

Community Trust and Public Health Compliance: COVID-19 Experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador

Description

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly affected global healthcare systems, necessitating effective infectious disease control measures. Understanding specific populations' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) relating to COVID-19 is crucial for implementing public health interventions. Since Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), Canada has a unique socio-geographic context and high healthcare expenditures per capita, a KAP study is needed to understand how COVID-19 impacted local communities and its influence on public health measures. **Methods:** In-depth interviews were conducted with 100 NL resident participants aged 18–76 years between August 2022 and January 2023 to investigate their experiences with COVID-19 through a phenomenological and KAP framework. **Results:** The study identified three main themes: COVID-19, knowledge built on locally trusted sources and experiences, social dynamics shaping attitudes towards COVID-19, and the need for public health tools to improve practices around COVID-19. Key findings include reliance on local news for information, mental health impacts, high compliance with health measures, and challenges in at-home care and recovery. Some challenges include the need for regular communication, accessible mental health support, and COVID-19 at-home care tools. **Conclusion:** The unique experiences and KAP of COVID-19 in NL highlight the importance of understanding regional differences to improve COVID-19 public health interventions. Targeted interventions that focus on transparent communication, at-home COVID-19 care tools, and accessible mental health support should be explored in the context of regional public health support for sustaining a healthy population and mitigating future outbreaks in similar contexts.

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Consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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