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RECYCLING IN SHARJAH: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

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Background. Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) third largest city, is also the third highest waste producer (9.9% of ≈26 million in 2012). Over \$1 billion has been invested into recycling programs aiming to achieve zero-waste to landfill by 100% recycling and conversion. Aside from providing infrastructure, assessment of people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) is needed for an effective municipal solid waste (MSW) management.

Methods. A cross-sectional study of 400 selected subjects was conducted in public venues in Sharjah. Convenient sampling method was used for selection of Sharjah residents 18-55 years old. A pilot-tested, self-administered questionnaire was distributed. Participants' responses were entered and analyzed using SPSS 22 software. Results were then compared to those found in similar researches.

Results. The mean age of respondents was 28.0 years ± 9.4 and 56.5% were females. Knowledge level was 51.8%±18.1, with students reporting the highest (53.7%, $p = 0.007$). Respondents showed a mean attitude of 92.6% ± 16.5 towards recycling; 51.1% and 46.8% would recycle more if there was a financial reward or penalty, respectively. 70.4% ($n=307$) reported that they recycle. Logistic regression model indicates that knowledge and attitude were the only significant predictors (OR = 1.013 and 1.014, respectively) of practicing recycling, keeping demographic variables constant.

Conclusions. Although Sharjah residents have positive attitudes towards recycling, their knowledge is relatively lacking, leaving room for improvement. Innovative methods could be introduced in order to encourage higher recycling practice.

Biography

Suhaib Al Haj Ali is a 4th year medical student at the College of Medicine in University of Sharjah, UAE. Suhaib has lived his whole life in the UAE, and has graduated the British curriculum in high school with outstanding results before proceeding to study medicine. Suhaib is keen on studying issues that affect the environment as part of the wider context of the community, recognizing the importance of integrating that with medicine.

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