

ENT Knowledge and Preventive Practices Among Undergraduate Students in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

To assess knowledge of common ear, nose and throat (ENT) conditions and selected preventive practices among undergraduate students in Riyadh, and to identify factors associated with total knowledge scores. Cross-sectional questionnaire survey. Four universities in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. A structured electronic questionnaire was completed by 405 undergraduates recruited by convenience sampling between September 2025 and January 2026. Seventeen knowledge items generated a 0–17 score; internal consistency was good (KR-20=0.87). Multivariable linear regression used heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. Associations between total knowledge and three selected practices were assessed with Spearman correlation. The mean knowledge score was $9.84 \pm 4.41/17$. Poor, moderate and good predefined knowledge categories included 43.7%, 36.0% and 20.2% of participants, respectively. Cotton swabs were used at least sometimes by 76.8%, annual influenza vaccination was reported by 17.8%, and 60.2% selected the correct forward-leaning approach to epistaxis. In adjusted analysis, several demographic and clinical characteristics were associated with knowledge scores, although the model explained a modest proportion of score variance. Knowledge was not significantly associated with cotton-swab avoidance or influenza vaccination and was weakly associated with correct epistaxis management ($\rho=0.249$, $p<0.001$). Important gaps remain in ENT knowledge and selected preventive practices among university students. Educational interventions should focus on specific misconceptions and practical behaviours rather than information alone.

Keywords: Otorhinolaryngology; ENT; knowledge; preventive practices; university students; Saudi Arabia

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