

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES TOWARDS PREMARITAL SCREENING IN THE GENERAL POPULATION OF UAE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Background

The prevalence of **genetic blood disorders** is remarkably high in various **Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries** owing to a significant economic burden on healthcare systems. Therefore, a **compulsory Premarital Screening (PMS)** program was introduced in UAE in 2011. Research to assess the **public awareness** towards PMS is very scarce in some of these nations with this study being the first of its kind to be conducted in the UAE.

Objective

This literature aims to assess the **knowledge, attitudes and practices** of the population of UAE towards PMS

Methodology

- Study design/research tool: **cross-sectional study/** online questionnaire
- **SPSS-version 27** for analysis.
- **Mann-Whitney U test** for statistical significance of association.

207
18-45 YRS

Results

Comprehensively, lesser awareness and poorer attitudes towards PMS was associated with **male gender** and **non-healthcare sector of work or study** ($p < 0.05$)

75.8%
female
participants

53.4%
from healthcare
sector

Conclusion

- About a fifth ($n=39$) of the participants would not undergo PMS prior to marriage.
- Over a half reported their main source of information regarding PMS was family and friends, with only 40.6% from healthcare centers and 30.9% from media.
- This necessitates the implementation of **nationwide health educational campaigns** including quality assured **awareness programs** through various **media platforms** for a wider reach.

a=27.1%

b=12.6%

c=76.8%

d=81.2%

e=59.9%

a: Consanguinity in parents, b: History of inherited diseases, c: Knows what premarital screening is, d: PMS should be mandatory in UAE, e: No impendance to marriage if test is positive