

ELDERLY PEOPLE AND CORONAVIRUS DISEASE: LOW RISK PERCEPTION LEVEL AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS IN AREKA TOWN, WOLAITA ZONE, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

Abstract Background. Still now, COVID-19 is a public health concern in both developed and developing countries. Risk perception has been studied in different countries with different population groups. However, there have been few studies conducted risk perception on elderly people and there is no study on elderly people' in Ethiopia including this study area. This study aimed to assess coronavirus disease low risk perception level and associated factors among the elderly. **Methods.** To carry out this study among elders in Areka town from 01 August 2021 to 30 August 2021, a community-based cross-sectional study was used. Multi-stage sampling method was applied to select study participants. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire with the mobile application of Open Data Kit mobile(ODK). **Results.** This study showed that individuals with age range of 65 to 74 [AOR= 4.76, 95% CI (2.35-9.64)], poor practice on preventing coronavirus disease [AOR= 2.39, 95% CI (1.51-3.78)], low trust level in medical professionals [AOR=2.44, 95%CI (1.45-4.10)], no history of coronavirus disease [AOR=6.45, 95%CI (2.02-20.58)], poor perceived self-efficacy for preventive practice [AOR=2.25, 95% CI (1.43-3.54)] were identified as associated factors of low risk perception. **Conclusions.** In the current study area, the perception of risk of coronavirus disease was affected by age, perceived self-efficacy, trust in medical professionals, preventive practice, and history of coronavirus disease. Including Ethiopia, the findings of this study would help for developing countries to generate evidence-based policy decisions for elderly people during COVI-D-19 pandemic and future pandemic(s). **Keywords:** Associated factors, Coronavirus, Elderly, Ethiopia, Perception

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