

The societal concern on the current pandemic health practices: An urban population based study

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1. Introduction

As cities grow worldwide and more of the world's population lives in cities (David et al, 2005). Comparatively developed countries have the highest urban population nowadays though some developing countries contain few crowded cities. People prefer to have city life and believe that the urban lifestyle is more standard than living in a rural one. With rapid global urbanization, the importance of understanding relationships between the changing urban environment and human health and wellbeing is being increasingly recognized (Xuemei et al, 2012). Due to the prevailing biological contagious disease, the urban environment is being extra cautious about the pandemic. Multiple studies are being carried out regarding the prevailing health issues. However, the studies related to the health and wellbeing of the urban population in the pandemic situation are low.

Urban environments are multi-faceted, diverse, dynamic, complex, and evolving, as are the underlying human health and well-being features (Xuemei et al, 2000). Since the beginning of the last year 2020, numerous health-related issues are being risen due to the prevailing biological health hazard. The urban population is being affected more comparatively. Historical perspectives on health in cities vary. Researchers from various disciplines considered a city as the prolonged sediment of good and bad diet practices. Moreover, the urban population had infectious diseases since the areas are overcrowded and dense. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, people get clean often, wear masks, using sanitizers, washing hands, and having a healthy diet. Those practices are giving multi-facet phenomenon in the day-to-day life of the urban population. Therefore, this study was conducted on selected urban populations in Colombo and the adjacent developed region around Colombo to have the perspective of the urban population regarding the health practices cause of Covid-19.

2. Objectives

Cities are more than the compile of people with health care needs and individual risk factors. Therefore, this study aims to know the public view of prevailing sanitary practices. Hence this study has the main objective and subordinate objectives.

The main objective is;

- To expose the societal concern on the current sanitary health practices.

And the subordinate objectives are;

- To identify the way of precautions activities followed by the urban population in the Covid-19 pandemic.
- To identify the advantages and disadvantages of the current sanitary practices.

3. Materials and Methods

This study mainly depended on the Primary data collection methods. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was carried out from gathered data through primary data collection methods. A structured questionnaire survey method was selected using purposeful convenience sampling. 50 working individuals were selected randomly around Colombo and adjacent parts of the Colombo city which has the urban characteristics. Participants, who are living in urban more than 10 years have been chosen to answer the questionnaire. The survey included participants with various age groups between 20 to 60 years old, to accumulate the different perspectives towards the prevailing health practices. Due to the current pandemic situation, the questionnaire survey was conducted via email, WhatsApp, and other Social Media.

Table 1. Age differences of participants

Category	Age range	Men	%	Women	%	Total n	Total (%)
Age	20 - 25	3	6%	5	10%	08	16%
	26 – 30	9	18%	3	06%	12	24%
	31 – 40	4	8%	5	10%	09	18%
	41 – 50	7	14%	4	08%	11	22%
	51 - 60	6	12%	4	08%	10	20%
	Total		29	58%	21	42%	50

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Different Aged participants have been selected to study to gather the various aspects of health practices. And the selected participants are working both onsite and online nowadays. Therefore, they are facing lots of struggles in their everyday routines. With this necessity of sanitary practices, the busy urban people struggle to fulfill their day-to-day works. Hence, the working population has been selected as the study sample to expose the real struggle and the adjustments they make.

Moreover, secondary data were collected from previously conducted and published papers, internet sources, and Books. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed through Excel spreadsheet software and MS word. The Uni-Variate analysis method was employed. The presentation of quantitatively analyzed data was displayed with Tables and Graphs.

4. Results and Findings

Following the response from the questionnaire survey participants, the following problems have been indicated as the common urban environmental issues that could cause health issues. Contaminated water, Environmental degradation, land fragmentation, poor sanitization, lack of housing space, air pollution, chemicals, and solid waste problems, noise pollution, and Poor drainage system. Due to these characteristics of environmental conditions, various health issues might have arisen. Such as infectious diseases, malnutrition, chronic respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, Trauma, Stress, depression, anxiety, and other chronic and infectious diseases.

Below table 2 represents the frequency of responses to the survey questions regarding sanitary health practices and the preference of the urban population. Mostly the youngest have the highest preference towards the continuation of the health practices even after the pandemic. And they justify that, it will be very advantageous if the shops keep a tap and hand wash in front of the door and sanitize the customers individually. That habit will mitigate the spread of contagious diseases and other diseases due to the heavy pollution in the city. Most elders, age range above 40 think that these washing and sanitizing make them too tired and not suitable for their skin protection, wearing masks suffocates and, bathing every day lead them to get sick quickly. So the perspective of different age groups is varied.

Table 2. Frequency of responses to the survey questions regarding the health practices during the Pandemic.

Survey Questions		Satisfaction with the current sanitary practices of the city	The follow of the required sanitary practices routine	Whether been quarantined due to health risk	Visited to any crowded functions during the pandemic	The preference of the sanitary practices to be continued after the pandemic
20-25	Yes	06	07	02	04	08
	No	02	01	06	04	00
26-30	Yes	08	06	03	08	10
	No	04	06	09	04	02
31-40	Yes	04	07	02	08	06
	No	05	02	07	01	03
41-50	Yes	07	08	01	03	07
	No	04	03	10	08	04
51-60	Yes	03	08	00	02	05
	No	07	02	10	08	05

Source: Questionnaire Survey

By the survey, the participants are well aware of the current situation of the country and know the responsibility to be safe and secure. The youngster shows much satisfaction towards the sanitary practices rather than elders. According to the questionnaire survey, the youngsters have been visited crowded places more than the elders. It seems that the elder population has taken the health issue seriously and the young population ought to consider the risk of the situation even more.

When the participant was asked whether they prefer the sanitary practices to be continued after the pandemic, 72 percent of them have said yes and 28 percentage of them said no. The prevailing pandemic has given serious trauma to the public. People follow different cautious activities to be safe from the contagious virus. Table 3 is showing the cautious activities followed by the urban population.

Table 3. Different types of cautious activities followed by the urban population

Precaution Activities	Number of Individuals	Percentage (100%)
Using sanitizers often and keeping them always	41	82%
Washing hands often with soap	35	70%
Bath every once go out in public	29	58%
Covering nose and mouth with a Mask	50	100%
Keeping distance with other people at work	33	66%
Taking Vitamin C and other immunity boosting food	18	36%
Steam every time going in public	11	22%

Source: Questionnaire Survey

Almost everyone is wearing masks while they go out and the practice is mandatory. Almost 82 percent of people using sanitizers and they make sure to keep it with them always. Seemingly half of the participants only taking a bath or shower once after they come from a crowded place. Only 22 percent of the study population gets steam after they go into a public place. Below Figure 1 shows the exposed pros of the prolonged health practices by the public.

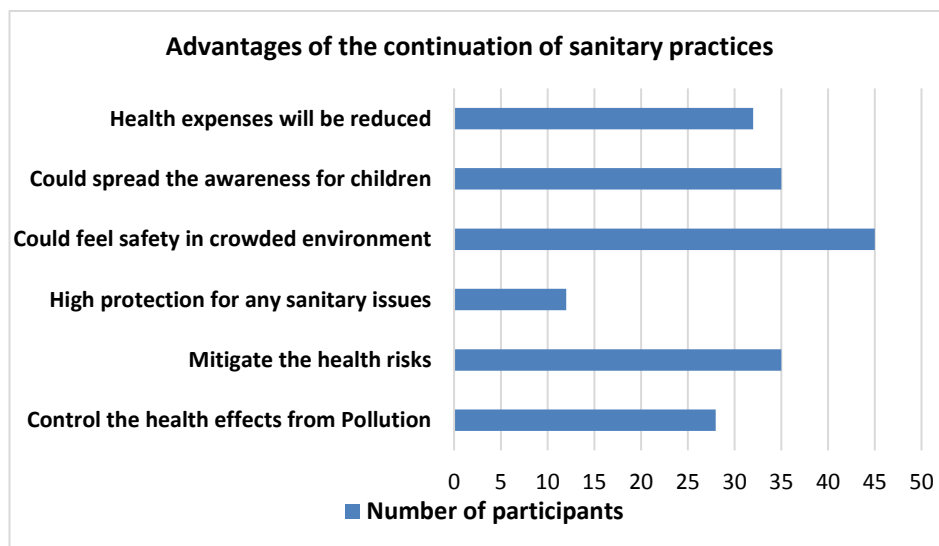


Fig.1. Public Opinion towards the prolonged health practices in urban

Some health benefits and general struggles were listed by the survey participants regarding the continuous process of sanitary practices. More than 90% of the study participants have said that they could feel safe in crowded environment. Since the urban areas are often crowd, people

tend to have an insecure feeling while they are out. Therefore, the continuation of the health sanitary practices can highly benefit the public.

The advantages and the disadvantages have been discussed with the study participants given in Table 4. A few sanitary practices which were told as their pre cautious activities have been weighed for the pros and cons.

Table 4. Pros and cons of prevailing sanitary practices.

Sanitary Practices	Health Benefits	General Struggles
Wearing Masks	Air pollution free, Can be safe from any contagious diseases, Skin protection from heavy carbon pollution in the city, and prevent from lung and respiratory issues.	Couldn't recognize people, hard to breath and difficult to walk fast, ear pain due to the attached loop and headache
Washing hands often with soap	Prevent from parasites and contagious diseases, keep our hands clean even in crowded environment, and could feel safe among densely crowded malls.	Skin peeling on hand, water waste, and every shop owners couldn't afford to get a water line
Using sanitizers often	Be safe and healthy without diseases, keep the children at home safe during outing in the urban	Couldn't afford since the sanitizers cost a lot, protect the children to keep out of it.
Keep distance in public	Could acquire safety in public, prevent from any contagious diseases.	Cannot keep distance in a working environment, Not possible in a public transportation
Having a bath after a travel or visit to a crowded place	Can be sure about the safety from virus and parasites	Lead to other health issues such as headache, cold, fever and etc.
Steam every day after work	Freshen up in the end of the day, keep our skin glow and healthy, prevent from cold and respiratory diseases.	Cause eye soreness, increases the electricity bill or reduce the gas. Extra work after a long day.
Having immunity boosting diet	Could be able to follow a proper and healthy diet plan, Prevent form diseases, Some already prevailed health issues have been cured.	Extra cost for food, so much time for the food preparation, couldn't have the same sort of drinks every day.

Source: Questionnaire Survey

In accordance with the exposed benefits and struggles, it seems that not only the urban people but also every person has both negative and positive thoughts on the emphasized health practices. Economically people struggle to achieve their needs. And though the health practice keeps us safe from the contamination of viruses, those practices lead to other health issues.

5. Conclusion

Sanitary practices are being carried out in a compulsory manner due to the fast spread of the Covid-19 virus around the globe. However, the pandemic situation made people be vigilant and cautious towards their health forever. The urban population is more vulnerable to this contagious disease. But in urban, high sanitary practices could be seen and people prefer to keep the health practices even after the pandemic cause of its multi-facet advantages. The urban community's perspective towards the prevailing health practices is varied due to different reasons. Some people see the advantageous side more, rather than complaining about the struggles they face to keep doing the practices. Regardless, some people complain about the struggles they face due to their busy schedules. According to elderly working people's perspective, these sanitary practices are tiresome and taking a portion of time in their busy schedule. Though the young urban population support and willing the system to change into permanent and forever.

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