

# ASSESSMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES TOWARD RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS AMONG THE TRINIDADIAN POPULATION

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## Introduction

Respiratory Tract Infections (RTIs) are currently at the forefront of discussions as the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that more awareness is raised on RTIs, their causes, the different types, how they are contracted and spread and complications of and risk factors for RTIs. Prevention measures towards RTIs should also be assessed and encouraged, such as proper hand washing, mask wearing, sneezing and coughing etiquette as well as vaccination. Therefore, this investigation was undertaken to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards Respiratory Tract Infections (RTIs) among Trinidadian population.

## Objective

1. To assess the knowledge of the Trinidadian population on the etiology, transmission, complications, risk factors and prevention of respiratory tract infections.
2. To assess the attitudes of the Trinidadian population on the etiology, transmission, complications, risk factors and prevention of respiratory tract infections.
3. To assess the practices of the Trinidadian population on the etiology, transmission, complications, risk factors and prevention of respiratory tract infections.

## Methodology

The cross-sectional prospective study inclusive of the Trinidadian population above 18 years assesses the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) towards respiratory tract infections.

- Sample setting: The study was conducted via online survey using pre-structured questionnaires.
- Sample size: 366 participants
- Data collected:
  - ✓ Demographics
  - ✓ Participants' knowledge, attitudes and practices toward respiratory tract infections.

## Results

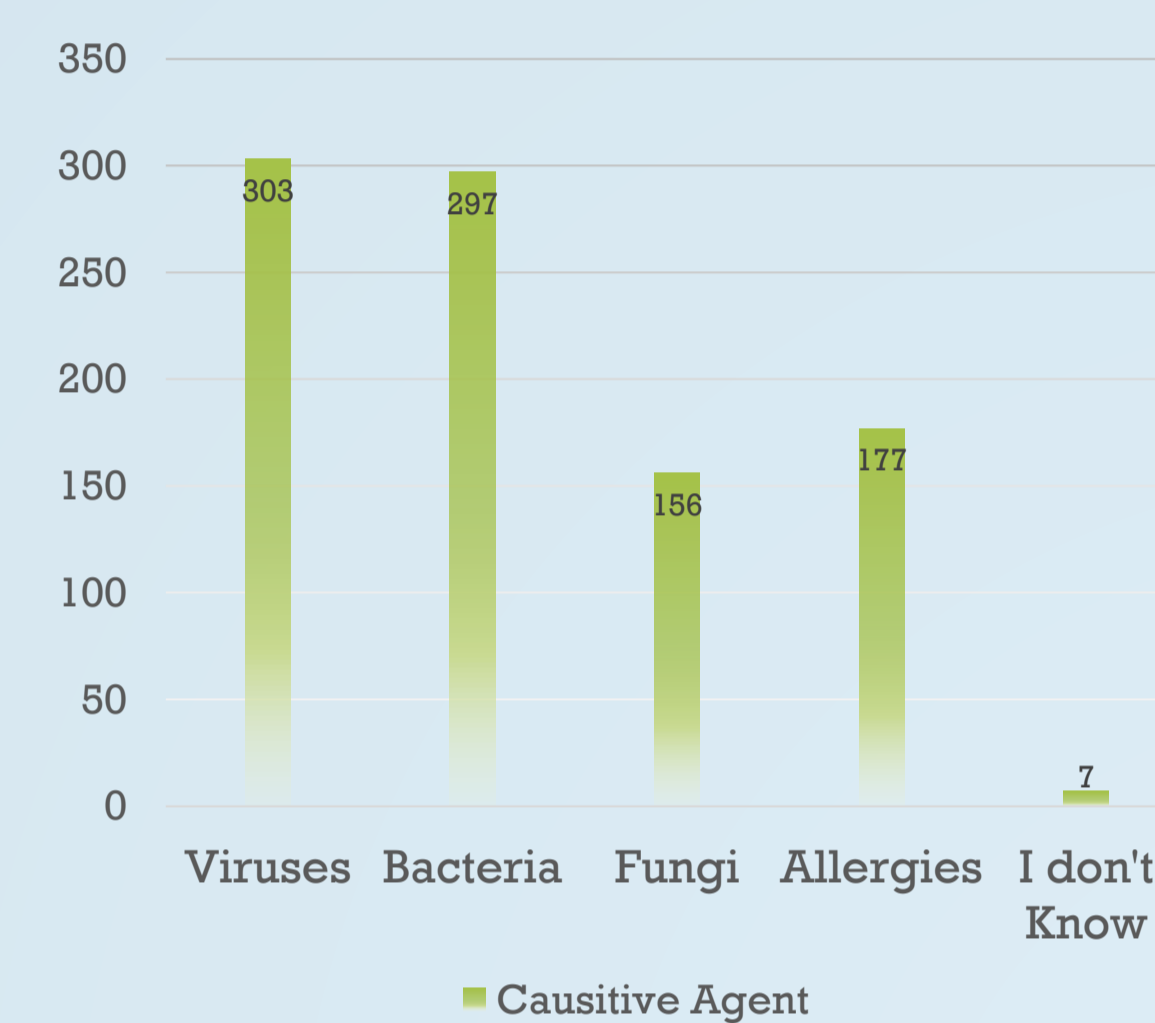


Figure 1. Bar graph showing the knowledge of the causative agents of RTIs

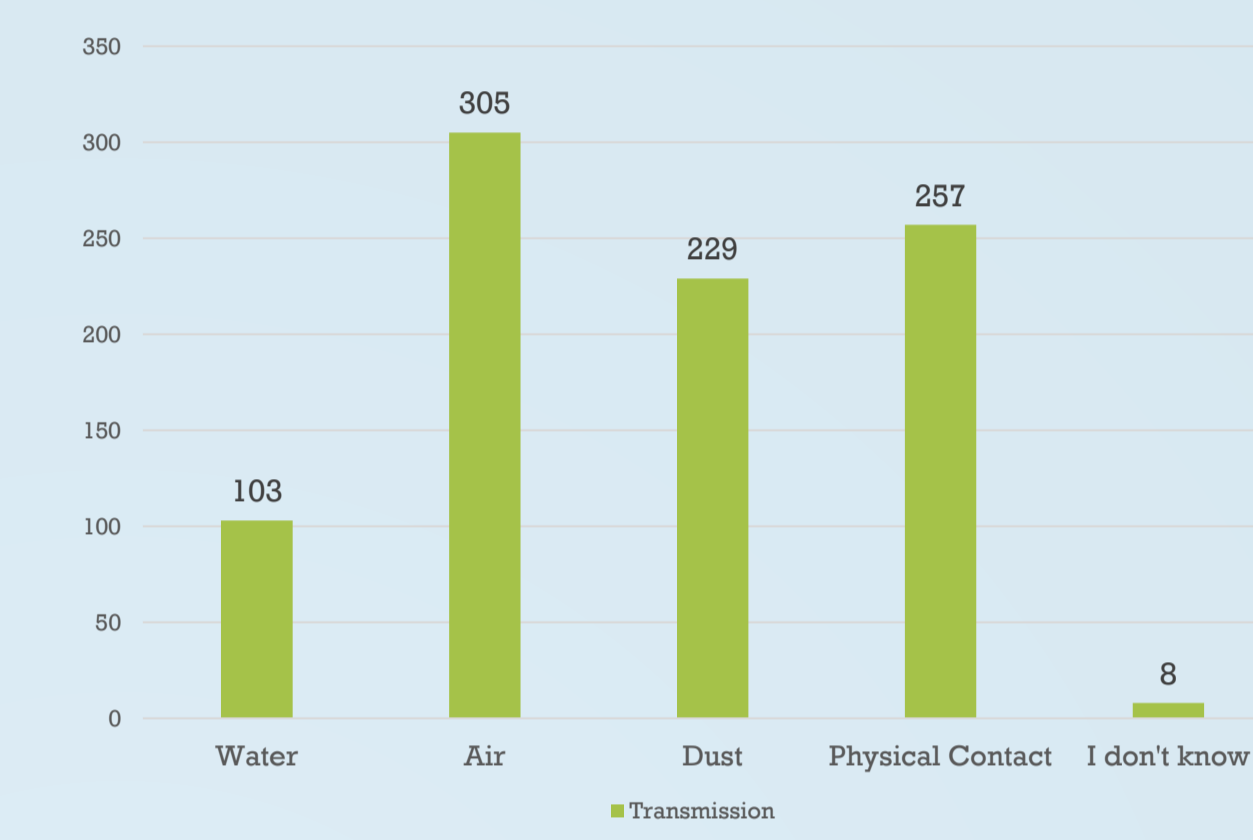


Figure 2. Bar graph showing the knowledge of the modes of transmission of RTIs

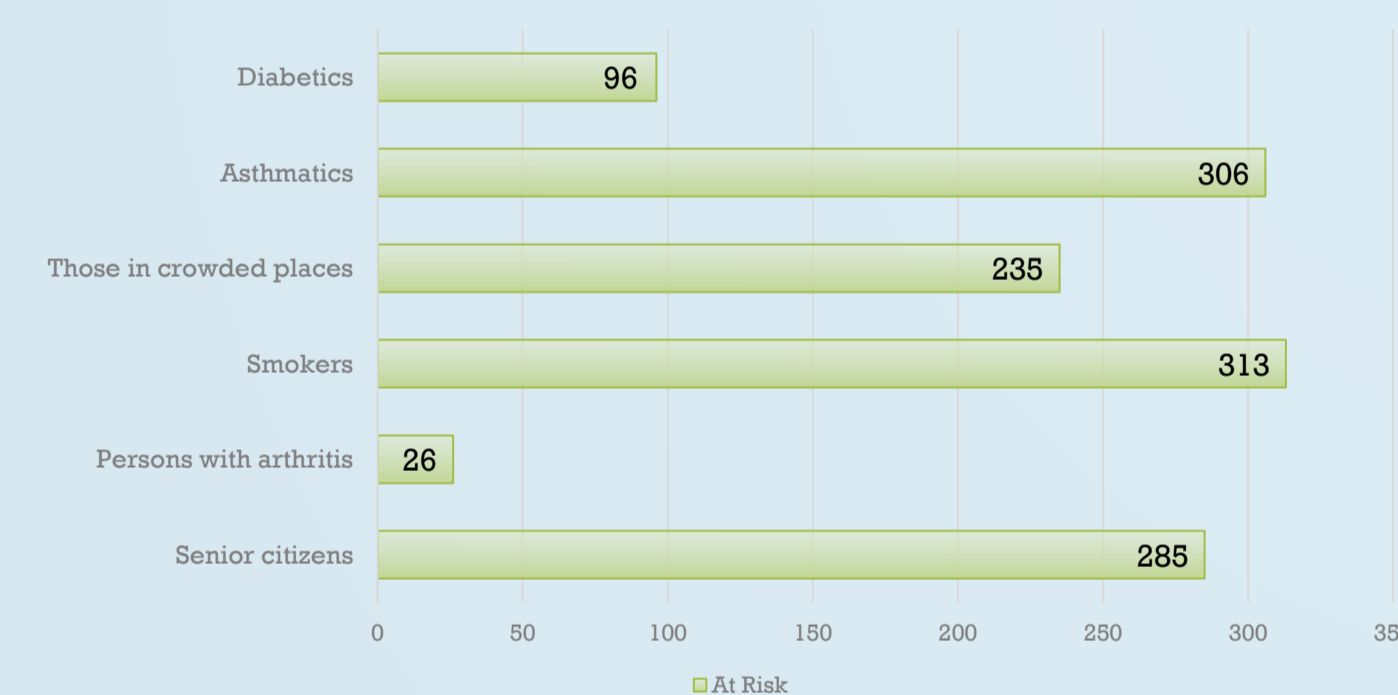


Figure 3. Bar graph showing the knowledge of populations at risk of contracting RTIs

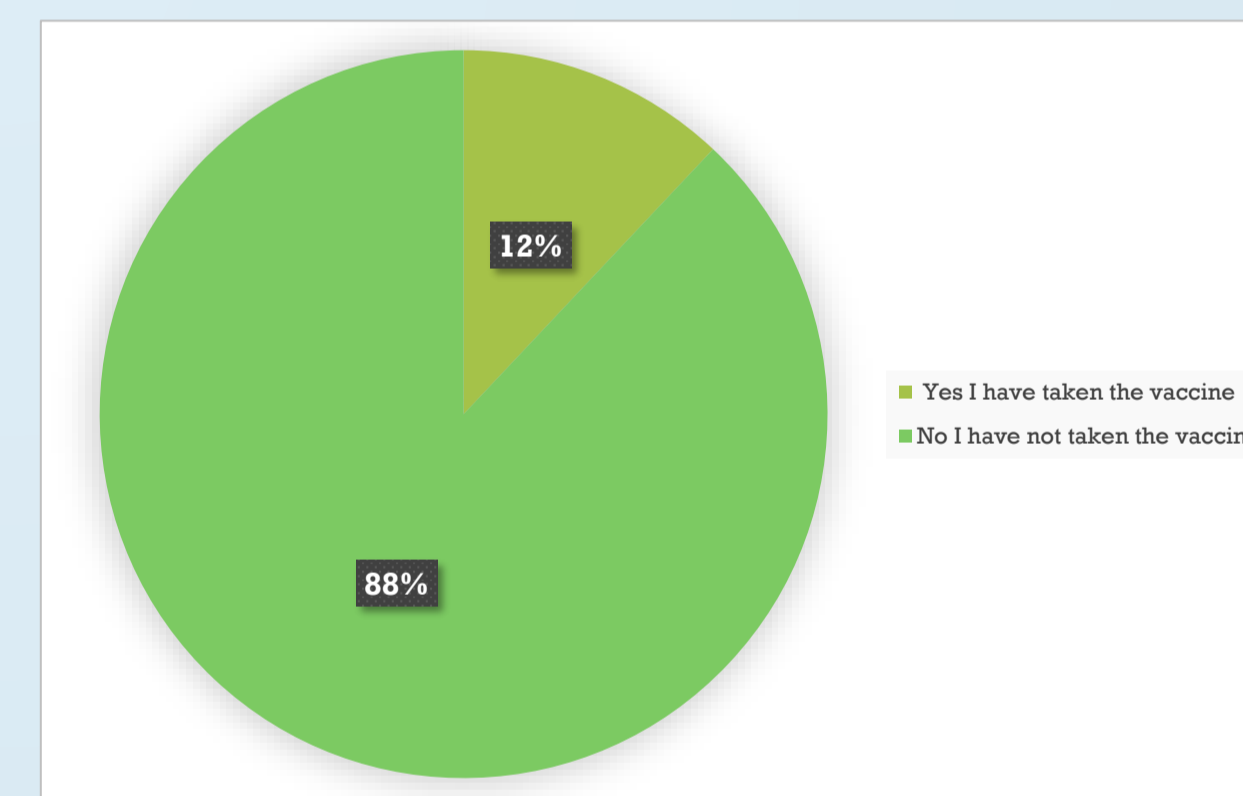


Figure 4. Pie chart showing the respective amounts of persons who have taken the Covid-19 vaccine.

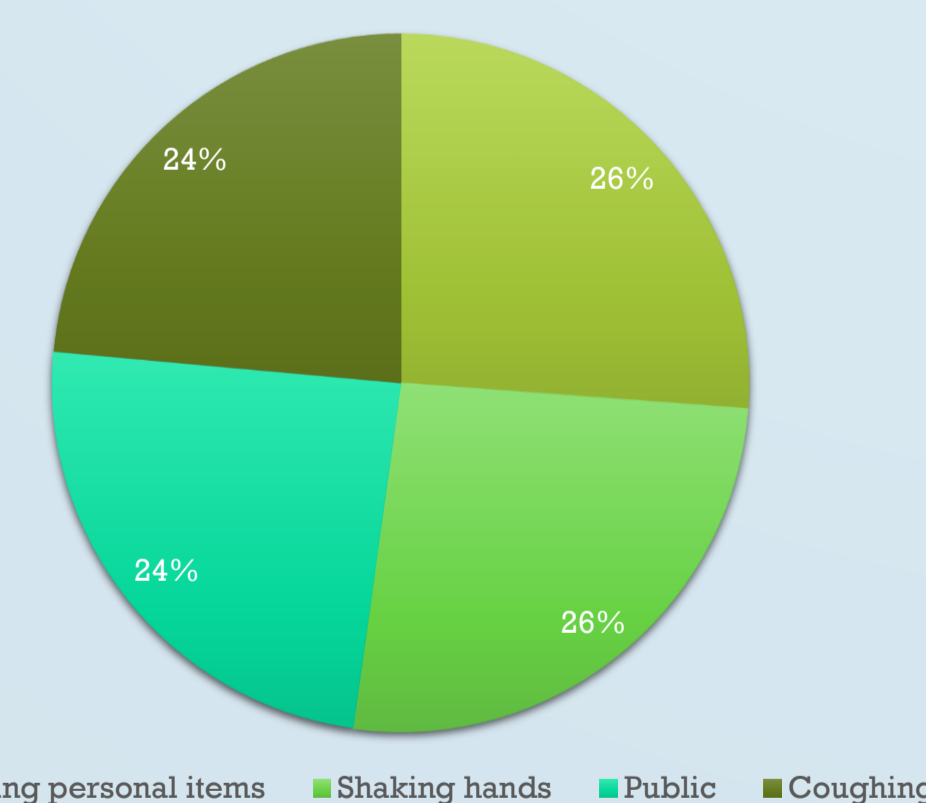


Figure 5. Pie chart showing the times at which persons practice washing their hands

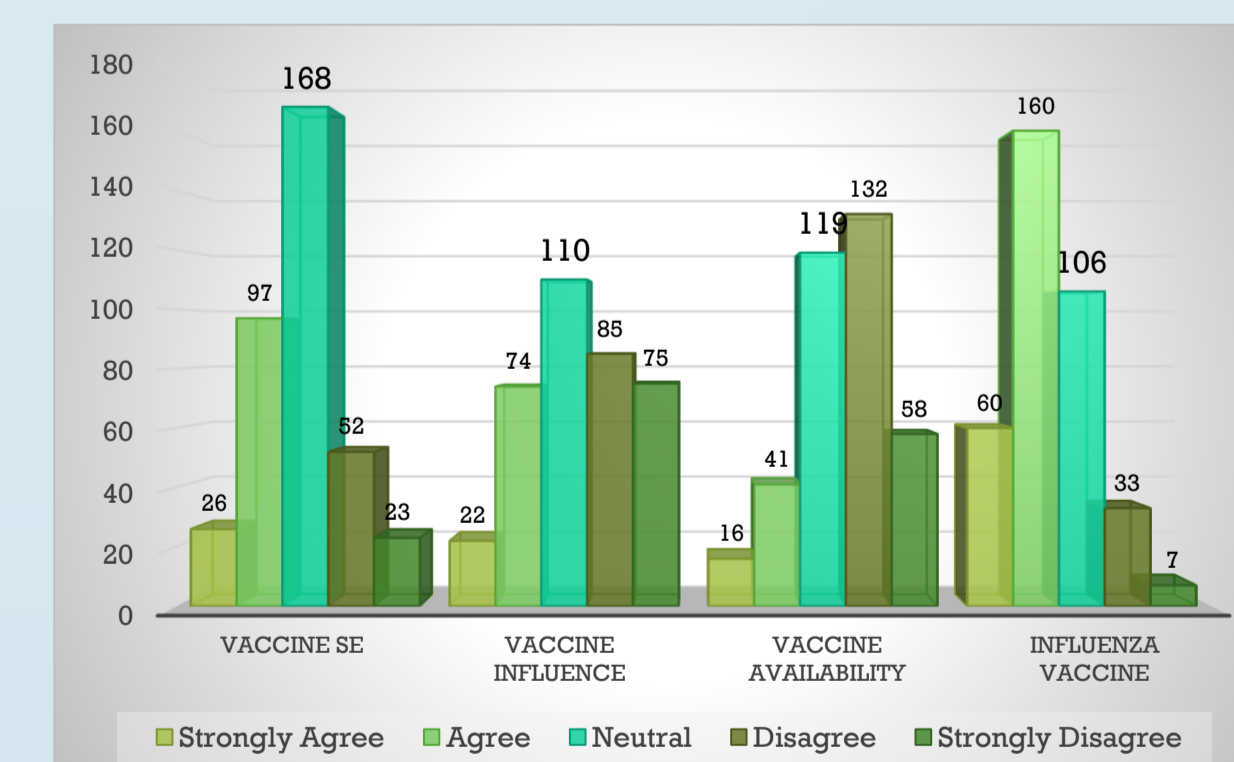


Figure 6. Graph showing the attitudes of persons towards vaccines

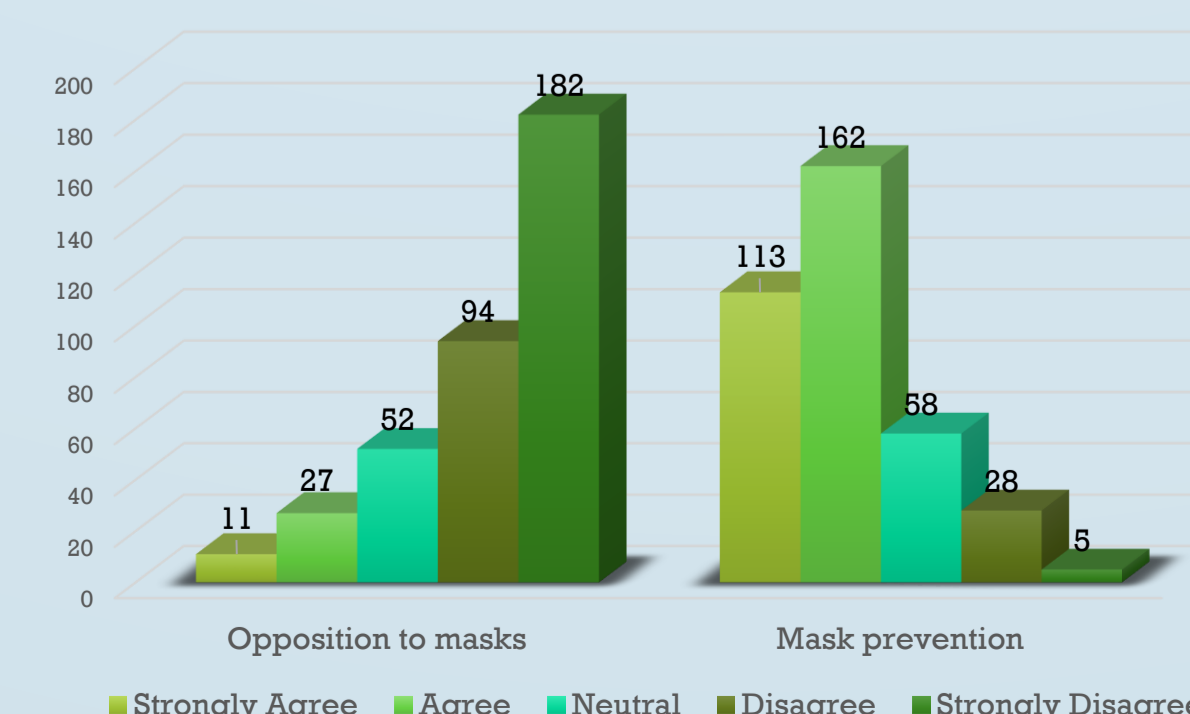


Figure 6. Graph showing the attitude of persons who are generally opposed to wearing face masks in relation to those with the attitude that wearing a well fitted surgical mask is effective in preventing flu like illnesses.

## Discussion

- Good knowledge on the causes of RTIs were exhibited by most respondents as the majority knew the main causes to be viruses (83.0%) and bacteria (81.4%). However, in a study done in 2015 from NUS Young Loo School of medicine (1), the results showed that many had misconceptions on how RTIs were caused.
- It should be noted that the responses with regards to the knowledge on protection from RTIs were positive, as with the current pandemic there are many reminders, signs, and advertisements from various reputable sources throughout the mass media stating all the preventative measures.
- Moreover, majority of the respondents did have a positive attitude when it came to practices to prevent the spread of RTIs, such as agreeing to stay home from work if covid-19 like symptoms presented and agreeing to properly get tested and self-isolate if necessary.
- Overall, the respondents of this study had good knowledge of RTI preventative practices which contrasted with a study done in 2017 Kasegaon India among high school children and their parents (2), where there was a strong disagreement since they believed that covid-19 may be over soon just like bird flu, SARS, MERS-COV and the H1N1 crises. Hence, they believed that they did not need to worry about contracting RTIs or flu like illnesses.

## Conclusion

Majority of the population were generally well-informed and educated on the KAP toward RTIs.

It also showed that some were unaware of the full risks associated with contracting RTI's resulting in poor attitudes and practices. More information about RTIs should be provided to Trinidadian citizens to foster better attitudes and practices toward its prevention, especially in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## References

1. Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of mothers on acute respiratory infection in children under five years [Internet]. Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences. [cited 2021 May 22]. Available from: <http://pjms.com.pk/index.php/pjms/article/view/10788>
2. Mutalik, Anirudha & Raje, Vaishali. (2017). Study to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practice about acute respiratory infections among school going children and their parents in rural Maharashtra. International Journal of Medical Science and Public Health. 1. 10.5455/ijmsph.2017.0721414092017

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