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Public perception on face mask wearing during COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia: A cross sectional study
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Abstract

Introduction Since the emergence of COVID-19, the Malaysian government has made wearing a face mask in public mandatory since August 1, 2020, as an effort by the government to control the transmission of COVID-19. However, Malaysians' willingness to wear face masks in public is unknown. **Objective** Thus, this study aimed to evaluate their perception of face mask wearing during COVID-19 and its contributing factors. **Methodology** A total of 1024 respondents, aged ≥ 18 years, participated in this online cross-sectional survey from October 2021 to December 2021. The Face Mask Perception Scale (FMPS) was used to measure their perceptions. **Results** Most of the respondents perceived wearing a face mask as uncomfortable. Our findings also revealed statistically significant differences and a small effect ($f^2 = 0.04$) in which respondents who were concerned about being infected by the virus perceived face mask wearing appearance positively ($B = -0.09$ units of log-transformed, 95% CI = $-0.15, -0.04$), whereas married respondents perceived it negatively ($B = 0.07$ units of log-transformed, 95% CI = $0.03, 0.09$). There were no statistically significant differences in other domains of FMPS. **Conclusion** In conclusion, discomfort was a major complaint. Marital status and fear of COVID-19 infection affected their perceptions. The public health implications of these findings highlight the importance of addressing discomfort and societal perceptions, particularly those influenced by factors such as marital status and COVID-19 experience, to promote widespread acceptance and consistent usage of face masks, which is crucial in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. © 2024 Yusof et al. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Index Keywords

adult, Article, attitude to health, awareness, coronavirus disease 2019, cross-sectional study, dyspnea, education, employment status, face mask perception scale, female, government, human, Likert scale, Malaysia, male, masking, pandemic, perception, perception test, questionnaire

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