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Investigating the Causes of Non-compliance with Health Protocols during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Covid-19 pandemic spread rapidly around the world and is now the most important health issue worldwide. Since the onset of the epidemic, Iran experienced several waves.

Although it is not possible to predict the end of pandemic, it is possible to control it by observing hygiene, and people need to act vigilantly. In this situation, the best advice of doctors is to stay home and follow health protocols. Various measures such as reducing social distance, using face masks, and washing hands properly were emphasized by most governments to prevent the transmission of the disease. In Iran, the most important policy of the government to deal with the crisis was social distancing and compliance with health protocols, the social consequences of which have been different for different classes, groups, and individuals in the society.

Since the social, occupational, and personal structures of people's lives were disturbed during Covid-19 crisis, the implementation of health protocols was not very successful and the correct behavior patterns were not seen among all members of the society. The most important reasons were the lack of comprehensive and correct training and the flow of correct and incorrect information. Achieving reliable and timely information was challenging due to this information tsunami. The information through the media such as news, influential statements, and research findings have a significant impact and can influence people's behavior and feelings as well as their compliance with health protocols.

The extent of adherence to health protocols has a direct and undeniable effect on the number of patients and deaths from this disease, considering its incidence, prevalence, and continuity. It seems necessary to identify the factors involved in this issue, because non-observance of health protocols not only puts the life of the person at serious risk, but also the lives of all those who are in contact with him/ her.

According to the country's health officials, currently (October 2022), no city was in the red state and only 18 cities were in the orange state, but compliance with the health protocols in the country was low. Observing health protocols is one of the important indicators to prevent the spread of the virus. Adherence to health principles and the

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extent of compliance with health protocols depend on various factors in any country.

Considering the unknown nature of Coronavirus disease and its rapid transmission rate, the main strategy to control the disease is to eliminate the virus transmission chain, mainly through observing health protocols. Despite all warnings and restrictions in the country, the rate of observing health protocols is nearly 32%. Such behavior and the reasons for non-observance of the health protocols are very important for managers and policy makers, understanding of which can help future planning and goal setting.

The following presents the most important reasons for non-compliance with health protocols in Iran:

1) Individual factors

- Lack of information about the disease.
- Difficulty of observing health protocols.
- Feeling helpless and inability to deal with the disease.

2) Social factors

- Adherence to health protocols by others.
- Lack of a correct and appropriate pattern to deal with the disease.
- Having unconventional and somehow invincible behaviors.
- Lack of understanding the importance of following the health protocols by those who have not encountered this disease and its consequences.

3) Economic factors

- Insufficient facilities and resources for disinfecting the workplace.
- Inadequate access and high cost of masks and disinfectants.

4) Cultural-political factors

- Holding traditional and cultural ceremonies, and participation and gathering of people.
- Reduced public trust in the government.
- Conflicts and problems such as "poor monitoring and dealing with violators", "poor performance of the authorities in response to this crisis", "economic inflation and high living costs", and "dissemination of various and contradictory statistics and information".

Various factors can affect the level of compliance with health protocols. The first step to deal with this crisis is to identify the important factors. Managers and policy makers of the health system should do detailed planning based on the influencing factors in order to increase compliance with health protocols.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

Author contribution

K K: Design and supervision

Z Z: Data collection and manuscript preparation

M H: Preparing the manuscript and finalizing the study

Keywords

Management, Health, Health Protocols, COVID-19.

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