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Accepted Abstracts for the Oral Presentations



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**Title:**

Knowledge and Attitude of Adult Saudi Community towards Premarital Screening Program (Sickle Cell Anemia/Thalassemia) in Riyadh Province of Saudi Arabia.

**Introduction:**

The premarital Screening (PMS) program in Saudi Arabia aims at limiting the spread of hereditary diseases like Sickle Cell Anemia (SCA) and Thalassemia and infectious diseases like Hepatitis B&C and Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Although the PMS program is reducing the percentage of incompatible marriages, the prevalence of hemoglobinopathies is remaining high. With the changing perception of the general population towards the PMS program, an examination of community awareness and attitude toward PMS is needed to find ways for reducing the prevalence of diseases.

**Objective:**

To assess the present knowledge and attitude of the adult Saudi community from Riyadh Province to the premarital screening (PMS) program for hemoglobinopathies.

**Methods:**

This cross-sectional study was conducted on 676 participants from the general population in June-September 2022. The electronic questionnaire was used to assess the sociodemographic data, knowledge, and attitude toward the PMS program.

**Results:**

Out of the 676 participants, 58% were females, and 42% were males. 54% had consanguineous marriages and 5.6% hemoglobinopathies in the family. 96.3% agreed on suggesting PMS to others, 83.2% considered PMS incompatible marriage is wrong, and 78.6% considered associated genetic counseling is important. 22.7% preferred consanguineous marriage over nonconsanguineous. For raising awareness, 97.6%, 85.9%, 84.6%, and 81.2% of respondents felt the need for community participation through the Internet, social media, and medical education in schools respectively.

**Conclusion:**

Most participants have a positive attitude but only superficial knowledge of the PMS program and one-third are still unaware of its use for the prevention of hemoglobinopathies, especially thalassemia. Increasing the knowledge about the importance of the PMS program and associated genetic counseling should be done with multiple information sources in a well-organized way that suits the community's requirements.

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