4%), and inappropriate climate (35.7%).

Conclusion: This study showed that majority of females above 21 in Sharjah are physically inactive, although most of them were aware of the benefits of PA, valued them and enjoyed exercising. This emphasizes the need to tackle the implicated barriers to improve general health. For instance, suggestions could include organizing women’s events at parks/recreational centers including charity runs, marathons, or Yoga to raise awareness. Special gyms offering nurseries could also be used.
A. Health Promotion and Behavioral Modification

A-2 Nutrition
Background and Aim: Fast food is defined as meals that are prepared and served quickly. Nowadays, the rates of fast food consumption have increased vastly among students worldwide and it is associated with poor health outcomes. This study aims to determine the prevalence and the factors associated with fast food consumption among preparatory school students in Sharjah.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using probability multi-stage sampling where sections from grades 7 to 9 (age between 11 and 15) were selected from six randomly chosen public preparatory schools in Sharjah. Two sections of each grade were selected randomly from each school. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 400 students. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: demographics, attitudes and awareness about fast food. Students’ weights and heights were measured using a scale and their BMIs were calculated. Data was entered and analyzed using the SPSS22 program where the means, percentages as well as Chi-square test and Odds ratio were used to conduct data analysis. Pie and bar charts were used to present the results.

Results: Of the 400 subjects, 97% of reported eating fast food. In addition, 73.4% of the students used to eat fast food twice or more per week, for reasons related to low prices of meals (64.3%), enjoying the taste (51.2%), fast services (47.7%) and attractive advertisements (46.5%). 61.7% of the students were able to define fast food correctly. Subjects showed a decline in fast food consumption rates after discussing issues related to fast food with their families.

Conclusion: Fast food consumption is a prevalent problem among students, and some serious measures need to be taken to eliminate such poor eating habits.
Sugar-sweetened beverages consumption among secondary school students in Sharjah: Knowledge and practices

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College of Medicine, University of Sharjah

Research Supervisor: Dr. Muhammad Tufail Anwar, University Hospital Sharjah

Background: The consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages contributes to childhood obesity emphasizing the importance of investigating the consumption of SSBs among secondary school students since it is known to increase the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes later in life.

Aim: To investigate the consumption of SSBs among secondary school students in Sharjah, to describe their intake patterns, and their knowledge about excessive sugar intake.

Methods: A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among secondary school students in Sharjah. Schools were selected randomly using multistage, gender stratified, cluster sampling. 509 students (321 girls) completed self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of 34 closed-ended questions divided into 3 main sections: demographics, knowledge and practices. Students were asked 5 questions to assess their knowledge level (percentage of the correctly answered questions).

Results: 509 students (321 girls) between the ages 15 to 17 responded. Almost all students reported sugary beverages intake in the past week. Fruit juices and soft drinks were the most common sugar-sweetened beverages. Taste and cost were important. Juice has a “health halo”. Students reported higher consumption of soft drinks when socializing with friends and family. Few students consumed soft drinks while smoking. Students who spent more time watching TV didn’t consume more sugary drinks. Male students were more likely to consume fruit juices (15% vs. 4%, p > 0.0005) than the female students. Students with high stress levels reported significantly higher intake of sweetened hot drinks (p = 0.006).

Conclusion: Efforts to reduce SSB consumption are needed for the youth of Sharjah because SSBs contribute to excess caloric intake which lead to weight gain and result in bad health consequences.
Knowledge, attitudes and practices related to calcium & vitamin D intake among females of Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Prof. Randa Mostafa

Introduction: Calcium and Vitamin D are micronutrients that are essential for proper bone health. Females between 18-25 years of age require the maximum amounts of calcium and vitamin D intake.

Aim: To measure the knowledge, practices, and attitudes towards Calcium and Vitamin D intake among females of Sharjah between the ages of 18-25.

Methods: A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to a convenient sample of 374 women. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions in four sections (Demographics, Knowledge, Attitudes, & Practices). For practices, a table was used to measure the sample’s frequency of Calcium and Vitamin D rich foods intake.

Results: A total of 429 females completed the questionnaire. Knowledge of Calcium and Vitamin D sources and functions was low. There was a weak correlation (r=0.124) (p=0.017) between knowledge and practices. Females attaining different levels of education had the same knowledge about calcium and vitamin D (p=0.104; F=2.28). 67.7% of students and 31.3% of housewives were adequately exposed to sunlight (> 15 mins/day). 60.2% of females did not know that their Islamic coverings make them more prone to vitamin D deficiency (n=228)

Conclusions: Our study revealed that females in Sharjah do not have enough knowledge about the sources and importance of Calcium and Vitamin D. As for Practices, cheese and seafood were the most and least eaten foods, respectively. Awareness campaigns and educational courses are recommended.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

The knowledge, attitude and pattern of meat consumption among adults in Sharjah, UAE

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Bashair Mussa

Background: Overconsumption of meat is an escalating phenomenon in the UAE resulting in a surge of cardio-metabolic diseases and cancers prevalence.

Aim: To describe the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices related to meat consumption among Sharjah residents and to identify factors associated with their unhealthy practices.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included a convenient sample of 400 participants (50% were males) at the age of 18-50. Data were collected using interview-based structured questionnaires that used visual aids.

Results: Results have demonstrated that Arabs were more likely to consume grilled processed meat (OR= 1.58), and 68.2% of them thought grilling is the healthiest way of preparation. Seventy-five percent of obese and overweight participants who were knowledgeable had an unhealthy meat intake. Unexpectedly, unmarried participants were more likely to consume deep fried chicken despite their awareness of its harms (OR= 2.11) while married participants over-consumed grilled fish (OR= 1.58). Alarmingly, the working age group had poor knowledge; 57.3% of them were below high school education level and had their friends as their primary source of knowledge.

Conclusions & recommendations: The main factors hindering healthy meat consumption were lack of knowledge and an inability to apply the acquired knowledge. Our participants had an overall strong desire to over-consume fish and were unaware of their beef over-consumption. Noticeably, Arab participants were under the misconception that grilling is the healthiest way of preparation although it carries a carcinogenic risk, yet they over-consumed deep fried processed meat which predisposes them to cardiovascular complications and colorectal cancer. Finally, this study calls for the development of educational interventions in the UAE to improve its residents’ eating habits.
Breastfeeding knowledge & practices among pregnant and breastfeeding mothers in the UAE

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Naguib Abdel Reheim, University Hospital Sharjah

Background: Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival. WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months as a global health strategy.

Objectives: The study aims to describe the existing levels of both knowledge and practices regarding breastfeeding in the UAE.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers of a child up until 2 years of age. An interview-based questionnaire was distributed, involving open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Knowledge and practices were assessed and scored. Statistical tests including ANOVA, T-test and Pearson correlation were conducted using SPSS 23. P-values less than 5% were reported as statistically significant.

Results: The total number of study participants was 469 women of whom 20.1% were pregnant. Out of the 89.8% (n=421) of the mothers who had initiated breastfeeding, only 38% (n=160) were exclusively breastfeeding for the recommended duration, which is 4-6 months. The most common reasons for not exclusively breastfeeding included insufficient milk production and introduction of formula milk. Primiparous mothers had an overall lower mean score in both knowledge and practices compared to multiparous mothers. Mothers who had received breastfeeding information prior to giving birth did not score significantly higher than those who did not. 45.1% (n=210) did not agree that providing anything other than breast milk is a factor in reducing breast milk production, and only 4.5% (n=21) were familiar with all the correct positions and hold techniques for adequate breastfeeding.

Conclusion: Knowledge of breastfeeding among pregnant and breastfeeding mothers is acceptable with a few misconceptions. However, the study found that their exclusive breastfeeding practices are suboptimal. There is a need for revision of the current breastfeeding information delivery methods to make them more effective. Additionally, intervening programs that promote exclusive breastfeeding should place an emphasis on targeting primiparous mothers.
Caffeine consumption and associated psychological dependence: A comparative study between university students and working adults

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Samrein Ahmed

Background: Caffeine dependence has become a controversial topic as its stimulatory effects on the consumer have made it a widely-used drug that complies with criteria of an addictive substance.

Aim: To compare the intake and psychological dependence of caffeine between university students and working adults.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional study conducted among participants chosen by quota sampling. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and psychological dependence was measured by DSM-V guidelines. SPSS 23 software was used to analyze the data.

Results: Out of the total 547 subjects, 27.6% were students & 72.4% were employees, of whom 21.3% and 56.7% were caffeine consumers respectively. The consumption was in the form of black tea 68% and other drinks (cappuccino and green tea 54%). 31% of participants consumed caffeinated drinks in the morning and 20.5% at the evening. More than quarter of the subjects said that the reason they consume caffeine is to concentrate for study purposes (28.5%), while others consumed it for its taste and flavor (25.8%). Headache (80%), craving (58%) and lack of concentration (42%) were the chief withdrawal symptoms reported by consumers. When knowledge was questioned, 60% of consumers think caffeine addiction is a health issue.

Conclusion: In this study, more than half of the participants consumed caffeinated drinks from different sources. Results showed that consumption was higher among employees yet the psychological dependence was more common among students due mainly to their need for concentration.
**Research Abstract**

**Weaning: Knowledge and practices among mothers in Sharjah**

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**Introduction:** The World Health Organization has defined weaning as “the process by which a baby slowly gets used to eating family or adult foods and relies less and less on breast milk”. The body uses all the storage of important nutrients by the age of six months, thus, breast milk will not meet the full requirements of babies.

**Objective:** Since research on weaning is scant and outdated in this region of the world, we aimed to study the knowledge of mothers and how they approached the weaning process.

**Methods:** The research was conducted using a cross sectional study design. Non-probability convenient sampling was used to calculate a sample size of 424 participants. Data was collected by interviewing mothers, who have children aged 3 years old or younger and were available at MCH centers and public places. Structured questionnaires were developed by the researchers. SPSS 22 program was used to enter data and results were summarized in percentages and presented in charts. Mothers’ practices during weaning were compared to the WHO guidelines to assess their level of adherence.

**Results:** Out of the 424 participants; 63.9% were housewives, 34.2% were workers, 44.9% correctly defined weaning, 91.7% believed that breastmilk shouldn't be stopped at the beginning of weaning, 50.7% started weaning at 4-6 months, 54.1% of first time mothers correctly knew about the time of starting weaning as compared to 42% among mothers who had more than one child. Mothers’ adherence to the WHO weaning guidelines ranged between 42 and 90% on the 10 items. 23.1% of mothers correctly knew 6 out of the 10 items.

**Conclusion:** Mothers in this study were lacking knowledge about the correct definition of weaning. Introducing the correct type of food at the right time was improper too. We encourage local health care systems to consider holding more awareness programs for mothers in order to promote proper weaning methods.
B. Prevention and Risk Reduction
**Background:** According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014), breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women worldwide, and early detection is crucial in reducing mortality. Breast self-examination (BSE) is a simple and cost-effective method of early detection, making it an important method, beside mammography and clinical breast examination.

**Aim:** The aim of this study is to assess the awareness and practices of BSE among females in Sharjah.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in UAE, Sharjah using self-administered questionnaires that were distributed among a convenient sample of 412 women enrolled from public places. A total of 36 questions including demographics, awareness and practices of BSE were used. Five questions were designed to assess awareness and a score (0-5) was calculated. Score < 3 indicated unawareness, whereas, a score ≥3 defined awareness about BSE.

**Results:** Out of 412 participants, 43% were 20-25 years old, 42% had completed their college education and 22% of them had a family history of breast cancer. 119 females (29%) were aware (Score ≥ 3) of BSE, and 144 (35%) reported practicing it. Awareness showed a significant correlation (p<0.0005) with ethnic backgrounds, with only 24% (n=28) of Emirati and 21% (n=37) of Arab non-Emirati females, compared to 45% (n=54) of non-Arab females being aware of BSE. Awareness was also correlated (p<0.0005) with employment, as 36% (n=81) of the employed females were aware, compared to 20% (n=38) of the non-employed females who lacked such awareness. Only 40% (n=64) of the practicing women knew when to practice BSE, while 85% (n=123) were aware of the correct method.

**Conclusion:** Awareness of BSE and practices among females in Sharjah are insufficient, (29%) and (35%), respectively. Both factors were significantly correlated with employment and ethnic background (p<0.0005). Health education programs are strongly recommended to rectify this lack of awareness.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Medication compliance among elderly patients in Sharjah

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Background: Noncompliance to medications especially for chronic diseases is a worldwide health problem, specifically among older adults, and its prevalence is increasing. Poor compliance may have a major impact on clinical outcome, contributing to substantial worsening of disease, increased health care costs and even death.

Aim: This study aimed to assess the prevalence of drug compliance among patients aged above 65 years in Sharjah who are suffering from chronic diseases that require them to adhere to medications over a period of time.

Methods: This is a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in Sharjah in 2015. The study targeted a total of 386 randomly selected elderly people aged 65 years old and above who are suffering from chronic diseases and are taking medications over a period of time. Subjects were enrolled from public places in Sharjah. Compliance was measured by the Moriskey Scale-8. Data collection was performed using personal interviews with subjects using a 26-item structured questionnaire. SPSS-22 has been used for data entry and analysis. T-test was used to study the correlation between the risk factors and level of compliance.

Results: Of the 386 subjects, 17% represented the high compliance group while most of the sample 47% were a part of the low compliance group according to the MSA-8 classifications of compliance. We found out that higher levels of compliance correlated significantly with female gender, higher educational levels and having medical insurance. 76.1% of elderly patients attributed their non-compliance to forgetfulness. Other causes were due to improvement of signs and symptoms (20.9%) and experiencing side effects of the medication (13.7%). There was no significant relationship between poly-pharmacy, comorbidities and medication compliance.

Conclusion: Medication compliance among the elderly was relatively low. The most common factors affecting level of compliance included: level of education, medical insurance and gender.
Knowledge and awareness about Cervical Cancer Vaccine (HPV) among parents in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Hiba Barqawi

Background: Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the leading cause of cervical cancer (CC) and other diseases worldwide. Despite several measures taken to reduce the risk of infection with HPV, the most effective method is the HPV vaccine. This study’s aim was to assess knowledge and attitudes of parents in Sharjah towards HPV, in addition to, whether they would vaccinate their daughters or not.

Methods: A cross-sectional study of 400 subjects was conducted in Sharjah public venues. Convenient sampling was used for the selection of English/Arabic-speaking parents (of daughters) working in nonmedical fields. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed with questions on demographic data, CC, HPV and HPV vaccine knowledge and attitudes towards it. Participants’ responses were entered and analyzed using SPSS 21.

Results: 46.5% of participants were aged 35-50 years, 36% were <35 and 17.5% >51 years; 74% were Arabs, 16.5% non-Arabs and 9.5% UAE citizens. 77% of participants and 78.5% of spouses had completed their university education/undergraduate studies. Knowledge about CC, HPV and HPV vaccine was 24%, 21.3% and 19%, respectively. 27.5% of mothers were unwilling to get vaccinated because of age (43.2%) and vaccine safety (32.4%). 23.4% of parents were unwilling to vaccinate their daughters because of side effects (46.3%), lack of knowledge (40%), poor access to health services (2.5%) and cost (1.3%). A significant correlation was found between spouse’s educational level and HPV knowledge (p-value =0.025), HPV vaccine (p-value =0.044).

Conclusion: This study revealed that knowledge about CC, HPV and its vaccine is lacking among parents in Sharjah. It also found higher parents’ acceptance to vaccinate their daughters if the government approves the vaccine. This demonstrates the need for raising awareness about HPV and its vaccine.
Low dose aspirin use for primary prevention among adults in UAE: A study of prevalence and awareness

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Maha Saber

Background: Cardiovascular diseases are the number one cause of death worldwide which can be prevented by addressing the risk factors and using prophylactic drugs most commonly aspirin.

Aim: The aim of this study was to explore the prevalence of using low dose aspirin among people aged above 40 in the UAE and their awareness regarding its benefits and side effects.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study which included 419 UAE residents from all 7 Emirates through convenient population sampling. A self-administered questionnaire containing 33 closed ended questions was used to collect data and SPSS 21 for data analysis.

Results: The study showed that 29.8% (95% CI is 25.4% to 34.2%) of the population aged above 40 use low dose aspirin. 79.0% of those using low dose aspirin were using it as a primary preventive tool from CVDs. 35.2% were using aspirin following a friend's/relative’s recommendation or self-prescription. The prevalence of aspirin in the “40-45”, “46-50”, “51-55”, “56-60”, and “above 60” age groups was 8.8%, 18.5%, 23.3%, 29.8%, and 50.0% respectively (p<0.0005). There was a significant association between aspirin use and history of smoking (36.4% in positive smoking history and 16.2% in negative smoking history, p<0.0005), hypertension (40.9% in hypertensives and 24.5% in non-hypertensives, p=0.013), and hypercholesterolemia (46.9% in those who suffer from hypercholesterolemia and 24.6% in those who do not, p=0.002). 69.2% of the study population didn’t know about the side effects of aspirin use. Genetics was the first ranking choice (73.9%) when asked about the risk factors of CVD.

Conclusion: Prevalence of low dose aspirin use in the UAE is relatively low considering that the guidelines suggest that primary prevention should start at the age of 40. Stronger primary care initiatives including health education and awareness programs may be required to increase awareness of safe aspirin use and its potential side effects.
Practices & attitudes to prevention of travel-related infectious diseases in the UAE

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Introduction: A growing number of the UAE population is considering travelling abroad. Travelling enhances exposure between hosts and pathogens, therefore, posing a risk on the health of travellers. Therefore, it is necessary to educate the public on such risks and ways to avoid them. Despite the fact that guidelines and advice are available and easily accessible, several studies proved that travellers do not always follow them.

Aim: This study aims to look into the practices and attitudes followed by the UAE residents towards prevention from travel-related infectious diseases.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted from February to April 2015, in different Emirates of the UAE. A self-administered anonymous questionnaire containing 20 questions covering practices and attitudes followed by UAE residents prior to their trips was developed. Quota sampling method was used, where adults above the age of 18 who travelled abroad in the past year were chosen through convenience sampling from the seven emirates in proportion to the population size of each one. Data was entered electronically and analysed using SPSS 21 software.

Results: A total of 385 questionnaires were completed. Most travellers (66.8%) included in the sample perceived the risk of travel-related infections at their destination as low, with only 10.5% perceiving it as a high risk. As a result, a remarkable 70.1% of respondents indicated that they did not seek any precautionary measures prior to their trips. A surprising finding was the fact that only 20.9% sought travel health advice prior to their trips, while the outstanding majority 79.1% said they didn’t. Family and friends were the major sources of advice for those who sought it with a percentage of 41%, followed by the internet at 35.9%.

Conclusion: This study reveals that UAE residents don’t adhere to the adequate practices and attitudes in prevention of travel related infectious diseases.
Level of knowledge related to Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in the UAE community

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**Background:** The UAE is one of the top ten countries worldwide in terms of diabetes prevalence, therefore, emphasizing the importance of public awareness to effectively manage and reduce this alarming rate.

**Objective:** The objective of this study is to assess the knowledge of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2-DM) in the general population of the UAE and to relate the level of knowledge to specific demographics.

**Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, data was collected through face-to-face interviews, from 490 participants between the ages of 18 and 65 years. The questionnaire included items about demographics and knowledge regarding development, risk factors, clinical manifestations, complications, prevalence, management and prevention of T2-DM. SPSS v.22 was used to analyze the data. Those who answered more than 50% of the questions correctly were considered knowledgeable.

**Results:** Of the 490 participants, 45.9% were knowledgeable about T2-DM, 9.4% were diabetic and 55.9% had family history of T2-DM. Regarding knowledge, 33.5% of the participants knew the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes, 84% knew the risk factors for T2-DM, 17.1% knew how T2-DM develops, 64.1% were knowledgeable about its symptoms, 5.7% estimated the correct prevalence of T2-DM in the UAE and 80.6% knew that T2-DM is preventable. 76.1% of the diabetics and 41.7% of the non-diabetics were knowledgeable.

**Conclusions:** This study reveals that knowledge of T2-DM in the UAE is poor and highlights the need for public education programs. In addition, it is recommended that healthcare professionals be more proactive in disseminating accurate information about diabetes, particularly in regards to the causes, manifestations, prevalence and the preventative measures of T2-DM.
Hormone replacement therapy: Knowledge and attitudes among women in Sharjah, UAE

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Mohamed Eladl

Background: Menopause is a period usually accompanied by mild to severely hindering symptoms such as hot flashes, mood swings, urination difficulties, and so on. With medical advancements, hormonal replacement therapy has been devised in an attempt to alleviate menopausal symptoms.

Aim: To assess the level of knowledge and attitude of women towards menopause-related HRT in Sharjah, UAE.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in public places in Sharjah, UAE. The targeted sample was 385 women of ages 30-65 years. A convenient sampling method was used for subject selection. A self-administered questionnaire (29 closed ended questions) was distributed in Arabic or English. It consisted of two blocks: knowledge (28 questions) and attitude measured through Likert scale. SPSS 21 was used for data analysis.

Results: The study consisted of 400 females of whom, 51.5% were in the age group 30-39; 31.7% were 40-49 years; and 16.8% were 50-60 years old. 47.0% heard of HRT out of whom 8.0% reported using the therapy. The highest percentage of awareness towards the benefit of HRT in reducing menopausal symptoms belonged to the age group 40-49 (p=0.008). Out of those who have heard of HRT, 92.5% identified its disadvantages with women of university level education knowing 10 times more than those who belonged to the less than university group. The main sources of information regarding HRT were the television (34.4%), friends (27.4%), and general reading (25.8%). As for the attitude, 55.7% agreed that HRT is a good solution if one has many symptoms and 43.9% believed that HRT is accompanied by many side effects.

Conclusion: A moderate portion of the community was aware of HRT, but has not acquired accurate facts concerning the different aspects of the therapy. Many believed HRT is more effective in cases of various symptoms, however, there were fears regarding its possible side effects.
Prevalence and factors associated with shoulder pain among adults in Sharjah, UAE

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Background: Shoulder disorders and complaints constitute an important health problem in the general population and multiple factors seem to affect the risk of developing shoulder pain. However, there is no research that has been done to estimate the prevalence of shoulder pain among the general population in Sharjah, UAE.

Objectives: The purpose of the study is to assess the prevalence and risk factors associated with shoulder pain in Sharjah, UAE.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was carried out among adults (n = 405) aged between 25 and 55 years old chosen by convenience in Sharjah, UAE. Data was collected by interviews based on a questionnaire composed of seven sections including modified sections from Shoulder Pain and Disability Index and Dutch Musculoskeletal Questionnaire. Analysis was performed using SPSS 22 software.

Results: A total of 405 participants completed the questionnaire 51.4% of which were females (n=208). Mean age of subjects was 36.5 years. Shoulder pain was reported by 49.4% (n= 200) of subjects, and more often by females than males (59.1% in females and 39.1% in males, p<0.0005) and the right shoulder being affected in 50% of the subjects reporting shoulder pain. Among other risk factors, a positive family history was significantly associated with shoulder pain with a 66.7% association (p<0.0005). As perceived by the subjects, “bad posture for a long time” was the most frequent cause of their shoulder pain (26%) compared to lifting heavy load, stress, sudden movements, and accidents which were not significantly related to shoulder pain. 47.5% of the subjects with shoulder pain have sought medical assistance regarding their shoulder pain.

Conclusion: The study concluded that shoulder pain is very common among adults in the Sharjah population and is more frequent in females. A positive family history of musculoskeletal disability was significantly associated with shoulder pain.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Knowledge About Stroke Among Adults in Sharjah Emirate

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Background: In the UAE, stroke is the second leading cause of disability after RTA, where annually 8,000 to 10,000 patients get a stroke. There is limited data available about the level of knowledge of stroke among the population.

Aim: Since the first step towards stroke prevention is awareness, the aim of our study is to identify the knowledge levels of stroke among Sharjah’s adult citizens.

Methods: Using self-administered questionnaires, in a cross-sectional design, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used to enroll subjects. Eligible subjects were above 18 years of age, comprehended Arabic or English, and are currently residing in Sharjah. Any health care provider, medical personnel or patients with past history of stroke, were excluded from the study. The questionnaire was 17 questions structured in five sections which included: demographics, general knowledge, knowledge of signs and symptoms, risk factors, and appropriate response towards stroke. SPSS V.22 was used to analyze the data. Percentages, means, and ANOVA were used. A P-value less than 0.05 was considered to be statistically significant.

Results: The study included 426 subjects, mean age was 35.1 years, 65.2% were females. 51.8% of the subjects claimed they know what stroke is, out of whom 24.3% provided incorrect descriptions. The mean knowledge level of signs and symptoms was 55.4%, and of risk factors was 40.6%. Visual disturbance was the least identified of the five signs and symptoms (38.0%). Female gender, African American race, and age above 60, were the least identified of the 8 risk factors (4.7%, 3.5%, 19.8% respectively). Better knowledge was associated with increased age and higher education.

Conclusion: The majority of the sample showed an average to low level of knowledge. Such results indicate the importance of implementing more awareness programs that target younger age groups in the community.
Prevalence of snoring and its risk factors among adults in the UAE
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Background: Snoring is a loud noise produced primarily with respiration during sleep. Snoring can be classified into occasional snoring which has no serious complications and habitual snoring which is an important health risk, thus, has been a focus of research.

Aims: To determine the prevalence, associated risk factors and awareness of snoring among adults in the UAE.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in the months of February-April 2016 on a sample of 407 subjects from Sharjah. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed through a non-probability sampling method. Data was analysed using SPSS v22.0 software package and level of significance was set at 5%. The risk of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) was divided into high or low based on the Berlin scale, and day time sleepiness was also assessed using Epworth Scale.

Results: Of all sample subjects, 54.8% were females, mean age was 34.7 years. 34.2% were snorers, 45.5% non-snorers and 20.4% didn’t know whether they snore or not. The main risk factors were age (p<0.0005), BMI (p=0.003), hypertension (p=0.005), nasal septum deviation (p=0.024), male gender (p=0.038) and smoking (p=0.05). Among the snorers, 43.2% were at high risk for OSA based on berlin questionnaire. In terms of the knowledge, 68.9% thought that snoring is a serious health problem, and 88.9% believed that being overweight is a major risk factor. However, 53% reported that snorers don’t need to visit a physician even if it was accompanied with apnoea.

Conclusion: Prevalence and risk factors of snoring in the UAE are similar to other countries, however, campaigns to raise awareness about habitual snoring and its risk factors are recommended.
Awareness & knowledge of heart attacks among adults in the UAE

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Background & Aims: One in every four cardiovascular diseases related death in the UAE is attributed to heart attacks, this study aims to determine the current level of awareness about heart attacks among adults in the UAE. In doing so, economical, medical and voluntary resources may be utilized more effectively in creating beneficial educational programs/facilities that specifically target the knowledge gaps and misconceptions among the UAE population.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted among a convenient sample of 403 adults aged 20-60 years using self-administered structured questionnaires. All health professionals were excluded. The questionnaires were distributed at various locations within the Emirate of Sharjah. Collected data was then analyzed and interpreted using the SPSS program. Knowledge of participants was scored out of 28 points according to their total correct answers.

Results: Out of the 403 individuals who participated in this research, 57.6% of the respondents were females, 49.9% of which were below the age of 30 and 15.4% were above the age of 40. On assessing total level of knowledge, 46.8% of the sample scored above 15 out 28 of the total knowledge score, and only 6.7% scored above 20. Out of all the signs & symptoms listed, chest pain and shortness of breath were the most identified with 76% & 67.5% participants identifying them respectively. As for risk factors, the most identifiable were high blood pressure (86.6%), stress (81%) and smoking (80%). In general, reducing fat consumption (88.4%) was the most practiced preventative measure, while smoking cessation (78.9%) was the most practiced measure for the purpose of preventing heart attacks (63.1%). Main source of subjects’ knowledge was the Internet (34%). Other variables were not found to be correlated with the knowledge of heart attacks among adults (p> 0.05). Experiencing a previous heart attack was found to be significantly associated with better knowledge about all aspects of heart attack (p=0.001).

Conclusion: The study indicates a low level of knowledge and awareness about heart attacks, thus, a dire need for further heart attack awareness among the UAE population, possibly by utilizing different platforms (i.e. cyber campaigns, community fundraisers, marathons, etc.) is needed.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Prevalence and clinical characteristics of headache among medical, pharmacy, and health sciences students in the University of Sharjah

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Background: Headache is the most common neurological disorder, especially among university students. It has significant effects on their academic, social, and personal lives.

Objectives: The objectives of this study are to determine the prevalence, clinical characteristics, impact and management strategies among students of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health Sciences colleges at the University of Sharjah.

Methods: Self-administered structured questionnaires were distributed among 471 students. Data was analyzed by SPSS-22 using inferential statistics tests, including Chi-square and odds ratio. A modified version of MIDAS was adopted for measuring headache impact.

Results: Prevalence of headache was 84.9% (95%CI, ±0.0323%) over the last six months. Comparing Medicine to Pharmacy, medical students were 2.9 times (90.3%) more likely to experience headache ($P=0.001$). There was a significant correlation between headache and wearing corrective eye lenses ($P=0.033$) as 87.9% of students who use corrective eye lenses reported having headaches. They majority reported having one headache episode per month (35%), for less than an hour (46.5%), during the afternoon (39.5%), described it as tightness (46.1%), frontal (35.5%), worsened since enrolment in the university (66.8%), moderate in severity (51.6%), with dizziness (31.8%), with no warning signs before episode (62%). Few students (3.3%) reported that headaches had a significant impact on missing university classes. However, headaches minimally decreased productivity of 62.3% of university students. Stress/tension and too little sleep were the most reported factors that triggered headache episodes, 84.4% and 83.1% respectively. Sleep was the main strategy of management followed by the majority of students (72.5%), while few sought health professionals (5.8%).

Conclusion: The majority of undergraduate students suffer from headaches which affects their academic and daily performance. Therefore, it’s recommended that more attention should be drawn towards this issue with better guidance on how to manage it more efficiently.
Premarital Screening: Knowledge and attitudes among Sharjah community aged 18-30 years
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Research supervisor: Dr. Ahmed El-Serafy

Background: According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 240 million people are carriers for genetic blood disorders and at least 200,000 affected individuals are born annually. Those disorders are evident in the Gulf and Arab countries. Premarital examinations can particularly be important in curtailing the spread of such diseases or disorders.

Aim: To assess the level of knowledge and form an idea regarding the attitudes towards the PMS of adults aged (18 – 30) in Sharjah community.

Methods: A descriptive quantitative cross sectional study. A non–Probability convenience sample of 400 unmarried individuals (18-30 years of age) were asked to fill a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured and the data was analyzed by SPSS program.

Results: 41% of the sample were males. The majority of the participants were Arabs (91.8%), of these were (32.3%) were Emiratis. Most of the participants had completed their high school education (81.8%) and (17.0%) completed their higher education (university). 12% of the sample answered correctly on 4 or more out of 6 knowledge questions. Out of 12% knowledgeable people, 11.5% were females. Educational level affected the attitude towards the necessity of the test as 94% of college student found it necessary to do the test. 86.25% of the sample assumed to have good perception, 44% passed the knowledge questions. 53.75% of those who agreed on doing the test, even if it was optional, were females, whereas, 1.75% of females disagreed and 1.25% of males disagreed. 89.5% of the sample got their knowledge from sources other than health professionals.

Conclusion: According to the study, there is poor level of knowledge in the community of Sharjah towards PMS. On the other hand, the sample showed positive attitudes towards doing the PMS. We recommend more seminars to be held by health professionals to increase the level of knowledge towards PMS testing.
Colorectal Cancer: Awareness & knowledge amongst Sharjah population

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Research Supervisor: Prof. Mohammed El Hajjaj

Background: Colorectal cancer (CRC) is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide and in the GCC. It is the 4th leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide, and is responsible for a significant number of deaths in the UAE per year.

Objective(s): This study aims at describing the level of awareness on CRC among the public of Sharjah and to identify factors associated with the level, gaps, and main sources of knowledge.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, adults in Sharjah of an age above 20 were selected via the non-probability quota sampling method proportional to gender distribution. Data was collected through structured interviews adopted from previous questionnaires and modified to suit the study purposes. The questionnaire was divided into sections of demographics, health-related practices, awareness, knowledge, and future plans. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 17 knowledge questions. Data was then analyzed via SPSS 23.

Results: Study sample consisted of 400 subjects, 74.4% of whom were males (n=298). The majority of the subjects (72.3%) were between 20-39 years old. 33.3% (n=133) of the population were aware of CRC. There were significant relationships between awareness level and age/educational level/smoking/nationality/income level; as well as knowledge scores and the age/income level. The 2 main gaps in knowledge were identified: 59.40% did not know the relative mortality rate of CRC and 54.10% did not know the incidence rate of CRC in relation to gender. The main 2 sources of awareness and knowledge were friends/relatives and websites.

Conclusion & Recommendation: The findings of the study highlight the lack of awareness about CRC and gaps in knowledge among the Sharjah population as well as the need for raising awareness. Using social media, and public awareness campaigns, based on the personal preference of the public, to raise the level of awareness on CRC is highly recommended.
Knowledge and attitudes towards Dementia among Sharjah residents: A cross-sectional study

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Ibrahim Eltayeb

Background: Dementia is a clinical syndrome that consists of impairment of cognitive skills resulting from disease of the brain which is severe enough to impair daily functioning. In the UAE, it is estimated that there are 4,300 patients suffering from dementia with a projected increase of 600% by 2030.

Objective: To explore the community's knowledge, perception and attitudes towards dementia.

Methods: In this cross-sectional survey conducted in Sharjah, data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed among residents attending public places. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part included questions regard demographic characteristics of the participants. The second and third parts include validated tools consisting of Alzheimer's disease Knowledge Scale (ADKS) and the Dementia Attitude Scale (DAS). A total of 392 adults aged 18 years and above, with 158 (40.6%) males and 231 (59.4%) females, participated in this study. Data was analyzed using SPSS.

Results: The mean on the DAS scale was 98.7 (out of 140), and on the ADKS 16.4 (out of 30). There was a significant difference between Arabs born in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (Mean=15.79) and non-Arabs (Mean=16.85); (p=0.030) in terms of the ADKS score (Alzheimer’s Disease Knowledge Scale). A significant difference was also found between the DAS (Dementia Attitude Score) results of Arab-GCC (Mean=100.32) and Arabs (Mean=96.12); (p=0.015) and between Non-Arabs (Mean=100.93) and Arabs; (p=0.019). There was a significant difference between participants who didn’t complete secondary school (Mean=90.67) and those who did (Mean=99.96); (p=0.021), and between participants who received higher education (Mean=98.79) and those who didn’t complete secondary school (p=0.035) in terms of attitude.

Conclusions: The level of knowledge and attitudes among the sample was lower than other regions while it displayed similar attitudes to them. Non-Arabs scored better on both scales. Arabs from the GCC showed better attitudes than other Arabs with less knowledge. Higher education correlated with better attitudes.
Helicobacter Pylori Gastric Ulcer: Knowledge about its health impacts among adults in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Hiba Barqawi

Background: H. pylori bacterium is a known underlying agent for gastritis, peptic ulcer disease, and gastric cancer and is believed to infect half of the world’s population. Even with the ubiquity of H. pylori bacterium, there is a lack of knowledge regarding its modes of transmission, associated diseases, carcinogenic effect and means of prevention.

Objective: To assess the knowledge, and describe the attitudes and practices among UAE residents towards Helicobacter Pylori.

Methods: A structured anonymous questionnaire was developed and convenient sampling was used for selection of the sample. A sample size of 385 participants was needed based on 5% marginal error (ME) and 50% prevalence. The questionnaires gathered data related to participants’ demographics, knowledge related to H. pylori, their habits and attitudes towards preventing the infection. Participants’ responses were entered and analyzed using SPSS 22 software.

Results: A total of 500 subjects participated in this study of whom 58% (n= 289) were females. 37% (n=185) of the participants were 18-29 years old, 34.8% (n=174) were 30-39, and the rest were above 40. 75.4% had never heard of H. pylori before and a remarkable 60% of the participants were not aware of the link between H. pylori and stomach cancer. Additionally, 90% of the subjects reported that they would not ignore symptoms of stomach ulcers, yet only 33% stated they would seek medical help. 31% of subjects had severe ALARM symptoms and these subjects were found to more frequently engage in risky habits (average score = 72.8%) compared to those with mild and moderate symptoms (p= 0.0078**).

Conclusions: Results revealed poor general knowledge towards H. Pylori’s and significant discrepancies regarding awareness about its potential causes, routes of transmission and carcinogenic effect. Overall poor to average attitudes and practices towards prevention of the bacterial infection were evident. Thus, it is essential to highlight the importance of devising new educational campaigns to raise awareness on this health issue which could be avoided with successful primary prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.
Parents’ knowledge, attitudes and practices towards children's vaccination in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Muhammad Anwar, University Hospital Sharjah

Background: Parents’ knowledge and practices towards children’s vaccinations play a great role in the protection against many preventable diseases worldwide. The purpose of this study is to measure the knowledge, beliefs and practices of parents towards children’s vaccination.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using self-administered questionnaires containing 28 questions put into three sections including: knowledge, practices and beliefs. The minimum calculated sample size needed was 385 subjects, with an inclusion criterion for parents being with children under the age of 10 in the emirate of Sharjah. Non-probability convenient sampling method was used. Data collection took place during March of 2017. Data analysis was done using SPSS 22. Scores were calculated for knowledge, beliefs and practices by counting the number questions answered correctly in each section.

Results: The sample included 425 of whom 79.7% were aware of UAE’s vaccination schedule, and 58.2% knew which age groups can receive vaccines. Main barriers against vaccinations reported by parents were lack of education (70%), lack of availability (26%), high costs of vaccines (41%) and fear of side effects (20%). Main sources of knowledge about vaccines were physicians (44%), internet (17%) and TV (15.3%). In terms of practices, 94.6% of the parents in the sample’s population have a vaccination schedule for their children, but only 58.9% accepted to give their child booster doses of vaccines. A weak positive correlation between knowledge and believes (p<0.0005, r=0.398) and between attitudes and beliefs (p=0.037, r=0.423) was found.

Conclusion: Parents in Sharjah had a good level of knowledge, positive attitudes, and practices regarding children’s vaccinations. Regardless, there was a significant percentage of parents with fears regarding vaccination. We recommend more education for parents as it will eliminate fears from vaccines and will increase adherence to the correct practices regarding vaccination. This can be achieved with educational pamphlets about vaccines in healthcare centers.
Cord Blood Banking: Knowledge and attitudes among residents of Sharjah and Dubai

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Ahmed Taher ElSerafy

Background: Cord blood banking (CBB) is a procedure in which blood is painlessly collected from the baby’s umbilical cord after it is cut. Cord Blood is used for the treatment of more than 70 diseases, notably thalassemia and leukemia (NCBP, 2015).

Aim: The aim of this research is to evaluate the levels of knowledge and attitudes towards CBB among adults in Sharjah and Dubai.

Methods: In public places of Sharjah and Dubai, interview based questionnaires were administered to 511 subjects above the age of 18 years. The subjects were chosen using non-probability convenience sampling.

Results: About 50% of subjects have heard of the term CBB, however more than 65% of subjects didn’t know about its uses. Only 36.5% of subjects knew that CBB services were offered in the hospitals of Sharjah and Dubai. The most common sources of subjects’ knowledge were the internet (34%) followed by family/friends (29.6%), and healthcare providers (24%). Married subjects with children were more aware that CB could be used for the treatment of Thalassemia (67.4%) compared to married subjects with no children (50%). The overall attitude of the public towards CBB was positive as 85% of the subjects wanted to be informed about CBB and 69.9% were willing to store their babies’ cord blood. The factors significantly affecting knowledge were identified to be gender, age, marital status, and parenthood. Marital status was the major factor significantly affecting subjects' attitudes.

Conclusion: The findings of this research showed general lack of knowledge among the sample of the study. However, the majority of subjects had a positive attitude towards CBB. This study highlights the need for healthcare and educational policies to integrate knowledge about CBB and increase awareness amongst the population.
Non-communicable Diseases: Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of risk factors among secondary school students in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Sara Shorbagi

Background: Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) kill 40 million people each year, equivalent to 70% of all deaths globally. The risk of developing lifestyle diseases looms larger among the younger population.

Aim: This study aims to determine the level of knowledge about, attitudes towards, and practices of the risk factors of lifestyle-induced chronic diseases (non-communicable diseases) among secondary school students in Sharjah city.

Methods: A total of 591 school students, from grades 10 to 12, formed the study sample, using the multistage stratified cluster sampling method. Four governmental schools were chosen, for each gender. Data was collected through a pretested, closed-ended questionnaire consisting of five sections; demographics, physical activity, diet, smoking and sleeping patterns. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to analyze data using SPSS 23.

Results: A total of 591 students participated. As concerns knowledge about NCDs, 73.90% believed that the risk factors of NCDs are preventable, but concerning the causes of NCDs, the students demonstrated a low level of knowledge as they weren’t aware of the main causative factors of NCDs. Regarding practices, 58.2% were physically inactive, females being less active than males. More than 2/3 of students didn’t fulfill the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables (75.9%), and 77.1% drank less than 7 cups of water a day (recommended intake is 8 – 11 daily). 8% reported to be smokers with cigarettes being the most encountered tobacco product. Concerning attitudes, 80.2% of inactive participants were willing to improve their physical activity and 14.1% were willing to smoke a cigarette if offered.

Conclusion: The study has demonstrated a low level of knowledge and practices, but positive attitudes towards risk factors of chronic diseases. We recommend implementation of thorough awareness campaigns about the risk factors of non-communicable diseases through school health education programs.
Level of knowledge of antibiotic resistance and practices related to antibiotic use among adults in the UAE

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Research supervisor: Dr. Eman Abu-Gharbieh

Background: Antibiotics are one of the most frequently used therapeutic class of drugs. However, the overuse and misuse of antibiotics has led to the growth and proliferation of antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Aim: To describe the knowledge and practices related to antibiotic resistance among the general population of the UAE.

Methods: A cross-sectional study based on a self-administered questionnaire was conducted among a convenient sample of adults between 20-50 years in Sharjah.

Results: A total of 400 adults participated in the study: 53.3% were males, 61.5% were Arabs, 55.5% were between 20 and 29, 28.7% were between 30-39, 9.3% were between 40-49, and 6.5% were above 50 years. 54.5% believed that antibiotics can treat common cold and flu. 64.1% had heard about the term antibiotic resistance. 62.1% knew that antibiotics don’t work on all bacteria. 29.9% knew that antibiotic resistance can be slowed and the majority (79.5%) of them believed that antibiotic resistance can be slowed by following medical advice. 73.7% said that antibiotics are less likely to be effective if used frequently. 74.7% showed proper practice of using antibiotics. 71.8% got their antibiotics after consulting their doctor. This study also found a correlation between age and practices: people above the age of 50 had more favorable practices.

Conclusion: The majority of the study sample showed above average knowledge regarding antibiotic resistance and favorable practices of antibiotic utilization, yet they believe that antibiotic resistance is a serious health issue facing our country. Further educational interventions are necessary to increase the understanding of antibiotic resistance and correct the population attitude toward antibiotic use.
C. Environment and Safety
Sports Safety: Awareness and Application among Secondary School Students in the UAE

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Background: Inadequate knowledge of sports safety was linked to a higher incidence of sports related injuries. Accordingly, lack of safety measures application among secondary school students is recognized as a significant public health concern.

Aims: This study was conducted to determine the awareness and application of sports safety measures among Sharjah secondary school students.

Methods: A cross sectional design was used, enrolling students from 6 Sharjah governmental schools chosen using stratified cluster random sampling. A questionnaire containing 33 questions was developed and self-administered among subjects to collect data. SPSS 22 was used in data analysis.

Results: Sample included 428 students, 53.5% males and 46.5% females, whose ages ranged between 14 to 20 years. Students expressed their awareness of safety measures in sports as “injury avoidance” (53.7%); “abidance by rules” (22.2%); whereas 21.3% expressed they were unaware of the essence of sports safety measures. The sources of students’ information listed descendingly as follows: Coach (40.1%), Internet (31.6%), and Teammates (22.6%). The extent of the students’ safety applications varied depending on the sport practiced and the measures applicable to each sport; however, generally the application was inadequate. The major reasons behind not applying these safety practices were: “harmless sport” (39.0%); “dislike of application” (29.7%); and “lack of experience” (20.6%) among other reasons. 55.4% of students reported suffering a sports-related injury, of whom 53.8% could have prevented them by applying safety practices. There was no correlation between the students’ awareness and application with their gender, BMI, professionalism, or coach supervision.

Conclusion: The students’ awareness and application of safety measures were unsatisfactory. Therefore, we recommend that sports safety measures be covered within the school Physical Education curriculum. Additionally, we advocate supplying the players with suitable setting and improved sports education.
Knowledge, Practices and Attitudes to Lab Coat Contamination and Handling Among Medical Students

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Farhan Cyprian

Background: Lab coat represents a professional dress code for people working in the medical field or involved in laboratory work so it is a major source of infectious diseases. In 2015, The Ministry of Health in the United Arab Emirates issued a policy that prohibits medical staff from wearing their lab coats in public places.

Objectives: The study aims to determine the knowledge, practice and attitudes of medical students in Sharjah University regarding the most appropriate way of laundering a lab coat, as well as to check their attitudes towards handling lab coats.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in the college of Medicine in University of Sharjah. A self administered questionnaire was distributed among 392 medical students including both clinical and preclinical students. Then, data was entered, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS 21 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Appropriate statistical tests were used relative to the type of data measured.

Results: Results showed that most medical students believe that the lab coat protects them from pathogen transmission and liquid biohazard and that long sleeves provide more protection. Also, results showed that medical students carry their lab coats by hands and wash them at home instead of carrying them in a special bag and washing them in laundry sites, respectively. Comparing clinical and preclinical students, preclinical students were found to be more knowledgeable than clinical students, yet both groups showed poor hygiene practices related to Lab coats.

Conclusion: Medical students were found to have good knowledge yet poor practices regarding lab coat hygiene. This malpractice is due to the lack of on-campus laundering sites rather than poor knowledge. Providing accessible laundry sites and holding more conferences regarding the importance of correct practices is highly recommended.
Awareness and attitude toward permanent hair removal by laser

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Ahmed Abdelaziz Shorrab, UHS

Background: Despite how widely Laser Hair Removal (LHR) is being used nowadays, it can be misused in inexperienced hands. Many researchers doubt the safety and efficacy of this procedure since there is limited research published. Burns, permanent changes and other conditions could be possible side effects, and their incidence of occurrence could be reduced if performed by a medical doctor. Consequently, there has been a demand for measuring people's awareness and attitudes toward LHR.

Aim: Assessing the level of awareness and attitudes regarding LHR in adults aging 18-45 living in Sharjah.

Methods: A cross sectional study using a non probability convenient sampling was conducted among participants between 18-45 years in Sharjah, where healthcare professionals and medical students were excluded. Using an interview-based questionnaire and data was analyzed on SPSS.

Results: Out of the 400 adults, 38.8% were men and 61.2% were women. 35.3% had done LHR; as expected, females (24%) had used it more than males (11.3%). 82.3% of both genders are considering LHR in the future. Most of the subjects knew about the procedure through friends (60%), internet (40%), and TV (32%). 70% of total participants were in favor of using LHR. Furthermore, we found that people between 31-45 years have the tendency to be against using LHR (43%) (p=0.001), while 18-22 and 23-30 years old are against using LHR by (23%) and (26%) respectively. 38.8% of the participants agreed that LHR is the most common nowadays. The demographic characteristics such as age and educational backgrounds had no significant relation to the total knowledge of LHR.

Conclusion: Although LHR remains a therapeutic challenge in the world of cosmetics, the amount of knowledge is still limited and the attitude towards it is not yet completely established. From our study we concluded that older people tend to have a negative attitude due to some misconceptions or fear of possible side effects.
Perception of Bariatric Surgery among Adults in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Atef Demian, University Hospital Sharjah

Background: Bariatric surgery is a known method for weight reduction as it slows the progression of comorbidities of obesity. About 68.2% of the UAE population have an unhealthy weight level. To our knowledge, no previous studies highlighted the general public’s knowledge about surgical treatment of obesity.

Aim: This study was designed to assess adults’ perceptions of bariatric surgery.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted among 400 Sharjah residents aged 18-60 years. Interviews were conducted with the eligible individuals in public places during the month of February 2015 using a questionnaire that included two sections: the demographic data and their knowledge relating to bariatric surgery. Individuals working in the medical field or who have done the surgery before were excluded from the study. SPSS program was used for analysis and processing statistical tests of the collected data.

Results: Our sample consisted of 226 females (56.4%) and 174 males (43.6%), aged 18-60 years with mean of (28.64 ± 9.63). The sample’s BMI showed that 5.6% were under normal, 50.3% normal, 31.1% overweight, and 13.0% obese. 67.17% chose exercise as the best method to lose weight, 20% regarded liposuction as the best method to lose weight and 40.4% didn’t have knowledge about benefits of bariatric surgery. There is a relationship between gender and knowing the benefit of bariatric surgery in reducing severity of long term diseases (P=0.003). There is no correlation between BMI and the decision to do the surgery (P = 0.552).

Conclusion: We concluded that the people in general have poor knowledge about bariatric surgery with regards to its indications and complications. The public need more credible sources, such as health awareness campaigns for different age groups, gender and BMI, to get the correct knowledge regarding bariatric surgery.
Knowledge and Practice of Contact Lens Wear and Care among Medical Students in University of Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Mohammad Wasfi, University Hospital Sharjah

Background and purpose: The use of contact lenses for improving vision has been increasing among college students and this can be attributed to increased awareness, and better advertisement. Our purpose is to assess knowledge and practices of contact lens wear and care among medical students and to investigate the relationship between proper care compliance and problems encountered.

Methods: This is a cross sectional study conducted among 397 medical students of Sharjah University who use contact lenses. They were selected by convenience sampling. A self-administered questionnaire that covered all aspects of the study objectives was used. A compliance score for knowledge and practice was conducted using eight questions; students were classified according to: (a) Poor: giving correct answers to less than 3 questions, b) Average: giving correct answers to 4-6 questions, c) Good: giving correct answers to 7-8 questions. Results were statistically analyzed using SPSS 22.0.

Results: Of a total 397 students, 86% (n=339) were females and 14% (n=58) were males. 53.4% were wearing for refractive purpose, 27.5% for cosmetic purpose and the rest for both. The majority of contact lens users wore their contact lens for a duration of 5-7 hours (38%) followed by 8-10 hours (26%). 63.7% were not aware of over-wear syndrome and only 17.9% of students were aware of Acanthamoeba infection. By gender, females had significantly better practice of contact lens use in washing before insertion and checking debris and damage (P=0.001). Surprisingly, 50.7% of females experienced problems while only 28.1% of males did. 47% (n=1860) of students encountered problems and the most common problem was dryness (55.3%) followed by discomfort (48.9%). Regarding the action taken by contact lens users if complications occurred, 34% of students tend to stop using until symptoms clear, while (22%) stopped using and sought medical help. Overall, the level of compliance of the majority was good (54%), followed by average (42%), and poor (4%).

Conclusion: A significant proportion of medical students experienced problems with contact lens use despite having a high compliance score. Improper practice and lack of knowledge could increase the risk of problems with contact lenses. Therefore, more health education and awareness must be promoted.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Awareness related to the Ebola virus among the UAE community
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Research Supervisor: Dr. Nihar Dash

Context: Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever is a severe and often fatal illness for humans.

Aim: The aim of our study is to assess the level of awareness about the Ebola Virus and its precautionary measures in the UAE's community.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using a convenience sampling method in public places in the UAE among adults aged between 18 and 45 who were available at the time and place of data collection. A self-administered questionnaire containing 23 questions was used to collect data and SPSS 22 for data analysis. Awareness of participants was assessed based on the number of correct answers and graded on a scale from 0 to 10 being the highest score and 0 being the lowest.

Results: A total of 385 participants were in our research: 18% (n=66) were Africans, and 82% (n=310) were non–Africans. 50% (n=192) of our participants were females. 53% (n=205) were between 18-20 years of age, 33% (n=125) were between 21-30 years of age, and 14% (n=55) were between 31-45 years of age. Our data showed that about 43% of participants had a knowledge score of 4 to 5. Only 20.6% of participants got a score of 7 or higher. Participants of higher educational levels or of African origins had higher score averages and showed a strong relation in terms of knowledge.

Conclusion: Knowledge of Ebola virus was not ideal. Future research should be conducted on how to improve the awareness on the virus among different social groups. Social media and networking are recommended to be used in further awareness campaigns.
**Prevention of home accidents among preschool children: Parents awareness in Sharjah community**

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*Research Supervisor: Dr. Nermine Nosseir*

**Background:** Home accidents are a leading cause of child mortality. This has been reaffirmed in the forward of the World Report on child injury prevention, where unintentional injuries were considered to be a major threat to the survival of children above 5 years.

**Aim:** To determine how well-aware parents are when encountering home accidents and to identify if parents' socio-demographic or academic characteristics affect their level of awareness.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted. Parents currently living in the Emirate of Sharjah that spoke either Arabic or English and had at least one child between 1 and 6 years were targeted. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire of 15 items. The questionnaire was divided according to: socio-demographics, practices, attitude and knowledge regarding home related accidents.

**Results:** Of the 300 participants, 68.3% were females. Parents had a mean age of 33 years, 47.3% were Arabs non-locals, 22% were locals and 65.9% were university graduates. 53% of the population were trained, taught or informed about preventing home accidents. 79.5% of the sample felt that they required more knowledge about proper prevention methods against home accidents. Females answered questions pertaining to home accidents more correctly (78.5%) than males (57.9%) (p<0.05). Among parents who had first aid kits in their homes, 70% were university educated, while 9.2% had higher education qualifications. (p<0.05).

**Conclusion:** This study concluded that only around half of the parents were prepared to deal with home accidents involving their preschool children. Parents’ socio-demographic and academic characteristics affect the level of awareness of preventative measures. Therefore, our recommendation is to implement a concise home accident prevention course to be mandatory after graduating from high school in order to help establish a safer home environment.
Research in Sharjah: Knowledge, attitudes, and practices

College of Medicine, University of Sharjah

Research Supervisor: Dr. Hiba Barqawi

Background. Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) third largest city, is also the third highest waste producer (9.9% of ≈26 million in 2012). Over $1 billion has been invested in recycling programs aiming to achieve zero landfill waste by 100% recycling and conversion. Aside from providing infrastructure, assessment of people’s knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) is needed for effective municipal solid waste (MSW) management.

Objectives. This paper aims to examine the levels of KAP in Sharjah community, since, to our knowledge, little study has been conducted on this matter.

Methods. A cross-sectional study, targeting a minimum of 400 subjects, was conducted in public venues in Sharjah emirate. Convenient sampling was used to select Sharjah residents 18-55 years old. A pilot-tested, self-administered questionnaire was distributed. Participants’ responses were analyzed using SPSS 22, where appropriate statistical tests were applied.

Results. The respondents’ mean age was 28.0 years (± 9.4), and 56.5% were females. Knowledge level was 51.8% (± 18.1); students reported the highest (53.7%, p = 0.007). 58.0% knew what recycling is, 22.9% knew all the benefits of recycling, and 31.2% and 65.4% knew how to correctly prepare and separate items, respectively. Respondents showed a positive attitude of 92.6% (± 16.5) towards recycling; 51.1% and 46.8% would recycle more if there was a financial reward or penalty, respectively. 70.4% (n=307) reported that they recycle; 16.0% always do. Paper was the most recycled item (77.9%). 74.5% separate items by type, and 26.5% correctly prepare them. Logistic regression model indicates that knowledge and attitude were the only significant predictors of practicing recycling (OR = 1.013 and 1.014, respectively), keeping demographics constant.

Conclusions. Although Sharjah residents have positive attitudes towards recycling, their knowledge is relatively lacking, leaving room for improvement. Recycling practices were generally mediocre, requiring innovative methods to encourage higher and more correct practice.
**Traffic congestion & long driving hours: Impact on stress, emotional and physical health among drivers in Sharjah**

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**Background:** The health impact of “long driving hours and traffic congestion” has lately grown to become a principle worldwide driving-related concern. Over the past ten years, the UAE has been titled ‘The most congested country in the Middle East’; and Sharjah, the third largest city in the UAE, is particularly known for its rush-hour; with its residents constantly spending long commuting hours in slow-moving, bumper-to-bumper traffic.

**Aim:** The purpose of this study was to detect the emotional and physical health effects associated with "long driving hours and traffic congestion" among Sharjah residents.

**Methods:** A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted, and self administered questionnaires were distributed aiming to target a total of 450 participants. The sample was chosen based on convenience among Sharjah residents, specifically drivers (>18 years of age) holding a driver’s permit.

**Results:** A total of 414 subjects were enrolled. 66.7% felt that they spend too much time driving, and 86.5% reported suffering from traffic congestion in Sharjah. The average Sharjah resident drives 3 hours and 10 mins per day; significantly higher than the worldwide average of 1 hour and 40 mins per day ($p<0.0005$). A wide range of health distresses were highlighted from traffic congestion as well as long driving hours. Traffic congestion led to greater *emotional* health effects; mostly stress (80.4%), nervousness (74.2%), and aggressiveness (52.2%); whereas long driving hours led to greater *physical* health effects; mostly back pain (66.8%), pain in the legs (56.7%), headaches (43.3%), and dizziness (28.8%). Limitation of daily activities among Sharjah residents was the main consequence of repeated exposure to traffic congestion (81.2%), and long driving hours (65.7%).

**Conclusion:** Exposure to “long driving hours and traffic congestion” resulted in a wide range of physical and emotional health problems; each having its own respective provoking factors.
Plastic Pollution: Awareness about Health and Environmental Impacts among Secondary School Students in Sharjah

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Research supervisor: Dr. Nihar Dash

Introduction: Since the industrial revolution in the 1800s, the issue of plastic pollution is becoming a global reality. The recent industrial development in the UAE and the lack of environmental awareness in the society has intensified the problem of solid-waste management. Building attitudes and knowledge in the future citizens and policy makers is an essential step towards safer environments. Our aim is to assess knowledge and attitudes about plastic pollution among secondary school students in Sharjah city, UAE.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted on 400 students in 6 different schools in Sharjah city selected through probability cluster random sampling method stratified by gender. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed between February and April 2016.

Results: Majority of population understands how harmful plastic wastes are to the environment (85.5%). However, the students' mean knowledge score was 53%. The most important problem caused by plastic pollution, as perceived by participants, is animal and health problems (56.4%), among which, lung diseases (46.6%) and cancers (45.1%) were the most perceived health effects. Females (p<0.0005), grade 11 and 12 (p=0.024), and students whose mothers are more educated (p=0.014) were more knowledgeable and inclined towards pro-environmental behavior.

Conclusion: Students’ knowledge about plastic pollution and its health consequences was found to be low although they had the potential to positively change their behaviours.

It is recommended to focus on realistic initiatives that have greatest potential to be achieved. This includes bridging the information gap by introduction of interactive lectures and activities, encouraging positive practices by providing sustainable alternatives, and introducing legislation against indiscriminate plastics consumption and disposal.
Food Safety: Practices and Knowledge Among Secondary School Students in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Prof. Nabil Sulaiman

Background: Adolescents are at a higher risk of engaging in inappropriate food safety practices, hence developing food-borne illnesses due to inadequate knowledge about food safety. Because of limited research about this topic in the UAE, we initiated this study to assess the level of knowledge and practices of food safety among secondary school students in Sharjah.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted, based on cluster random sampling method. 5 schools in Sharjah were chosen and a self-administered questionnaire, developed by the researchers, was distributed to 400 male and female students in 10th, 11th and 12th grades. A scoring system was developed to measure the knowledge and practices and prevalence was calculated. The data was analyzed using SPSS 22.

Results: Of the 400 students in total, 365 responded, out of whom 51.2% were females. The mean knowledge score was 21.51, (SD: 3.605) with 95% confidence interval 21.19 – 21.93. The mean practice score was 7.02, (SD: 1.457) with 95% confidence interval 6.87 – 7.17. There was a correlation between the prevalence of knowledge and practice of food safety (P<0.05). The main sources of knowledge about food safety were family followed by internet and social network. However, exposure to previous food borne illness, nationality and gender didn’t affect the level of knowledge about food safety.

Conclusion: Most secondary school students in Sharjah applied appropriate food safety practices. However, they had moderate knowledge about food safety, specifically areas regarding hand washing time and appropriate environment to keep the food safe. We recommend specifying a “Food Safety Day” every year to provide the students with adequate knowledge about food safety it’s relevant practices. Also, further research about food safety is required in different regions in the country targeting both school and university students.
The prevalence of low back pain and neck pain among employees of the University of Sharjah and the associated risk factors

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Background: Lower back pain (LBP) and neck pain (NP) are a real health problem. Understanding the causes of pain and its associated risk factors play an important role in its prevention.

Aim: To measure the prevalence of LBP and NP among employees of University of Sharjah and identify the associated risk factors.

Methods: A descriptive, cross sectional study, was conducted among 308 employees from the University of Sharjah including equal numbers of both genders. Self-administered questionnaires composed of 42 questions were distributed among the employees. Data regarding the individual's demographics, self-reported LBP and/or NP, risk factors, impact and methods of management were collected. Data were entered and analyzed using SPSS 22. Chi-square test was used for bivariate analysis with level of significance set at 5%.

Results: The prevalence of LBP, NP and both were found to be 24.0%, 13.0% and 36.4% respectively. NP was higher amongst females (59.7%) than males (39.0%) with p<0.0005. Employees who always worked in an uncomfortable posture showed higher prevalence of LBP and NP compared to those working in a comfortable posture (LBP:75.0% vs 46.6%, p=0.010; NP:64.3% vs 38.4%, p=0.008) respectively. The prevalence of both LBP and NP amongst employees who performed stretching exercises during work was lower than those who did not perform stretching exercises (LBP:46.8% vs 63.7%, p=0.020; NP:33.9% vs 53.1%, p=0.007) respectively. LBP and NP prevalence amongst employees with very severe levels of stress was higher compared to unstressed employees (LBP:81.3% vs 42.9%, p=0.002; NP:75.0% vs 9.5%, p<0.0005) respectively. People with LBP and NP showed decreased daily activities and quality of sleep. Age, BMI and smoking were not associated to LBP and NP (p> 0.05).

Conclusion & Recommendation: An alarming number of employees suffer LBP or NP that impair their daily activities. Implementation of educational programs emphasizing the preventive measures against LBP and NP might help alleviate the problem.
First Aid: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices in Sharjah Community

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Background: According to the WHO, injuries account for 9% of global mortality, and are a threat to health in every country in the world. In the UAE, annually, 19% of deaths are caused by injuries. First aid is the initial assessment and interventions that can be performed in emergency situations with minimal or no medical equipment required.

Aim: The aim of this study is to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices of first aid among adults above the age of 21 in Sharjah community.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was carried out in multiple public areas in Sharjah. The study sample comprised 452 individuals chosen through random cluster sampling. Data were obtained via self-administered questionnaires, which included 37 questions to identify the levels of knowledge, practices and attitudes about first aid. Data were analyzed by Chi-square, ANOVA and Mann-Whitney tests. Median scores were used as cutoff points. Scores of 3 and 7 or above indicated good levels of knowledge and practices respectively.

Results: Of the 452 participants, 49.1% were males, 50.9% were females and 18.6% were medical students. The mean age of the participants was 27.5 years old. 37.6% had a first aid course before. People with an educational level of high school and below had a higher knowledge score (mean= 3.4) than those with a bachelor’s degree or diploma (mean=3), or higher studies (mean=2.6). The mean practices score of the age groups {21-30} and {40-above} were 6.7 and 5.2 respectively (P-value= 0.038). Of all the participants, 21.7% knew the correct CPR technique, 22.3% knew the correct ambulance number, and only 22.6% knew what should be done first before performing first aid.

Conclusion: Sharjah community is in dire need for implementation of first aid training classes as both levels of knowledge and practices were found to be inadequate.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Salon-associated infections and preventive practices: Measuring the levels of client awareness in the UAE

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Background: Salons are used for a variety of purposes that involve the use of such instruments as scissors, scalpels and razors, and other commonly shared utensils and appliances. These salons-related activities provide a suitable environment for the transmission of several diseases and pathogens including hepatitis B and C, scabies, tuberculosis, and MRSA. The transmission of these pathogens can be prevented by maintaining adequate hygiene and standard preventive measures.

Aim: To assess customers' level of knowledge of salon-acquired infections and practices taken to prevent their transmission in the UAE.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among residents in the UAE using convenience sampling. Self-administered questionnaires were designed based on similar studies. T-test, ANOVA, and chi square tests were used for bivariate analysis using SPSS 23.

Results: The sample comprised 500 participants, of whom 250 were female. The mean age of the study sample was 33 years. The participants were from several nationalities representing Arabs (Non-GCC) 66.2%(n=325), Non-Arabs 22% (n=108), and Arabs (GCC) 11.8%(n=59). The majority of the participants (84.4%) had knowledge about salon-associated infections with a mean of 60%. Among those who took preventative measures, the majority did 4 out of 10 (mean=39.25%) of the recommended practices but only 73 (14.6%) brought their own equipment to the salons. Thus, there was no correlation (p=0.139) between the level of knowledge and preventive practices of salon-associated infections.

Conclusion: The level of knowledge of salon-associated infections among UAE residents was high, but only a small number took the required preventative measures. Therefore, a public awareness program is recommended to improve the level of knowledge and practices to prevent salon-acquired infections amongst the users. Up to our knowledge, this is the first study of this kind in the UAE targeting this important issue.
Heat Strokes: Knowledge and preventative practices among the residents of the UAE

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Background: Heat stroke is a serious condition caused by the overheating of the body and is associated with high levels of mortality and morbidity, as its complications include vital organ damage. Heat strokes are predictable and preventable, thus sufficient public awareness of the condition and preventative practices of heat strokes is essential in hot and humid countries such as the UAE.

Aim: This study aims to assess the level of general awareness (knowledge, prevention and management) of heat strokes among residents of the UAE.

Methodology: This cross-sectional study was carried out using structured questionnaires distributed among a random sample of adults (above 18 years of age). The questionnaire includes 38 questions on different areas that include knowledge and practice. SPSS was used for analysis. Each correct answer equaled to one point and the point system was used to calculate total scores. The null hypothesis was rejected by a p-value less than 0.05. The average of the total score was taken as the cut off point for good and poor knowledge (KPM).

Results: A number of statistically significant correlations were found between demographics (such as age, nationality, place of residence and source of knowledge) and their scores. Participants who identified medical professionals as their main source of information scored the highest on questions related to preventative practices and knowledge. While Arab nationalities scored highest on questions on preventative practices, local national had the lowest score. Abu Dhabi performed best out of all the other cities included. Overall, the total number of participants achieving above average score on knowledge and practices of heat strokes was at a suboptimal level.

Conclusion: Results of this study show that a huge proportion of the population in the UAE do not have the sufficient knowledge about heat strokes, its prevention and management.
D. Behavioral Culture and Psychosocial Factors Influencing Health
Prevalence of Depressive Symptoms among Working Mothers in the UAE

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Background: Recently, the size of the population of working women in the UAE has increased, with a possible increase in the levels of stress for mothers with other home duties.

Aim: To find the prevalence of depressive symptoms among working mothers in the UAE.

Methods: Cross sectional design was used. A convenience sample of working mothers was selected from public places. Mothers who were engaged in a paid job outside the house, in addition to the work they perform at home in raising their children, speak Arabic or English, and above 18 years old were eligible to be included in the study. Those separated from their children were excluded. The questionnaire included three sections: (1) assessing demographic data, education, social, psychological, financial status, (2) work related factors and somatic symptoms, and (3) the CES-D scale that measures prevalence of depressive symptoms in the sample population. SPSS version 21 was used for data analysis.

Results: The study sample included 405 working mothers aged 22-61 from different nationalities and marital status. 48.2% showed signs of depressive symptoms and 51.8% were not. 38.8% of Emiratis, 58.8% of Arabs and 31.9% of Non-Arabs showed signs of depressive symptoms. 45.2% of the wives of supportive husbands showed signs of depressive symptoms, whereas 59.6% of wives of unsupportive husbands did not. Educational level (p=0.003), age of children (p<0.0005), sleeping hour (p<0.0005), income (p<0.0005), work satisfaction (p=0.001), and the somatic complaints; heart flutters, joint pain, constipation, unexplained fatigue, headache were significantly correlated with high prevalence of depressive symptoms. Having domestic helpers, working hours, smoking, age and marital status were not significant risk factors.

Conclusion: Depressive symptoms were found to be prevalent among working mothers in the UAE. Further studies are needed to investigate the causes.
Factors affecting career choice among University of Sharjah medical students

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Introduction: Medical students’ career choices reflect and determine the medical workforce, thus influencing the delivery of medical care. According to the Health Authority of Abu Dhabi there is a capacity gap in health services especially in critical care medicine, and different specialties including Pediatrics and Oncology.

Aim: To identify and provide information about the factors that affect the selection of future specialties among medical students to achieve a balanced distribution among all specialties.

Methods: A Cross sectional study was conducted on students in both pre-clerkship and clerkship phases in University of Sharjah medical college in the period between 8th of Feb to 11th of March 2015. Self-administered questionnaire included: questions about demographic data, most preferred specialties, and influencing factors. The influencing factors were measured using a Likert scale. Data was analyzed using SPSS 21.

Results: The response rate was 81.4% (421/517). The most desired specialties were Surgery 30.3%(127), Internal medicine 22.7%(95), and Pediatrics 15%(63). The least selected specialties were Anesthesia, ENT and Urology. Gender has a significant role influencing career choice (p value < 0.0005), males showed interest in Internal medicine, Ophthalmology, and Orthopedics while females showed interest in Internal medicine, Pediatrics, and Dermatology. Yet both genders chose surgery as their first choice. There was no association between pre-clerkship & clerkship students’ career choices (p-value = 0.226). However, we found an association between the medical years and students’ preferences (p-value = 0.014). Factors that had the strongest influence on career choices were seeing good treatment outcomes (72.9%), having abilities for the specialty (67.3%), and prospect for further development of the field (61.4%).

Conclusion: Surgery and Internal medicine were the most preferred specialties even though significant gender differences existed in specialty choices among these students. Most significant factors were seeing good treatment outcomes, having the abilities for the specialty, and prospect for further development of the field.
Delivery methods: Prevalence and preferences among women in Sharjah, UAE

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Background: There has been a recent trend towards cesarean section (CS) among pregnant women. However, several studies show that CS has more risks than normal vaginal delivery (NVD).

Objectives: The study aims to discover women's perceptions of the methods of delivery and the factors affecting their choices.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in public places in Sharjah, UAE among women aged 18 to 50. Convenient sampling method was used for selection of participants. Individual interviews with a questionnaire, containing 24 questions, were conducted to collect data and SPSS 21 was used for data analysis.

Results: A total of 404 participants were surveyed; 36% (n=146) were between 20-34 years of age, 31% (n=127) were between 35-44 years of age, and 32% (n=131) were 45-50 years of age. 65% of the sample (n=262) had only undergone NVD, 18% (n=73) had only undergone CS, and 17% (n=69) had undergone both methods. Our data revealed that 35% of the sample has undergone CS and 19% prefer it. Out of those who have undergone CS, only 8.6% have done it for medical reasons. The main factors associated with women's preference of methods of delivery were age, previous experience and number of deliveries. More than half the sample (57.2%) had insufficient knowledge regarding the risks associated with delivery methods.

Conclusion: The high prevalence of CS in Sharjah raises some concern about the level of awareness regarding the associated risks. However, the preference of NVD was significantly higher than that of CS. We recommend further research to be conducted on a wider scale across the UAE.
Health Anxiety and Illness Attitude among Medical Students in the University of Sharjah

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Background: Health anxiety is a multifaceted phenomenon, consisting of distressing emotions while illness attitude is the way in which symptoms are perceived, evaluated, and acted upon. There is a belief that many medical students suffer from an increased level of health anxiety as a consequence of their medical education. It is even often referred to as medical students’ disease. Research has produced contradictory evidence regarding the validity of such an increase in health anxiety level. It is, therefore, crucial to determine the accuracy of such claims as false assumptions about such a disorder can bring a lot of negative consequences.

Aims: To assess the level of health anxiety among medical students. In addition, we sought to determine the correlation between health anxiety and illness attitude.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional study where a self-administered questionnaire was distributed. The Health Anxiety Inventory and Illness Attitude Scales were used to measure health anxiety and illness attitude respectively.

Results: 257 (98.1% response rate) medical students from the University of Sharjah participated in this study. The sample had 97 males and 178 pre-clinical students. Only 7 (2.70%) participants suffered from health anxiety according to HAI. No significant difference between genders was found in health anxiety, or between students in the different years of education. There was a high correlation (r=0.653) between illness attitude (mean score=33.45) and health anxiety.

Conclusion: Our study shows that the number of students suffering from health anxiety in our sample was very low, and that there was no increase due to medical education. In addition, it shows a strong correlation between health anxiety and illness attitude.
The impact of parents and peers smoking on the attitude of university students towards smoking

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Introduction: Smoking has increased, especially among young adults. Various factors have led to this catastrophe which include TV, social media and cigarette availability in the market. An interesting factor that we thought was worth studying is the impact of smoking parents and peers. We noticed that a lot of students start smoking because of the impact of the smoking habits of their parents or peers. We believed that if our hypothesis was proven to be true, it would direct future research to study and analyze this factor in order to prevent it.

Aims: The aim of this project is to study whether parents and peers smoking habits have any impact on the University of Sharjah students’ attitudes towards smoking.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional observational study with convenient type of sampling. The sample included in the study are university students aged 18 to 23. The information was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 23 questions. It is a semi-structured type of questionnaire that contains both open and closed-ended questions.

Results: A total of 400 University of Sharjah students (50% male and 50% female) within an age range of 18 to 23 years were included in the study. Regarding the impact of parents' and peers' habit of smoking, it was found that 15.8% (n=15) and 17.1% (n=40) of students with smoking parents and peers, respectively, were smokers. Peers had a stronger impact on the students' smoking than parents (p=0.009). Out of 45 males with smoking parents, 15 were smokers (22.2%), while 5 out of 50 (10%) females with smoking parents were smokers (p=0.001). 34 students out of 157 (21.7%) students with smoking peers were smokers while 6 out of 77 (7.8%) female students with smoking peers were smokers (p=0.001).

Conclusion: Peers had a stronger impact than parents. The impact of smoking parents was more prominent on medical students than non-medical students, while peers had more impact on non-medical students. Parents and peers had more impact on males compared to females. Action should be taken on a societal level to reduce smoking among adults for the aim of creating a non-smoking generation.
Knowledge, practice and attitudes towards voluntary blood donation among adults in Sharjah, UAE

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Introduction: Blood transfusions save countless lives. Despite the rapid increase in the demand for blood, donations have not increased, resulting in a severe shortage in blood supply in the UAE.

Aim: This study aims to evaluate the knowledge, practice and attitudes towards voluntary blood donation in Sharjah, UAE, in order to plan evidence-based interventions.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in Sharjah, using a self-administered questionnaire constructed from material acquired from similar studies. Convenience non-random sampling was used. 380 questionnaires were distributed in public places in Sharjah.

Results: 357 questionnaires were completed. The mean age of the participants was 33.24±10.98. 47.6% were male, and 75.3% had university level and above education. 40.6% of the sample reported having previously donated blood, 61.4% of whom were male (p < 0.0005). Student group had the least donors (22%, p<0.001). The lowest percentage of donors (24.8%) was in the 18-25 age group as compared to other age groups (p = 0.002).

Participant knowledge percentage mean score (PMS) was 55.40±14.36 (95% CI). PMS was strongly related to donation status in males (59.04% for donors vs 49.16% for non-donors, p < 0.001), but less so in females (p = 0.354). PMS was highest for students and health workers (p=0.001), and consistently increased as the level of education increased (p=0.006). 90.8% of the sample were unaware of the shortage. PMS was unrelated to the gender or age of participants.

83.8% (n=299) had an overall positive attitude. The major reasons for not donating included not being well-informed (52.4%), accessibility (31.4%), fear of anemia (28.0%). Females were more likely to report fear of anemia than males (p<0.006).

Conclusion: The UAE population has inadequate knowledge and suboptimal donation practices. More female donors need to be recruited. Campaigns in universities to increase the number of young donors and raise the public’s awareness of the blood shortage in the UAE may be the most important steps to increases donations.
RESEARCH ABSTRACT

The prevalence of self-diagnosis and Self-medication among Sharjah residents

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Introduction: The growing trend of improper self-medication, as well as self-diagnosis, has had serious consequences.

Aim: The aim of this research was to measure the prevalence of self-medication and self-diagnosis among Sharjah residents.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among Sharjah residents during the period between February 2016 and April 2016. A total of 400 individuals were haphazardly selected. A self-administered questionnaire that included closed-ended questions covering various aspects that identified the participant’s practice, knowledge, and attitude regarding self-medication & self-diagnosis was used to collect data.

Results: A total of 385 subjects participated: 54.5% female with 25% of the sample were 18-25 years, and 49% were 26-45 years old. 60.1% and 60.4% of the population practiced self-diagnosis and self-medication, respectively. Most drugs were obtained from pharmacists (77.4%). The main reasons for self-medication were time saving (41%), money saving (22%) and urgency (19%). Self-medication was mainly practiced for cough (57.4%), sore throat (55.7%) and runny nose (50.2%). People who checked the expiry date of the medication, took the correct dose & had an attitude that is against self-medication were found to be significantly more aware about the adverse effects of self-medication. Knowledge score was influenced significantly by the stoppage of medication after completion of the dose, taking the correct dose and checking the expiry date. Unexpectedly, people with an attitude against self-medication have a higher tendency of practicing self-medication (OR= 3.13, CI 95% 2.23-4.90).

Conclusion: Self-medication and self-diagnosis are widely practiced among Sharjah residents. It is recommended to promote awareness regarding reasonable self-medication through regulatory authorities (such as strict regulations and monitoring of drug distribution) and further education.
**Time management and its relationship with academic performance of Medical, Dental and Pharmacy students in University of Sharjah, UAE**

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**Background:** Acquiring time management skills plays an important role in students’ success during their university education and beyond.

**Research Question:** Is there a relationship between time management and academic performance of medical, dental and pharmacy students?

**Methods:** Descriptive cross-sectional study in which 390 students from Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy colleges were selected by simple random sampling. A self-administered time management questionnaire developed by Britton and Tesser was distributed. The questionnaire items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale consisting of the responses always (5), often (4), sometimes (3), rarely (2), and never (1). In addition, 5 close ended questions were added that sought information about regarding demographics and academic achievement. The total score of the time management questionnaire ranged from 18 to 90 in which higher values corresponded to better time management practices.

**Results:** Out of 390 respondents 107 (27.4%) were male and 283 (72.6%) were female. Most students 71.5% (n=279) had a time management score at the moderate level. However, the majority also believed there is place for improvement. A significant difference (p=0.006) was noted between medicine and pharmacy students in their time management overall scores. A significant (p=0.028) nearly perfect positive correlation (r=0.99) between the overall time management score and the GPA of each student was noted.

**Conclusion:** To conclude, the results showed that time management is a significant predictor of academic achievement. Therefore, raising awareness regarding time management should be taken into consideration by future generations due to its importance.
Extracurricular activities and sports: Perception and engagement of medical students

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Mohamad Al Homssi

Background: Extracurricular activities (ECA) are imperative in advancing a student’s quality of life.

Aim: This study aims to evaluate the perception and engagement of medical students at the University of Sharjah (UOS), UAE, in ECA and sports.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among medical students using the stratified column sampling technique. 439 medical students from years 1 to 5 in UOS completed a self-administered questionnaire about perception and engagement in ECAs and sports. Descriptive and Chi-Square tests were used to analyze the responses, considering a P value < 0.05 as significant.

Results: Out of 439 students, 60.4% reported participation in ECA and sports with higher involvement among males (68%) and students in clinical phase (68.3%) (p=0.006, p=0.02, respectively). 69.8% were involved in committees and 60.4% in sports. 47% perceived that involvement in ECA improves time management, and 52% perceived it increased motivation to study, while 19.8% thought it negatively impacted studies. Involved students heard about the activities from friends (83.6%) and social network (43.8%), and are engaged for self-interest (71.3%), gaining experience (58.1%) and socializing (55.8%). Non-involved students reported time (78.4%) and studies (55.7) as the main two causes for non-involvement.

Conclusion: Despite the difficulty and stress experienced by students of the medical school, most participants were engaged in ECAs and sports, highly influenced by their positive perceptions about ECAs. Better planning of ECAs that take into consideration students’ preferences is needed. The relationship between ECAs and academic performance should be addressed in relation to educational and social contexts.
The Correlation between smart device overuse and sleep quality among UAE residents

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Background: The use of smart devices has increased significantly in the Middle East recently. A study in the UAE shows that 65% of its residents lack proper sleep. Reduced sleep quality can be both a risk factor and a sign of other health problems. The use of smart devices is a likely cause of poor sleep quality.

Aim: The aim is to determine if there is a correlation between smart device overuse and sleep quality among residents of the UAE.

Methods: This research study was cross-sectional, non-experimental. The study sample included 494 participants from three main emirates in the UAE. Sampling was done using the quota sampling method according to gender and age distribution obtained from the respective emirates census. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was used to measure sleep quality, and the Cellphone Overuse Scale (COS) to quantify the usage of smart devices. Data management was conducted using SPSS 23.

Results: Of the 494 participants, 64.8% were poor sleepers. 47.5% of the subjects were considered heavy users, of whom 81% were poor sleepers. This suggests that there is a relationship between smart device overuse and sleep quality. It was also found that 74.5% of participants used their smart devices at bedtime. Furthermore, the location of the smart device affected sleep quality; as distance decreased, sleep quality worsened, reaching up to 86.8% when the smart device is under the pillow. Moreover, 100% of participants who were “always interrupted” by a smart device during sleep were poor sleepers.

Discussion and Conclusion: Poor sleep is significantly correlated with smart device overuse. In fact, overusers were 5 times more likely to be poor sleepers. The intensity and duration of smart device usage impacted sleep quality more drastically than bedtime use. With the increasing dependence on and inappropriate use of smart devices by all age groups, health complications may arise. It is for this reason that future research studies should look further into the effects of this issue.
Anxiety screening among adults in the community of Sharjah & attitudes towards seeking professional mental help

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Background: According to the WHO, people suffering from generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) have increased by 50% in the past two decades. In the UAE, there is a stigma associated with people seeking help from a professional psychiatrist.

Aim: To assess the prevalence of GAD and the readiness to seek professional help among the public in Sharjah.

Methodology: This is a cross-sectional, population-based study conducted among a convenient sample of 432 adults living in Sharjah, UAE. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire that included, besides demographics, two tools: the GAD-7 used to estimate anxiety levels and ATSPPH-SF used to measure readiness to seek professional help for mental health issues.

Results: Anxiety Scores were generally high, as 13.9% of the sample had severe anxiety and only 19.9% had no anxiety. Smokers had higher instances of anxiety compared to nonsmokers (mean of 7.38 and 6.27 respectively, p=0.037). People satisfied with their income scored lower (5.87) compared to those who were not (7.4; p=0.001). Other factors such as working conditions (p=0.010), home conditions (p=0.000), and ethnicity (p=0.004) were significantly associated with anxiety. People scored a mean of 15.15 out of 30 when it came to their attitude to seeking professional mental help. Readiness to seek medical help was significantly associated with education (means of 14.14, 15.23, 16.38 among pre-graduates, graduates, post-graduates respectively). Level of income had no impact on the readiness to seek help. Anxiety level and readiness to seek professional help were not significantly correlated.

Conclusion: Anxiety levels among the public in Sharjah are quite high, and, while the readiness to seek mental help is not low, it remains substandard compared to other nations. Main factors contributing to anxiety were smoking, income, income satisfaction, ethnicity, and work and home conditions. While, attitudes to seeking mental help were solely affected by the level of education level of the subjects.
Organ Donation: Knowledge and attitudes among Sharjah adults

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Atef Demian, University Hospital Sharjah

Background: Organ donation (OD) has only recently been legalized in the UAE. Thus, this could mean relief for the many patients in need of organ transplant all over the UAE. Because of the novelty of the notion of organ donation in the country, the Emirati society’s perception of OD remains undefined.

Objectives: To measure Sharjah’s adult population’s knowledge and attitudes toward organ donation.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among Sharjah’s adult population (18-65 years). A piloted, self-administered questionnaire comprised of 3 sections on demographics, knowledge of and attitudes toward OD was administered to a sample of 450 subjects chosen by convenience sampling method from public places in Sharjah.

Results: Only 35.4% of the subjects were aware of the legalization of OD in the UAE, and only 6.2% of the subjects knew how to register as an organ donor. 26% believed their religion allowed OD. As for attitudes; only 38.3% of the subjects were willing to donate pre-mortem, and the age group most unwilling/undecided to make a living OD was the middle age group (69.1%). Most of the subjects were willing to donate post-mortem (59%), but Emiratis showed the least willingness towards such donations (43.8%) compared to Arabs (62.2%) and non-Arabs (58.3%). The most common causes of unwillingness to donate alive and post-mortem were fear of health consequences (47.9%) and family disapproval (28.7%).

Conclusion: The majority of Sharjah’s adult population showed a positive attitude toward organ donation. However, the majority also had average knowledge about organ donation. Awareness campaigns are recommended to target middle-aged and employed population to increase their knowledge of organ donation, and UAE nationals to address their high rate of unwillingness.
The impact of entertainment media on the psychosocial development of children within government schools in Sharjah

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Research Supervisor: Dr. Mohamed Elhassan A. Elsayed

Background: The prevalence of the use of electronic devices has been on the rise among children of different age groups, as young as toddlers.

Objectives: To observe whether the use of entertainment media has any impact on the psychosocial development of students (from the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade) in government schools in Sharjah.

Methods: A cross-sectional study with cluster sampling. A total of 447 students (43.4% male) from government schools participated. A questionnaire was used to collect the information needed for the research. The data was coded, and SPSS 22 was used.

Results: When responses were analyzed, it was found that of those who preferred to stay home and watch TV than go out, 47.4% preferred to watch it alone. As for social media, of those who spent more time on social media than they intended to, 52.1% felt guilty after using it for a long time and of those who used social media to meet new people, 60.3% felt it helped them make friends more easily. As for internet access in general, of those who used the internet for more than 7 hours, 75.3% used it to watch YouTube, and of those who used the internet for less than 2 hours, 68.7% used it to do their homework. As for video games, of those who felt that video games helped them make friends more easily, 64.1% often had conversations about video games with other people, and of those who played games that contain blood and gore, 70.6% felt happy when playing.

Conclusion: This research yielded varying results, and so it seems that the use of technology among children is not as negative as one would think. For some, it shows an inclination towards socialization, while for others, it shows an inclination towards isolation.
E. Students Testimonials
It was a pleasant experience for me to join the Community Based Research (CBR) course at the College of Medicine. I was very glad to be part of a research program. Throughout the course, I had the chance to brainstorm some ideas and build up my knowledge about different research methodologies and different research designs.

I believe that the research is very important for a medical student as it helped me to develop my personality through communicating with other researchers while presenting my research in different conferences.

CBR course has empowered us to use multiple and innovative data collection strategies and analyses methods by providing us with hands-on experience along with research and biostatistics knowledge.

Manar Mohammed Ismail Darwish
Year 5 Medical Student
What Our Students Say

Research is an important part of any academic field that needs to be learnt and experienced by students in order to have a clear concept of how it should be done. During our second year, we had the chance to work on a research project under our CBR course.

I found this experience one of the most important aspects of my academic life at the university. It enabled me to understand how any research is done step by step from coming up with an idea till writing a complete research article. Understanding and doing statistical analysis was also an enjoyable experience during this course.

Community Based Research course gave me the chance to develop my communication and organization skills as well as understand the mechanics of how a group should operate, which is also beneficial to me as a future doctor whose job always involve a big team from different backgrounds and professions.

Overall, my experience with CBR was an enjoyable one and one that will benefit me for life.

Omar Azrak
Year 5 Medical Student
What Our Students Say

The Community-based Research course was one of the best courses delivered at the College of Medicine. The course was organized, planned and delivered at its best. During this course, I learned about all sorts of different study designs and when each of them is needed, in addition to many skills an aspiring doctor will need in his career.

In this day and age of the technological revolution, being a doctor who’s always up-to-date with the latest developments in medicine and otherwise can be what distinguishes between a good doctor and an excellent one. It only makes sense, then, that a doctor should be able to sift through the ocean of research out there, and be able to make as much of an informed decision as possible whether or not a particular research study is valid, legitimate, applicable, and useful.

I will carry the knowledge and experience I got from the CBR course for years to come, and I’ll always be grateful to the corner stone of this course – Dr Amal Hussein.

Monther Tariq
Year 5 Medical Student
There is no denying the fact that the CBR course was a heavy burden to carry during year 2, but despite all the hardships and challenges I encountered along with my group members, it was a very enlightening course that I am glad to have had the privilege to take. It taught me how to properly conduct a research and made me more appreciative of all the effort that goes into one. I’m forever grateful for this opportunity and I hope that all students currently going through it gain such an enriching experience.

Farah Soukieh  
Year 4 Medical Student
What Our Students Say

CBR program was such a great introduction to research! It is one of the most beneficial experiences I have been through. There is no doubt that you will struggle a lot to get things done as required with a lot of meetings, drafts and papers. But, at the end you will see the fruits of your efforts and will have a high level of satisfaction. Previously, I was not a big fan of research and always had difficulties understanding its concepts. But, having this program where you simultaneously apply what you study in theory made it a fun experience where everything just make sense! Thank you doctor Amal for this wonderful experience.

Leena Al Husari
Year 4 Medical Student
What Our Students Say

I'm so glad that the university gave us the opportunity to do a research as a part of our curriculum. I'm so thankful that I got a valuable knowledge during this period; I learned the basics of research that I need for my future, and the steps I need to keep in my mind in how to conduct a medical research. At the beginning it was a bit difficult to manage my time but soon I started to enjoy working on it. This course motivated me to critically read a lot of medical literatures and analyze them. Working as group was helpful to build up a good communication skill and know how to manage any difficulties, it helped to divide the work among us and discuss more efficiently. The information we learned are very important, this course helped a lot to prepare for some international exams and solve their questions. Now, I feel more confident to participate in any research and work hardly.

Reem Nasser
Year 4 Medical Student
What Our Students Say

CBR is an opportunity, indeed, to experience and witness academic research. Gratefully, I read the methods section of academic literature more confidently than I used to before. Not only that, but it is also a window to better-know your peers whom you know their names very well, but not their weaknesses, strengths, agreeability and keenness when it comes to group work. CBR has taught us that the spirits of the team are more valuable than personal opinions. At last but not least, CBR is a window to look into the inner-workings of how to get your research published, this boosts one’s self-esteem and C.V. undeniably.

Ayesha Ahmed Abdulla Hajimohamed Alkhoori
Year 4 Medical Student
What Our Students Say

At first, I wasn’t convinced that research should be included in our curriculum because I thought that it was something elective and we shouldn’t be forced to do it. But after starting taking lectures and doing research assignment, I appreciated how important it is to study the scientific process of conducting research.

Throughout the Community-Based Research program I learnt how to choose a researchable topic, state a research question and work through the whole research process ending with analyzing and interpreting research data.

I’m really thankful and proud about our research program as I have gained important research skills that would enable me to become an important researcher in the near future.

Mohammed Al Fardan
Year 4 Medical Student