KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE & PRACTICE OF TRADITIONAL MALAY MEDICINE (TMM) PRACTITIONERS IN MALAYSIA ON THE CAUSE, MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT OF COVID-19

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Introduction

- COVID-19 had a huge impact on the economy, social, religion, education and health sector.
- TMM practitioners also affected
  - service is personal, including home services offering herbal formulations, massages, cupping and midwifery.
  - services were disrupted by COVID-19 management protocols.
- TMM practitioners could
  - shape public opinion on many important health issues
  - strong ally to biomedical health care givers and researchers.

Problem statement

TMM practitioners is often overlooked in the mainstream health care agenda, neglected to be studied, and hence often sidelined if not looked upon with suspicion when their assistance could help health promotion and management.
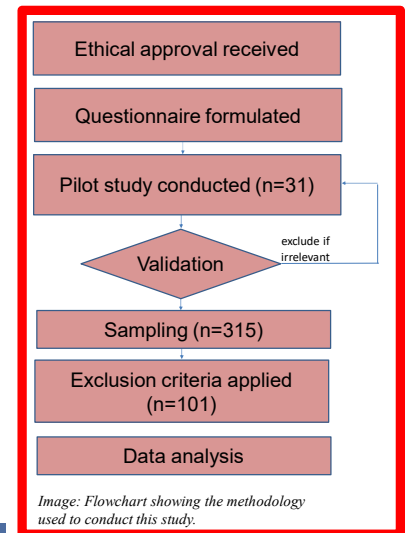
Aims

To assess Malaysian TMM practitioners, in relation to the cause, management and treatment of COVID-19, in terms of:
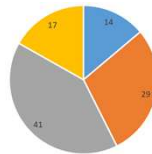
1. The socio-demography,
2. The association of the socio-demography to the level of knowledge, attitude and practice,
3. the relationship between the level of knowledge, attitude and practice in relation to COVID-19.

> **Traditional medical practitioners usually are very close to and highly trusted by their patients. They can influence public opinion on many health issues. They could become a powerful ally to mainstream health system in managing an epidemic.**

Methodology

- A cross-sectional study was conducted among Malaysian TMM practitioners (n=101) from 4 major associations related to TMM.
- Ethical approval was applied from the International Islamic University Malaysia's Research Ethics Committee (IREC).
- Questionnaire was formulated and pilot study was conducted to validate the questionnaire.
- Participants' consent retrieved before answering online self-administered questionnaire distributed from April - July 2021.
- Convenience sampling was performed, and exclusion/inclusion criteria was applied.
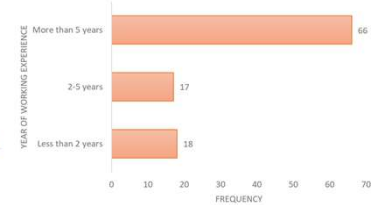- Data was analysed using Statistical Package Software for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Image: Flowchart showing the methodology used to conduct this study.

Results

Graph 1: The Age Groups of Respondents.

Graph 2: The Formal Qualification of Respondents

Graph 2: The Number of Year As A Traditional Malay Medical Practitioner

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Knowledge scores		
High	**90**	**89.1**
Moderate	11	10.9
Low	-	-

Table 1: The Level of Knowledge on Covid-19 Among Respondents

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Practice scores		
High	31	30.7
Moderate	**55**	**54.5**
Low	15	14.9

Table 3: The Level of Practice on Covid-19 Among Respondents

Item	Correlation coefficient, r	p-value	Interpretation
Knowledge – Practice	+0.100	0.460	No correlation

Note: Number of respondents = 101; r- value which is positive shows no correlation; p-values are statistically significant (<0.05)

Table 5: The Correlation between Knowledge & Practice Among Respondents

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Attitude scores		
High	20	19.8
Moderate	**66**	**65.3**
Low	15	14.9

Table 2: The Score on Attitude on Covid-19 Among Respondents

Item	Correlation coefficient, r	p-value	Interpretation
Knowledge – Attitude	+0.230	0.020	No correlation

Note: Number of respondents = 101; r- value which is positive shows no correlation; p-values are statistically significant (<0.05)

Table 4: The Correlation between Knowledge & Attitude Among Respondents

Item	Correlation coefficient, r	p-value	Interpretation
Attitude – Practice	+0.395	< 0.001	Fair correlation

Note: Number of respondents = 101; r- value which is positive shows fair correlation; p-values are statistically significant (<0.05)

Table 6: The Correlation between Attitude & Practice Among Respondents

Discussion

Level of knowledge is high (n=90, 89.1%), but the attitude (n=66, 65.3%) and practice (n=55, 54.5%) are moderate, indicating some dissatisfactions and resistance to COVID-19 SOP. Practitioners with better educational level, married, aged and longer experience in the industry tend to have better knowledge. None of the socio-demographic factors affects attitude and practice. Better knowledge appears to relate positively (p = 0.02) to better attitude although makes no difference to practice (p>0.05). Improved attitude appears to affect practice positively (p=0.001).

Conclusion

Understanding the factors that influence level of knowledge, attitude and practice can help in formulating effective strategies in managing COVID-19 public health issues.