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KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICES RELATED TO *HELICOBACTER PYLORI* AND GASTRIC DISEASE IN PALESTINE: IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY DETECTION AND ERADICATION.

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Abstract

Background: *Helicobacter pylori* infection is highly prevalent worldwide and is a major cause of chronic gastritis, peptic ulcer disease, and gastric malignancy. Public knowledge and preventive behaviors play an important role in early detection and eradication; however, data on awareness and practices in Palestine remain limited. This study assessed knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to *H. pylori* infection, transmission, and management among Palestinians.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in the West Bank in 2025 using a validated electronic questionnaire. The survey collected sociodemographic data and assessed knowledge, attitudes (5-point Likert scale), and preventive practices. A total of 205 participants were included, predominantly female (77.1%) and aged 18–25 years (66.8%), with 69.3% holding a bachelor's degree. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS v27 with independent t-tests and one-way ANOVA to examine associations between KAP scores and demographic variables.

Results: General awareness of *H. pylori* was high (80%; 95% CI: 74–85%); however, specific knowledge was limited. Only 36.6% correctly identified transmission routes, 24.7% recognized recommended treatment regimens, 42.0% identified clinical symptoms, and 47.8% understood its association with gastrointestinal disease. Attitudes toward prevention and treatment were generally positive, with 62.0% willing to undergo treatment if diagnosed. Self-reported hygienic practices were common, including routine handwashing (94.2%). No significant associations were observed between knowledge levels and age, gender, education, or occupation ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion: Despite high general awareness, substantial gaps persist in specific knowledge regarding *H. pylori* transmission and management. Targeted educational interventions are needed to improve understanding and support early detection and eradication efforts in Palestine.

Keywords: *Helicobacter pylori*, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Awareness, Palestine.