



Do Lay People in Oman Know How to Perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation?

Sultan Al-Shaqsi^{1*}, Ahmed Al-Risi² and Ammar Al-Kashmiri³

¹Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

²Department of Neurosurgery, Khoula Hospital, Muscat, Oman

³Department of Emergency Medicine, Khoula Hospital, Muscat, Oman

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Dear Editor,

Oman is undergoing significant social changes including demographics, public attitude and awareness about national issues.¹ The pattern of diseases in Oman has significantly changed with coronary artery disease becoming more prevalent.² However, there is a lack of data regarding bystander knowledge and awareness of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

A recent national survey highlighted the public knowledge of CPR in Oman. This study was the first of its kind to be carried out in five of the most populated cities in the country. It was divided into two parts. The first part described the sociodemographic information of the participants and the second focused on the awareness and knowledge of basic CPR. The survey reported that 62.7% of respondents were able to correctly identify the two main components of CPR as chest compression and ventilation. These results are similar to a survey conducted in the UK in which 54% of participants reported the components of CPR.¹ However, more than half of those who correctly identified the main components of CPR admitted that they did not know how to perform it. In addition, approximately 60% of participants who stated that they knew how to carry out CPR failed to correctly identify particulars in the procedures such as location, depth, and rate of chest compressions. This is an indication that awareness of CPR among those who recognize it was limited to the definition of the term rather than its practical knowledge.

There are several concerns from the findings from this national survey. First, 54.8% of all

surveyed participants did not know how to perform CPR. Another alarming finding was that 60% of respondents did not appreciate the need for CPR in a hypothetical scenario in an unconscious child who choked on a piece of fruit. This is comparable to the UK study where most participants opted to monitor the person until the ambulance arrives and initiates basic life support rather than to start CPR.^{2,3}

This section of the study revealed important information regarding CPR training and experience in Oman. A total of 61% reported no formal training in CPR. Furthermore, of those who were trained in CPR, the majority did not update their training status for more than three years. These findings are similar to a study carried out in Singapore, which suggested that even though most of their participants recognized the importance of CPR, only a minor proportion had formal training.⁴

From this national survey, it was apparent that people who encountered a situation requiring CPR did not carry it out due to lack of knowledge and awareness of how to perform it. It is known that people trained in CPR are three-times more likely to provide an appropriate CPR in out of hospital situations. Furthermore, this national study indicated that the majority of those who had CPR training received it as part of their employment prerequisite.

The public in Oman do not have enough knowledge about CPR. This is concerning given the increasing rate of illnesses and injuries that require basic first aid measures. It is time for policymakers in Oman to advocate mandatory training in basic CPR for government employees. Furthermore, incorporating CPR teaching in school curriculum

will ensure that generations of students have the required knowledge of CPR. International experiences in CPR community enhancement can be utilized to improve awareness and knowledge. CPR knowledge is an asset that for sure will be useful in times of sudden illness or injury.

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