



COVID-19 Help-Seeking Behaviors: Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is highly contagious. More than 247 million cases have been confirmed by the end of October 2021. Seeking help earlier may slow the spread of COVID-19 because it may help in early detection of infected cases, and it facilitate tracing those who were with close contact with infected cases. The purpose of this study is to identify participants' intentions toward COVID-19 seeking help and the factors affecting their decision. This is a cross-sectional study. An online survey using Google Forms was used for data collection. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to explain intentions to seek help for COVID-19. The concepts included in the Theory of Planned Behavior and COVID-19 knowledge were used as predictors. The sample included 780 participants, with an average age of 28.60 ± 9.86 years old. Most of the sample were female (67.4%) and having a bachelor's degree (72.7%). Participants showed high level of knowledge regarding COVID-19, 73% of the sample had a total knowledge score equal to or higher than 85%. Also, participants had high positive attitudes and high intentions to seek help for COVID-19. The four predictors: Attitudes towards COVID-19, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and COVID-19 knowledge significantly explained intentions to seek help. Participants had high intentions to seek help for COVID-19, which was related to having positive attitudes toward seeking help, high social approval, high perceived controllability, and high COVID-19 knowledge levels. Regular awareness campaigns during early stages of pandemics should be performed to improve attitudes and knowledge level, which may improve prevention measures, and promote help seeking behaviors. Consequently, this may facilitate early detection of cases, and slow the spread of pandemics.

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