



# Impact of the COVID 19 infodemic on knowledge, attitude and Social behaviour in India: a mixed method survey.

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**Abstract:** India, which has a growing base of 350 million social media users and large proportion of which are not familiar about fact checking of the sources has affected the control measures of the pandemic in India. This study aims to assess the impact of COVID-19 misconceptions on knowledge, attitude and preventive practices (KAP) in India using an online cross sectional survey. The 5 sections of the e-form collected the demographic profile, COVID-19 information profile, knowledge, preventive practices and attitude towards COVID-19. Also, this study aims to assess the impact of disinformation on individual and social behavior through 24 semi structured open ended interview questions and suggests mitigation measures. The misinformation question included "Coronavirus is airborne disease", "Frequent washing clothes can reduce spreading of COVID-19", "Consuming herbal products, home cures and supplements can prevent COVID-19" and "Gargling with salt water or vinegar can prevent COVID-19". Among the 520 responses, 44%, 51%, 44% and 32% agreed to these questions respectively. Binomial regression model was fitted to identify the predictors of KAP of Covid-19 prevention by taking the level of KAP separately and it revealed that the predictors for poor knowledge, negative attitude and non-compliance to preventive measures were associated with the misconceptions. The descriptive analysis in Tableau revealed that the trusted sources of information is majorly mass media. The content analysis of the interviews revealed that religious preventive methods, consumption of daily supplements, risk factors of the infection, disease statistics; treatments and conspiracy theory, are the subjective categories of the current outbreak. The consequences of misconceptions include stigma of discrimination, psychological distress and increased hygiene practices. The antidote to infodemics should include analyzing the information propagation and understanding the cognition and behavior of the population. In the era of the internet, health bodies can educate and address the people's concern with the help of digital and e- health literacy.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; social media ; infodemics; rumours; stigma; social behaviour

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