

Beliefs Towards Smoking and COVID-19, and The Pandemic Impact on Smoking Behavior and Quit Intention: Findings from a Community-Based Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study in Jordan

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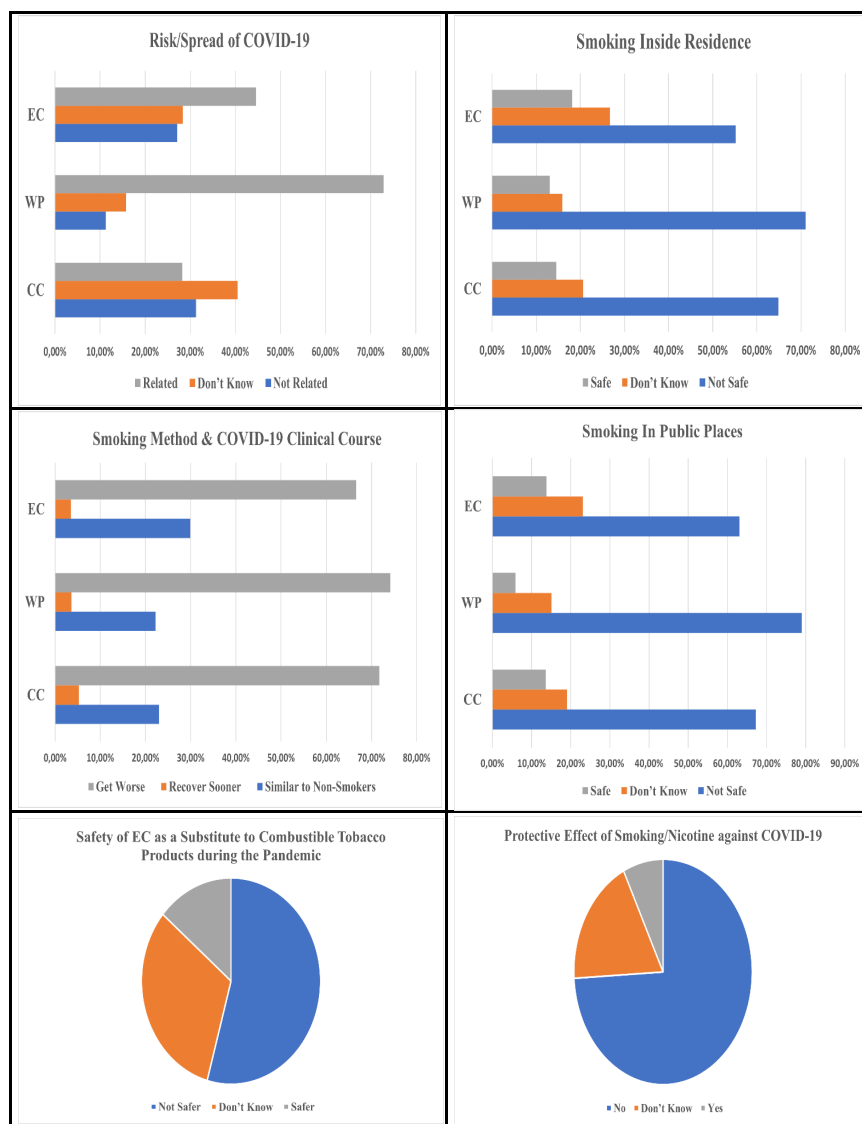
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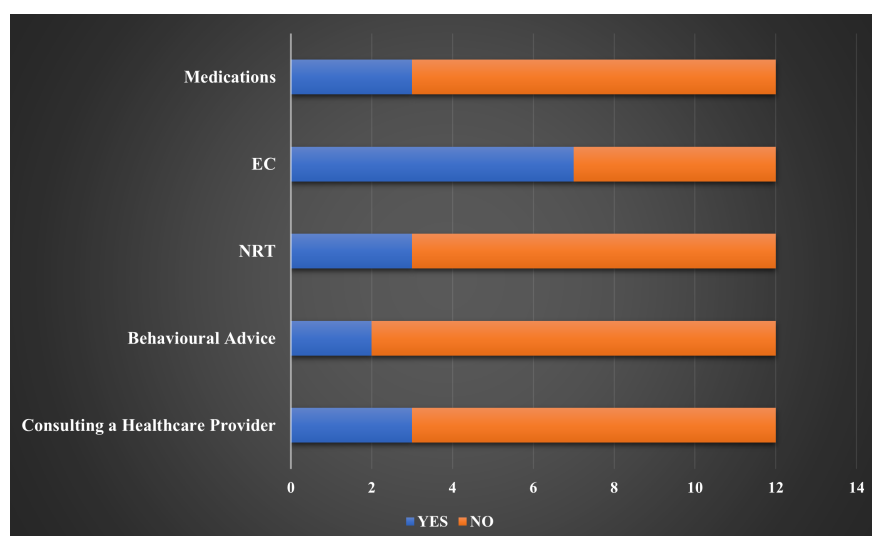
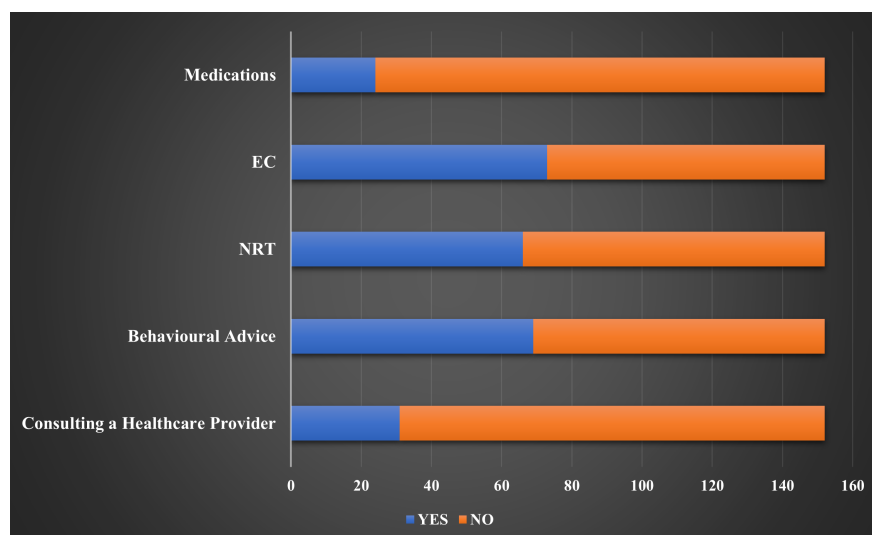
Abstract

Background: The relationship between smoking and Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) is still topical with mixed epidemiological evidence. However, the pandemic may affect people's beliefs towards smoking as well as smoking behavior and quit intentions. Considering high smoking rates in Jordan, our current study aimed to assess (i) the beliefs that surround smoking and COVID-19, (ii) the pandemic impact on smoking behavior and quit intention. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in Jordan utilizing an online questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 13 items on sociodemographic, health, and smoking profiles, 14 items to assess beliefs surrounding COVID-19 and the use of combustible cigarettes (CC), waterpipe (WP), and electronic cigarettes (EC), and 12 items to assess the pandemic impact on smoking behavior and quit intention. **Results:** 1163 never-smokers, 1044 current smokers, and 217 ex-smokers have participated in our study. The mean age of participants was 35.2 years (SD:11.06). Most participants have shown anti-smoking beliefs with around 72.9% believed that WP smoking is related to the risk of contracting COVID-19. Also, 71.7% believed that smoking CC may worsen the COVID-19 clinical course, while 74.1% of respondents believed that smoking has no protective effect against COVID-19. During the pandemic, about 28.1% and 19.3% of current smokers reported increased or reduced smoking, respectively, and many smokers reported their willingness to quit smoking due to the pandemic. **Conclusion:** Most participants reported anti-smoking beliefs during the pandemic. Nevertheless, the double-edged effect of the pandemic on smoking habits should be carefully considered, and reliable anti-smoking measures should be strengthened and sustained.

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