

## Original Article

# Knowledge & Awareness regarding colorectal cancer among health and allied students of King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Jeddah

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\* All students have contributed equally to the data collection

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Colorectal cancer (CRC) is one of the pivotal public health issues in Saudi Arabia currently. There is a need to examine the knowledge and awareness of the health professions' students who are going to be the caretakers of the public in years to come. **Objectives:** The aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge and awareness of CRC in health and allied students of our Health Sciences University in Saudi Arabia. **Materials and Methods:** An online predesigned and validated and self-administered Survey/Questionnaire was dispensed to all health and allied students. Descriptive statistics was performed using SPSS. Data were analyzed by demographic distributions to determine if students of these groups displayed any differential awareness and knowledge for CRC. **Results:** A total of 372 of students answered the online questionnaire with a mean age of 20 ± 7.3 (SD) years. There was almost an equal distribution of male (47.8%) and female (52.2%) students and majority of them were single (97.3%). In this study, we found that the students were not having any knowledge of the epidemiology of CRC in Saudi Arabia. The knowledge about the various risk factors of CRC was also very dismal; only a minority of them (34.4%) was able to identify 5 out of 12 CRC risk factors correctly. However, 59.7% of students had no idea about the test/examination methods that are used in screening and detection of CRC, but majority (76.1%) of them were aware that people should get screened for CRC. **Conclusions:** A very low level of awareness and knowledge about CRC was observed in this study among all health and allied students. We strongly recommend that there is a dire need of proactive aggressive preventive medicine campaigns, educational programs, and curricular modifications for the students to prepare them for the challenges posed by increasing burden of cancer in the kingdom.

**Keywords:** Colorectal cancer, early detection, health education, preventive medicine, risk factors, Saudi Arabia

## Introduction

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is one of the important solid cancers, characterized by malignancy of colon or rectal lumen cells.<sup>[1]</sup> CRC incidence rates vary widely according to region, but lately have

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