

The public's perception of bystander CPR legality in the UAE: A cross-sectional study

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Background:

Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) is one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide. Performance of an early, effective bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation (BCPR) increases the likelihood of survival among OHCA victims. The frequency of BCPR performance on OHCA victims and the overall survival rate has been reported to be low in the UAE. Identifying factors that influence bystanders' response is essential to develop interventional strategies that effectively reduce rates of OHCA mortality in the UAE. This study aims to assess the public's knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards BCPR.

Methods:

This was a cross-sectional study conducted between April and June of 2023. Data was collected from 588 adults in the UAE using non-probability convenience and snowballing sampling methods. The research tool used was a 41-items structured questionnaire, assessing knowledge of OHCA detection, CPR execution, as well as perception towards mandatory CPR training and willingness to learn and perform CPR. Data entry and analysis was performed using Google Sheets and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Results:

Of the 588 participants enrolled, a total of 509 entries were eligible for analysis. Of eligible participants, 17.9% and 80.9% were found to be completely and partially aware of identifying a cardiac arrest, respectively. In addition, 89.6% correctly identified that chest compressions and rescue breaths are part of CPR. However, only 14.9% of the sample were aware of the legality of performing BCPR in the UAE. Fear of causing harm (45.2%) and legal consequences (44.8%) were the most common reasons why people hesitate to perform BCPR.

Conclusion:

UAE residents are generally well-knowledgeable of BCPR and its practices, and exhibit a positive attitude towards its certification. The gap lies in their lack of awareness of the good samaritan law. Addressing the significant lack of awareness regarding CPR legality can reduce reluctance among the public towards performing life-saving measures.

Keywords:

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.