

Exploring Lifestyle Factors Contributing to Osteoarthritis in the UAE: Assessing Risk Awareness and Prevention Behaviors in Adult Populations

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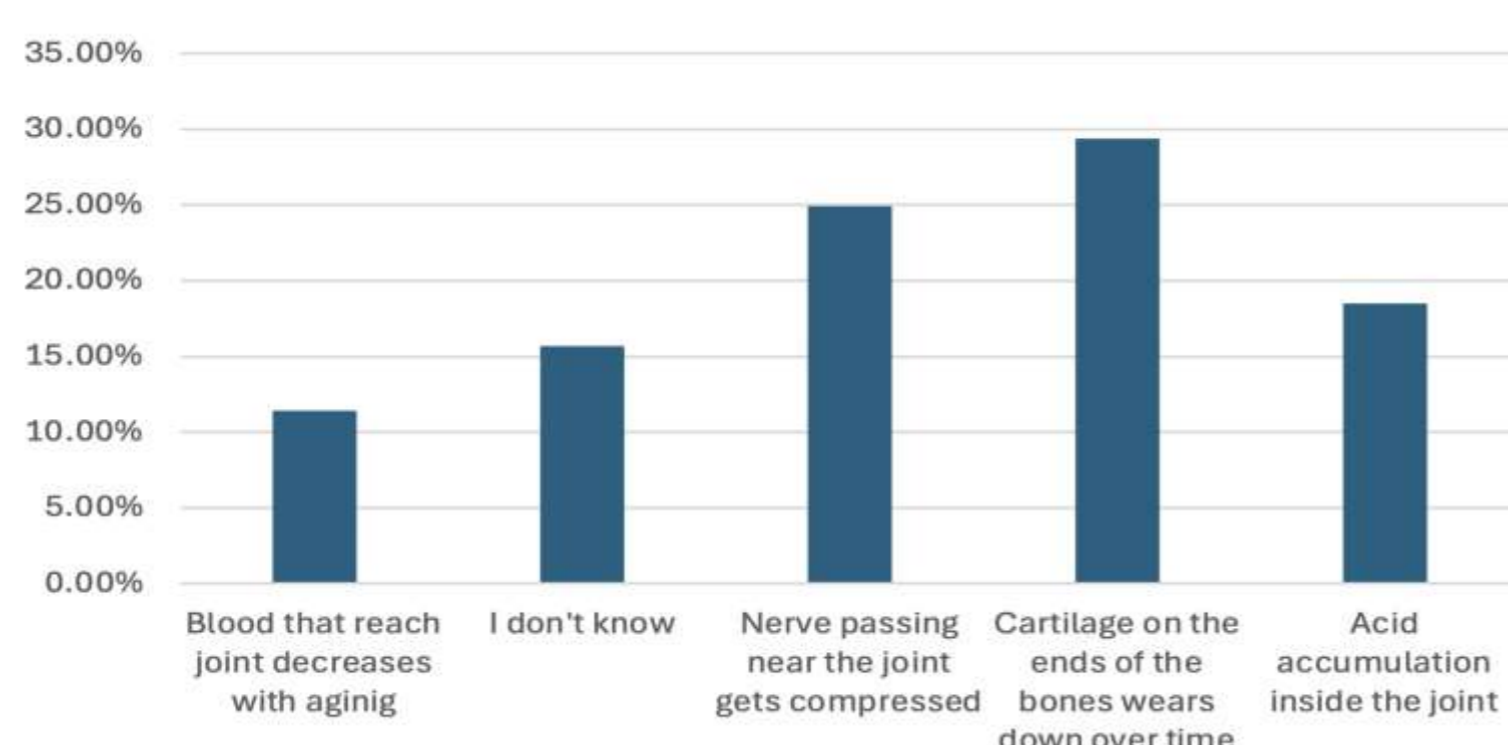
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INTRODUCTION & AIM

- Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common degenerative joint disease and a leading cause of disability worldwide, affecting over 500 million people.
- Its growing prevalence in the UAE is driven by urbanization, sedentary lifestyles, and poor dietary habits, making OA prevention a critical public health priority.
- Studies highlight that while OA awareness is improving globally, significant knowledge gaps persist, especially regarding lifestyle-related preventive measures.
- Addressing these gaps through targeted public education can enhance early intervention and reduce the healthcare burden associated with OA.
- This study assesses public awareness of OA in the UAE, identifies knowledge gaps in lifestyle-related prevention, and highlights the need for targeted educational interventions to promote healthier choices and reduce OA burden.

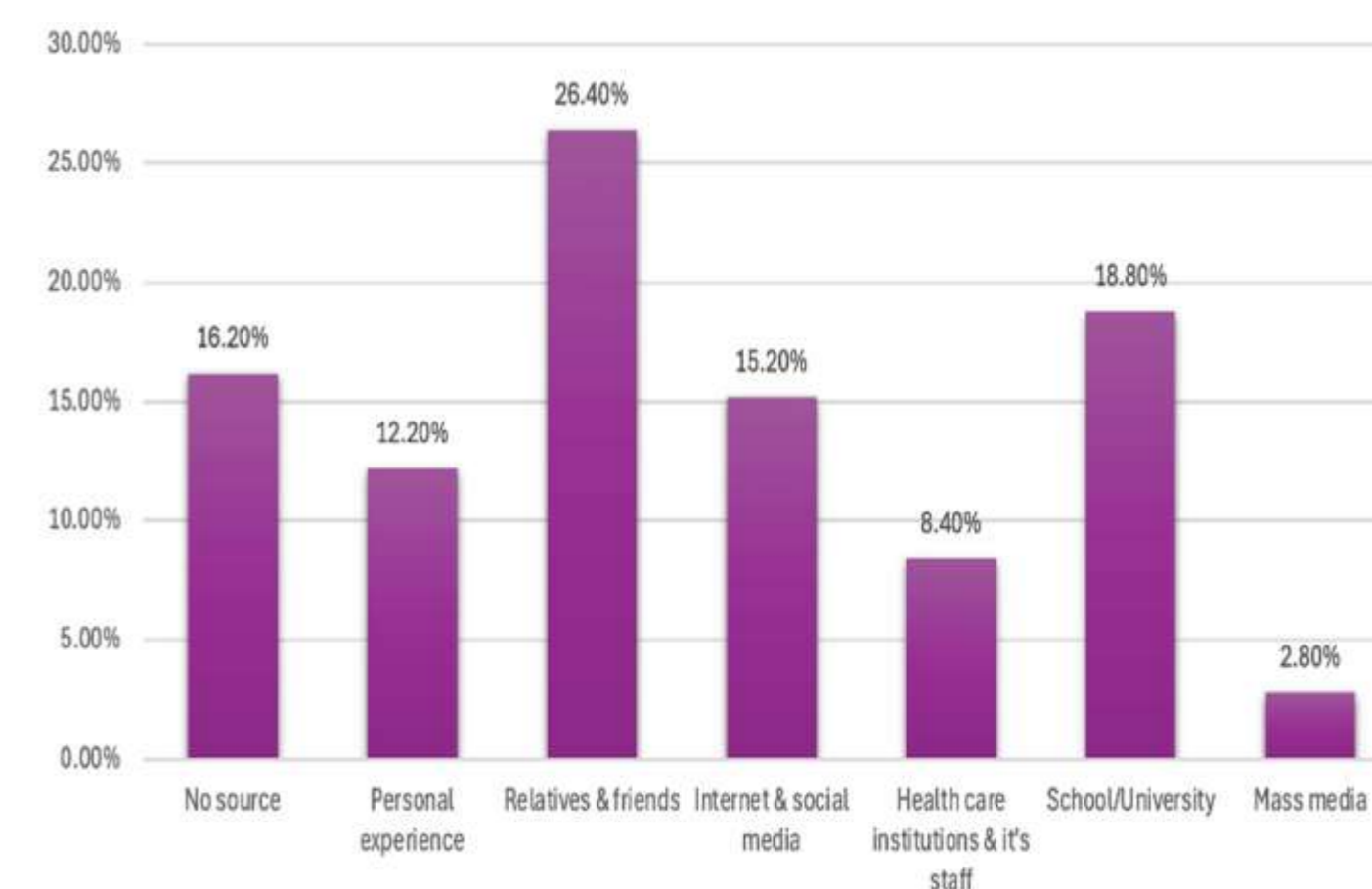
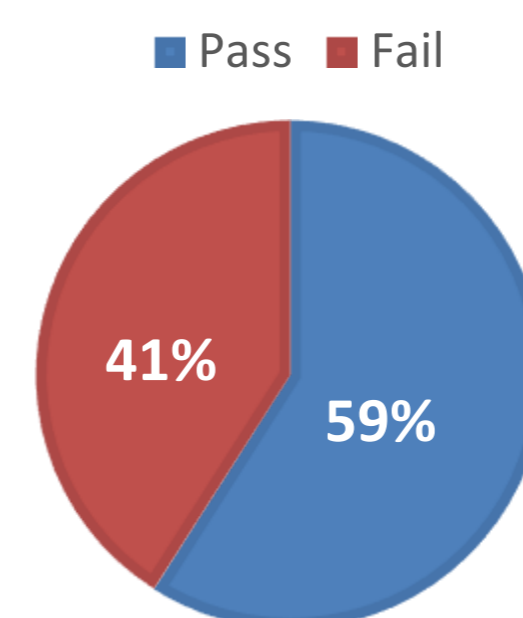
METHOD

- Design:** Descriptive, cross-sectional study.
- Sample:** A total of 394 UAE residents participated in the study through convenience sampling and met the eligibility criteria of being 18+ and residing in the UAE.
- Instrument:** A self-administered online questionnaire was distributed via social media and email networks. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographics, factors influencing OA knowledge, and a 28-item assessment on OA prevention and risk factors.
- Data Analysis:** Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Descriptive statistics summarized sociodemographic traits as percentages, while means \pm SD were used for continuous variables. Chi-square tests evaluated associations between awareness and participant factors, with statistical significance set at $p \leq 0.05$. Knowledge levels were classified into 'pass' ($\geq 60\%$) or 'fail' ($< 60\%$) based on a 28-item questionnaire. Bar charts and pie charts were used to demonstrate the results of this study



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- Demographics:** Participants (45.4% aged 18-29) were 51.3% male and 48.7% female. Most (57.6%) had undergraduate degrees, and 57.4% were Arab non-Emiratis. Employment status: 53.8% employed, 28.9% students, 17.3% unemployed.
- Knowledge:** While 95.7% identified OA as joint-related, only 67% knew it affects multiple joints. Weight management awareness was high (73.6%), but misconceptions included OA affecting genders equally (27.9%) and being caused by cold weather (22.8%).
- Key factors influencing OA awareness :** Higher awareness was observed in postgraduates and individuals aged 30-39. Non-Arabs showed better awareness than Arabs.



- OA awareness is shaped by cultural misconceptions, healthcare access, and socioeconomic factors.
- Common misunderstandings, such as attributing OA to cold weather or equal gender susceptibility, persist in regions like Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. Limited knowledge of advanced treatments highlights the need for accessible education.
- Adapting evidence-based strategies, like Canada's awareness campaigns, to the UAE through healthcare institutions, digital platforms, and community engagement can significantly improve public understanding.

CONCLUSION

- This study highlights significant gaps in OA awareness in the UAE, with misunderstandings about risk factors and treatments. While basic preventive strategies like weight management are moderately understood, pervasive misconceptions hinder effective prevention and early intervention.

FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

- Addressing these gaps through targeted public health initiatives is crucial to reduce OA's impact on individuals and healthcare systems.

