# International Journal of Medical, Dental, and Allied Health Sciences

**Original Article**

## WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING THIS CORONA CRISIS? AN ONLINE SURVEY

**AUTHORS:**

1- DR. SIDRA MANZOOR, RAWAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES ISLAMABAD
2- DR. SAMIA LIAQAT, SHIFA INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL ISLAMABAD
3- DR. HIRA JAVAID, MAYO HOSPITAL LAHORE

**Corresponding Author:**
Dr. Sidra Manzoor
Rawal Institute of Health Sciences Islamabad
sidramanzoor125@gmail.com

**Cite this article as:**
Manzoor S, Liaqat S, Javaid H. What do people think about social distancing during this corona crisis? An online survey Int. J. Med. Dent. Allied Health Sci. 2020;2(5). 85-91

**ABSTRACT:**

Social distancing and self-isolation are effective ways to slow the spread of Covid-19. This is considered a safe distance by public health authorities who promote further measures that include curfews and lockdowns to separate people. An online survey consisting of few questions was conducted to collect all the information. People in our close relations were shared the form through emails, WhatsApp, and SMS. There were 79 males (59.85%) and 53 females (40.15%). The mean age

of the participants was 33.87±2.14 years. One hundred and twenty-eight (96.97%) participants had knowledge about Covid-19 and 119 (90.15%) had knowledge about social distancing. In this study, a major chunk of our participants knew about Covid-19, social distancing, and its precautions. A lot of effort has been made by government agencies in spreading the awareness and precautionary information.

**Keywords: COVID-19, Social Distancing**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have described social distancing as a set of methods for reducing frequency and closeness of contact between people in order to decrease the risk of transmission of disease. During the 2009 flu pandemic the WHO described social distancing as "keeping at least an arm's length distance from others, [and] minimizing gatherings". It is combined with good respiratory hygiene and hand washing, and is considered the most feasible way to reduce or delay a pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC revised the definition of social distancing as "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately six feet or two meters) from others when possible". It is not clear why six feet was chosen. Recent studies have suggested that

droplets from a sneeze or forceful breathing during exercise can travel over six meters. Some have suggested the required distance is based on debunked research from the 1930s and 1940s or confusion regarding units of measurement. Researchers and science writers have recommended that larger social distances and/or both mask wearing and social distancing be required (1).

Social distancing and self-isolation are effective ways to slow the spread of Covid-19. This is considered a safe distance by public health authorities who promote further measures that include curfews and lockdowns to separate people. In these ways, the incidence of "social distancing" is keeping pace with the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing measures reduce spread of 2019-nCoV, but research shows that in some parts of the world, the spread of the new coronavirus has left public spaces weirdly silent and that social isolation affects mental health negatively; quarantine period increases anxiety, anger, confusion and complexity; but social connect and social support significantly improve mental and physical health. Therefore, practice of physical distancing can adopt rather than social distancing to reduce spread of corona virus. Young people, and particularly students, are particularly mobile and social. Their attitudes towards social distancing therefore plays an important role, especially in free and open societies where the ability to enforcement by state authorities is limited and

traditionally obedience towards the state is less emphasized (2, 3).

This study was conducted among general population to know what people think of social distancing during this corona pandemic and help public health specialists to make policies according to these trends.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS:

An online survey consisting of few questions was conducted to collect all the information. People in our close relations were shared the form through emails, WhatsApp, and SMS. A window of seven days was dedicated for collection of information. People submitting the form after those seven days were not included. A total of 132 forms were collected. All the data was analyzed with SPSS Ver. 25.0. The qualitative (categorical) variables were presented as frequency and percentages. The quantitative variables were presented as mean and standard deviation.

### RESULTS:

A total of 132 forms were collected within seven days window period. There were 79 males (59.85%) and 53 females (40.15%). The mean age of the participants was $33.87\pm2.14$ years, the mean age of males was $35.34\pm1.76$ years and the mean age of females was $32.48\pm1.92$ years. The participants were divided in three

major categories i.e. students, working in offices, hospitals and institutes and doing business (Table-I).

| Category | Male | %age | Female | %age |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 43 | 32.58 | 37 | 28.03 |
| Working in Offices, hospitals and Institutues | 28 | 21.21 | 15 | 11.36 |
| Business | 8 | 6.06 | 1 | 0.76 |
| **Total** | **79** | **59.85** | **53** | **40.15** |

**Table-I: Distribution of Participants**

Different questions asked from the participants were whether they know about Covid-19 or not, they know the idea of social distancing? whether they are wearing masks and using hand sanitizers when going in public places, have they participated in any gathering i.e. birthday party, any funeral, any wedding etc. in recent days? and that they had encountered any covid-19 positive patient. All these questions were asked in form of Yes / No and details of some questions was also asked (Table-II).

| Question | Yes | %age | No | %age |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge of Covid-19 | 128 | 96.97 | 4 | 3.03 |
| Knowledge of Social Distancing | 119 | 90.15 | 13 | 9.85 |
| Wearing masks | 121 | 91.67 | 11 | 8.33 |
| Using hand sanitizers | 89 | 67.42 | 43 | 32.58 |
| Did you enconunter any Covid-19 Positive patient | 5 | 3.79 | 127 | 96.21 |
| Have you participated in any gathering in recent days | 25 | 18.94 | 107 | 81.06 |

**Table-II: Response to different questions**

One hundred and two people (77.27%) responded that watch television for correct knowledge and statistics about Covid-19.

**DISCUSSION:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing and related measures are emphasized by several governments as alternatives to an enforced quarantine of heavily affected areas. According to UNESCO monitoring, more than a hundred countries have implemented nationwide school closures in response to COVID-19, impacting over half the world's student population. In Pakistan, the government advised the public to avoid public spaces, and cinemas and theaters, Event halls and shopping malls (4). Today, social distancing measures are most often thought about as a way to slow the spread of pandemic influenza. Health experts have looked at past pandemics and found that during the 1957-58 pandemic, the spread of the disease followed public gatherings such as conferences and festivals. And during this pandemic, the highest attack rates were seen in school children, due to their close contact in a crowded setting. Health experts believe that avoiding crowds of people will be important in slowing the spread of pandemic influenza. Since a pandemic cannot be stopped once it has started, and because health experts do not know how much warning there will be, once pandemic influenza is found in our area, social

distancing measures will be used early on to slow the spread of the disease and provide our community with the valuable time needed to be better prepared (5).

In this study, a major chunk of our participants knew about Covid-19, social distancing and its precautions. A lot of effort has been made by government agencies in spreading the awareness and precautionary information.

**REFERENCES:**

1.      Kumar S. Corona Virus Outbreak: Keep Physical Distancing, Not Social Distancing. Not Social Distancing (March 28, 2020). 2020.

2.      Ramesh N, Siddaiah A, Joseph B. Tackling corona virus disease 2019 (COVID 19) in workplaces. Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. 2020;24(1):16.

3.      Rieger MO. What Do Young People Think about Social Distancing during the Corona Crisis in Germany? Available at SSRN 3561366. 2020.

4.      Holtorf C, Bolin A. Corona crisis, UNESCO and the future: Do we need a new world heritage? 2020.

5.      Information About Social Distancing 2020 [cited 2020 April, 15]. Available from: https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/sites/default/files/public/php/185/185_factsheet_social_distancing.pdf.