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### ABSTRACT

#### **The Impact of Information Sources on COVID-19-Related Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) among University Students: A Nationwide Cross-Sectional Study**

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**Background:** COVID-19 is an emerging respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus accompanied by a tsunami of misinformation and fake news. This can weaken the public health responses by affecting the COVID-19-related knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of the public.

**Objectives:** This study aimed to evaluate the effect of the information-seeking patterns on COVID-19-Related society's perceptions, Attitudes, and Practices.

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**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted from 9 to 25 May 2020. A self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) was developed and circulated online using Google Forms. Targeted undergraduate students aged from 18 to 30 years, from seven Palestinian universities were randomly selected to represent the major governorates in the West Bank and Gaza.

**Results:** We found that the most trusted information source among students was the World Health Organization (WHO), followed by the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) briefings and healthcare workers, whereas social media was the most frequently used source of information. In total, 76% avoided going to crowded places, and only 33% wore a mask while being outdoors. The vast majority (93%) checked the accuracy of COVID-19-related information before publishing it, 56% used the WHO and MoH briefings for fact-checking, and only 8% relied on healthcare workers.

**Conclusions:** Efforts should be made to recommend healthcare workers as credible information sources.

**Research Keywords:** knowledge; information sources; information checking; COVID-19; Palestine.