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**KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF HAND HYGIENE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AMONG DENTAL STUDENTS IN A TERTIARY CARE CENTRE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY**

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**ABSTRACT**

**BACKGROUND:** COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 affecting more than a hundred countries has become a global health emergency. An understanding of the disease and basic preventive measures specifically among the healthcare workers is essential to curtail the spread of infection.

**OBJECTIVES:** To assess the knowledge and practice of dental undergraduate students about COVID-19 and basic hand hygiene measures.

**METHOD**: A cross-sectional study using a 34-item questionnaire was conducted on dental undergraduate students during the third week of March 2020. Chi-square test was used to describe the proportion of participants in each year. Post-Hoc pairwise comparison was done to compare the scores among different year groups. Multiple regression analysis using all demographic variables as independent variables and knowledge and practice score as the outcome variable was conducted. Logistic regression analysis was used to ascertain the effect of demographic variables on the source of knowledge and educational need related questions.

**RESULTS:** A total of 232 responses were received. Approximately, one-third of the participants had good knowledge and practice score depicted by more than 10 score in the knowledge and practice section each. The mean score of first-year students was significantly lower than that of the other years. Internet was found to be the frequent source of knowledge followed by social media sites.

**CONCLUSION:** The knowledge and practice regarding hand hygiene among dental undergraduate students in a tertiary care center were found to be short of optimal and requires strengthening through structured training programs.

**Keywords**: coronavirus, infection control, dental education, hand hygiene, hand disinfection