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The Impact of COVID-19 on Grocery Shopping Habits and Social Distancing Attitudes in an Inner-city CKD Patient Population

Introduction

We surveyed a population of intercity CKD pts about their attitudes towards COVID-19 and changes in grocery shopping habits.

Methods

A survey was conducted over the phone in a random convenience sample with pts from transplant (30), CKD (14) and family medicine clinics (24). Pts were surveyed on attitudes towards COVID-19 and grocery shopping habits. Pts were grouped as High Frequency (HF; once a week or less) and Low Frequency (LF; once every two weeks or greater) shoppers. There were no differences between Transplant and CKD pts so they were analyzed together.

Results

Mean age was 59.0 ± 11.2 years. There were 21 male and 23 female respondents, with 6 hispanic, 30 black, 3 white, 4 mixed or other race respondents. There was a significant difference in mean age between CKD pts and FM pts (65.3 ± 8.5 ; $p=0.02$), but no difference in gender or race.

There was no significant difference between the frequency at which CKD pts shopped at grocery stores compared to FM pts prior to COVID-19. After, CKD pts shopped significantly less than FM pts ($p=0.01$). CKD pts were stratified into HF (14) and LF (18). HF shoppers reported eating more frozen food ($p=0.01$), more fast food ($p=0.02$), and less fresh food ($p=0.05$). Compared to HF, LF shoppers felt they knew how to protect themselves from COVID-19 better ($p=0.03$) and were more afraid of going to public places ($p=0.02$). They were also overall more afraid of the coronavirus ($p=0.07$) and getting it from a friend ($p=0.08$).

Conclusion

In our population: 1) CKD and FM pts had similar grocery store habits prior to COVID-19. 2) After COVID-19, CKD pts shopped significantly less than FM pts. 3) A subset of pts are shopping less, probably due to fear of COVID-19. 4) HF shoppers bought less fresh food, instead buying more fast food and frozen food compared to LF shoppers. 5) LF shoppers were more wary of COVID-19. Healthcare workers should ask pts about their beliefs and educate them on shopping behaviors that minimize risk