

Assessment of the Trust Placed By the Practices of the Ministry of Health during the Coronavirus Pandemic Process in Turkey

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ABSTRACT	
<p>Corresponding Author Mustafa ALTINTAŞ</p> <p>DOI https://10.48121/jihsam.1057039</p> <p>Received 13.01.2022</p> <p>Accepted 16.04.2022</p> <p>Published Online 27.04.2022</p> <p>Key Words Covid-19 Pandemic Ministry of Health Practices</p>	<p><i>This research aims to evaluate the level of Turkish people's trust in the measures taken by the Ministry of Health to contain Covid 19. In the study, which was planned in a quantitative research design, Total of 931 people from 62 provinces in Turkey participated in the study. The data collection tool consisted of 31 questions. The questionnaire form was elaborated by Altstadt's authors and created using the freely available online Google Docs application. The questionnaire was sent to participants via social media networks from February 1, 2021 and February 20, 2021. Citizens over the age of 18 living in Turkey participated in the research. The research has a young participant population. According to the analysis results obtained from the research, it was concluded that participants' trust in the Ministry of Health was at a moderate level. Suggestions were made for future work.</i></p> <p><i>This article was presented as a summary paper at the 4th International Conference on Health Services Management.</i></p>

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INTRODUCTION

The new type of Coronavirus disease, which deeply affects the whole world, first appeared in the People's Republic of China in 2019. Research has been understood that this virus that causes the disease is from the Coronavirus family such as SARS (2002) and MERS (2012). Because of these properties, this disease has been named 2019-nCoV (www.ecdc.europa.eu, 2021; www.who.int/emergencies, 2021). The new type of coronavirus can pass from person to person. The disease, seen in Taiwan on January 13, soon spread to Asia, Europe, and America outside China. The World Health Organization Emergency Committee announced its emergency declaration globally on 30 January 2020 (www.gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com, 2021). With the new type of virus seen in almost all countries, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a "pandemic" on March 11, 2020 (www.who.int/emergencies, 2021).

The covid-19 disease has caused death in many people since its emergence on December 1, 2019. According the World Health Organization data, it is seen to be that there were nearly 3 million deaths as of March 2021 (www.who.int, 2021). Covid-19's first cases in Turkey saw on March 11, 2020. An increase in the number of cases had been observed in the ongoing processes as in other countries. Turkey followed thirty thousand deaths as of March 2021 (www.covid19.saglik.gov.tr, 2021).

With the emergence of the Covid-19 disease, countries have started to take many measures to prevent increasing cases and get rid of the disease. However, no matter how many precautions are taken, it has been a difficult to avoid the rapid spread of the disease. Countries have taken various measures to prevent Covid-19 disease. To prevent the disease, the World Health Organization first every individual's actions, such as regular hand washing, closing the mouth and nose during sneezing, avoiding people with symptoms of the disease, and avoiding contact (web.archive.org/web, 2021).

Due to the first occurrence of the Covid-19 disease in China, various measures have been taken in China. Transport is restricted in certain cities. Events such as meetings have been canceled. Educational institutions have been closed (www.dw.com, 2021; www.scmp.com, 2021). When the first case was seen in France on January 24, 2020 and in Montenegro on March 17, 2020, patients were seen in all countries in Europe and similar measures were started to be taken (web.archive.org, 2021).

Considering the European, American and Asian countries in the Covid-19 process, it is seen that restrictions and normalization steps are applied in similar ways. Fashion shows, sports competitions, art events were canceled (web.archive.org, 2021),

education was suspended in educational institutions, and restaurants and cafes were closed in France, where the youngest death case was observed (web.archive.org, 2021). In Italy, which was on the world's agenda at the beginning of the Covid-19 process, measures taken in every country were implemented (tr.wikipedia.org, 2021). The same bans continued in Estonia and entries into the country were restricted on March 14, 2020 (news.err.ee, 2021). Restrictions have been imposed compulsorily in Germany like other European countries. Individuals were allowed to leave their living spaces only for specific activities (tr.wikipedia.org, 2021). Considering the United States, the restrictions in the Covid-19 process have been made in a planned manner with local governments, businesses and educational institutions. Most of the rules applied in other countries have also been used in the USA (tr.wikipedia.org, 2021). In these countries, normalization steps have started to be implemented gradually. A striking statement came from France. A one-month curfew has been decided as of 19 March 2021 (www.birgun.net, 2021).

In Asian countries, the situation was not different from Europe and America and other continents. The first measures to combat the pandemic in Azerbaijan have been to impose some restrictions on imports and exports. Since the virus is transmitted from animals in China, attention has been paid to this (www.ticaret.gov.tr, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic emerged in Uzbekistan on March 15, and it was announced that flights were canceled in the country on March 16, and it was stated that non-Uzbek people were prohibited from entering the country. Similar restrictions imposed by other countries have been taken in Uzbekistan (tr.wikipedia.org, 2021). Interestingly, official institutions did not have any statements regarding the Covid-19 outbreak in Turkmenistan (tr.wikipedia.org, 2021).

The first Covid-19 outbreak cases in Turkey on March 11, 2020, have been taken. Obligation to wear masks, interruption of education, curfews on weekends and holidays, curfews at night, closure of many workplaces, especially restaurants, suspension of collective events, postponement of sports competitions or playing without spectators, abroad and Restrictions on intercity travel, flexible working, changing working hours, informing citizens through public service announcements are some of these practices (tr.wikipedia.org, 2021).

In our country, the Ministry of Health has undertaken significant responsibilities in managing the pandemic process since the first Covid-19 case was seen, carried out essential activities, and signed many decisions. Some of the activities carried out in the process can be listed as follows:

- Diagnosis and treatment of Covid-19 cases,

- Follow-up of those who contact the cases
- Quarantine studies,
- Studies to prevent and control the spread of the pandemic,
- Vaccination studies,
- Raising the awareness of the society about the Covid-19 outbreak,
- Following up-to-date risk maps with the “Life Fits in the House” application,
- Opening of pandemic hospitals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the Covid-19 process in the Republic of Turkey aims to measure trust against the Ministry of Health application. The research universe consists of all citizens over the age of 18. The survey technique was used in the research and the surveys were created with the Google Docs program and distributed over social media networks. The survey was conducted between February 1, 2021 and February 20, 2021, and 931 people participated.

The researchers created a questionnaire form as a data collection tool in the research. The questionnaire, form consists of two parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, there are questions to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, there are 31 questions regarding the determination of trust in the practices of the Ministry of Health in the Covid-19 process. The answers given to the questions are graded as 1-Strongly disagree / 5-Strongly agree. While creating the questions, and the

literature information, expert opinions, opinions of Ministry of Health employees, and opinions of citizens affected by the Covid-19 outbreak were taken into account. Since the measurement tool used in the study was developed by the researchers, it is not a scale but an inventory. The purpose of the measurement tool is to measure the trust in the Ministry of Health during the epidemic process. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, such as scale development studies, was not performed. Because the questions in the measurement tool only cover the Covid-19 process.

The data analysis obtained as a result of the study was made with the SPSS 22.00 package program. Descriptive statistics were made on the data obtained from the research, and the results obtained were transferred with the help of tables and graphics. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the "Ministry of Health Practices Confidence Inventory" questions created by the researchers was calculated as 0.95.

RESULTS

In this section, findings related to the research are given. In this section, the socio-demographic information of the participants, the mean and standard deviations of the survey questions are included. In this

descriptive study, the Ministry of Health's assessment in the Covid-19 process was made based on the answers given by the participants to the questionnaire questions.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

	Variable	Number	Percent
Age	Between the ages of 18-24	474	50,9
	Between the ages of 25-31	200	21,5
	Between the ages of 32-38	92	9,9
	Between the ages of 39-45	78	8,4
	46 Years and Above	87	9,3
Gender	Woman	557	59,8
	Male	374	40,2
Marital status	The married	303	32,5
	Single	628	67,5
Education status	Literate	3	0,3
	Primary school	13	1,4
	Middle School	20	2,1
	High school	108	11,6
	Undergraduate	303	32,5
	License	267	28,7
	Postgraduate	217	23,3
Profession	Government Official	205	22
	Workers in the Public	14	1,5
	Private Sector Employee	85	9,1
	Health personnel	45	4,8
	Housewife	42	4,5
	Student	355	38,1
	Unemployed	142	15,3
	Self-Employed Individual	43	4,6
Monthly Income	Between 0-100 ₺	273	29,3
	Between 101-3000 ₺	240	25,8
	Between 3001 - 6000 ₺	240	25,8
	6001 ₺ and Above	178	19,1
Household Person	0-4 Person	575	61,8
	5 People and Above	356	38,2
Chronic Disease	Yes	119	12,8
	No	812	87,2
Medication Used	Yes	148	15,9
	No	783	84,1
Total		931	100

According to the age distributions examined within the scope of the research, 50.9% of the participants are between the ages of 18-24. 21.5% of the participants are between the ages of 25-31. It is observed that the majority of the participants are in the young age range. 27.6% of the participants consist of other age groups as seen in Table 1. According to the marital status distributions examined within the scope of the research, it is seen that 67.5% of the participants are single and 32.5% are married. According to the educational status distributions examined within the scope of the research, it is seen that 32.5% of the participants received associate degree education with the most significant number of participants. Participants who receive

associate degree education are followed by undergraduate education with 28.7%. The number of graduate students is 23.3%. The remaining 15.5% constitute another educational status, as seen in Table 1. According to the distribution of professions examined within the scope of the research, 38.1% of the participants were determined as students, 22% as civil servants, 15.3% as unemployed and 9.1% as private sector employees. The remaining 15.5% constitute other occupational groups as seen in Table 1. According to the monthly income distributions examined within the scope of the research, it has been observed that the participants have almost no income with 29.3%. While 25.8% of the participants have an

income between 101-3000 TL, 25.8% have an income between 3001-6000 TL. 19.1% of them have an income of 6001 TL and above. According to the distribution of the number of people living in the household examined within the scope of the research, 61.8% of the participants have homes in the range of 0-4 people. In comparison, 38.2% have five or more families. According to the distribution of chronic conditions examined within the scope of the research, 87.2% of the participants do not have a chronic disease. 12.8% have a chronic illness. 84.1% of the participants do not use a drug continuously, according to the distribution of drug conditions constantly used within the scope of the research. 15.9% of the participants stated that they use a drug continuously.

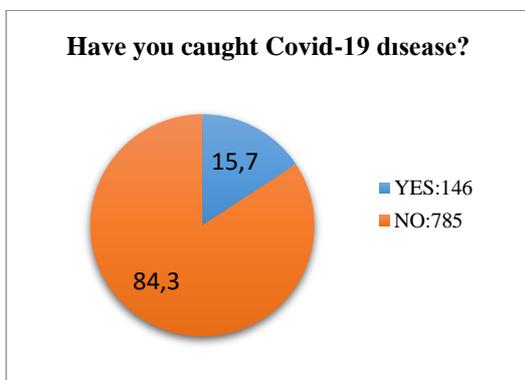


Figure 1. Conduct of the COVID-19 Outbreak

According to the distribution of Covid-19 disease conditions examined within the scope of the study, 84.3% of the participants did not get the disease. 15.7% of the participants had Covid-19 disease.

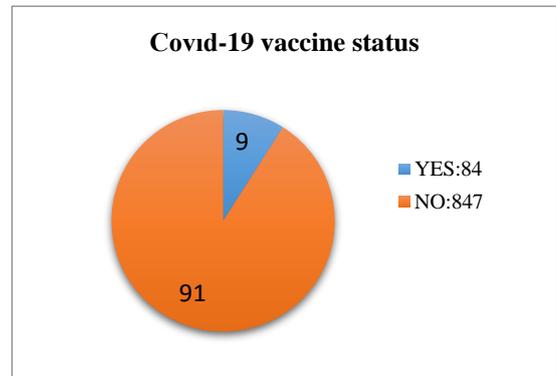


Figure 2. Distribution of Participants Being Vaccinated with COVID-19

According to the distribution of Covid-19 vaccine status examined within the scope of the research, 91% of the participants did not have the Covid-19 vaccine. 9% of the participants stated that there is no Covid-19 vaccine.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on “Ministry of Health Practices Trust Inventory”

Ministry of Health Practices Trust Inventory	Mean	Standard deviation
COVID-19 statistics announced daily by the Ministry of Health reflect the reality.	2,69	1,19
I think the number of people vaccinated is sufficient.	2,70	1,14
The Ministry of Health is responsible for the waves in the Covid-19 outbreak.	2,76	1,19
Strict measures and taken steps to return to normal life during the pandemic were expedient in 2021	2,90	1,17
Strict measures and taken steps to return to normal life during the pandemic were expedient in 2020.	2,96	1,18
The Ministry of Health was transparent enough during the Covid 19	2,96	1,23
I trust the effectiveness of the Sinovac (Chinese vaccine) vaccine used in our country.	3,00	1,04
I find the cooperation with local governments is sufficient in the pandemic management process.		1,08
The Ministry, pressure groups, media, etc. it is not affected by things.	3,07	1,13
I think the vaccine, having been applied is the right one for our country.	3,16	1,00
I think the Ministry of Health has been successful in managing the COVID-19 pandemic.	3,20	1,14
I think the decisions of the Covid-19 Scientific Advisory Board are in line with the realities of our country.	3,22	1,06
The society has been properly guided by the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 pandemic.	3,24	1,15
The measures carried out by the Ministry of Health in relation to the COVID-19 were as they should have been.	3,28	1,12
The Ministry of Health has taken the necessary measures in our country as soon as the COVID-19 outbreak has emerged in the world.	3,29	1,18
The Ministry of Health pays attention to the health and safety of healthcare professionals.	3,29	1,21
The Ministry of Health has acted fairly in regard to vaccination.	3,30	1,15
The government units are used effectively in the Covid-19 process.	3,39	1,00
I think the vaccination groups are determined correctly.	3,41	1,12
The Ministry of Health cooperates with international organizations in the Covid-19 process.	3,41	0,99
I think the treatment protocol applied by the Ministry of Health to COVID-19 patients is correct.	3,42	1,01
I think the decisions of the Covid-19 Scientific Advisory Board are scientific.	3,44	1,06
The capacity of our country's health system has been sufficient so far to cope with the pandemic.	3,46	1,14
Supporting the practices of the Ministry of Health with the government authority in the Covid-19 process has produced positive results.	3,48	0,93
The studies of the Ministry of Health to identify the contacts of Covid-19 patients were effectively managed.	3,49	0,99
Covid-19 scientific board consists of experts in the field.	3,59	1,03
The health system has been used effectively in the Covid-19 process.	3,61	1,01
The Ministry of Health has been effectively using the state media, social media and public service announcements to manage the COVID-19 process.	3,64	0,93
HES Code application provides benefits in combating the pandemic.	3,71	1,07
I think the "(HES)" application created by the Ministry of Health in the Covid-19 process is useful.	3,78	1,06
The Ministry of Health's motto «Masks-Social Distance-Hygiene» has been expedient.	4,15	0,88
General	3,25	0,72

Table 2 contains the means and standard deviations of the answers given by participants to the research questions. According to the answers provided given by the respondents, " COVID-19 statistics announced daily by the Ministry of Health reflect the reality." question ($\bar{x} = 2.69$) and "I think the number of people vaccinated is sufficient." The average of the answers given to the question ($\bar{x} = 2.70$) was the lowest. " The Ministry of

Health's motto «Masks-Social Distance-Hygiene» has been expedient." question ($\bar{x} = 4.15$), "I think the "Hayat Eve Sığar (HES)" application created by the Ministry of Health during the Covid-19 process is beneficial." ($\bar{x} = 3.78$) and "HES Code application provides benefits in combating the pandemic." The average of the answers given to the question ($\bar{x} = 3.71$) was the highest.

DISCUSSION

The study includes the Covid-19 pandemic process which profoundly affects the world. It is also carried out to determine the confidence level of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health practice. As it is known, the Covid-19 outbreak occurred in China on December 1, 2019 and spread rapidly worldwide. Since the Covid-19 epidemic is a health issue, the countries' health ministries are the first to take action. Therefore, the Ministry of Health in Turkey has begun to take the necessary measures together with the emergence of this pandemic. Restrictions have been applied since 11 March 2020 in Turkey. With the decrease in Covid-19 cases, countries have started to take normalization steps.

Another focus of the study is that such research has not been revealed before in the Covid-19 process. This study aims to present various explanations for the future, different from other studies. First, the researchers received opinions from experts, healthcare professionals and citizens. Then they determined the framework of the research. Therefore, a holistic approach aims to assess the citizens' opinion of the practices during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As stated in Table 1 and Table 2, when the responses of 931 people from different regions, professions, and characteristics are examined, the question with the lowest average, "The statistics announced daily by the Ministry of Health reflect reality" is the question. Another question with common standard is, "I think the number of vaccinations is sufficient." This was determined as the question. This situation reveals the public's concern about vaccination, more intensively in the number of vaccinations performed in developed countries. To mind that citizens in Turkey, "Why not be more than the number of vaccinations in Turkey?" brings the question. It may not be suitable to hold the Ministry of Health or the public authority is responsible here. Because no country's government knowingly and willingly allows its citizens to be affected by the pandemic. The state gives both cultural characteristics and some values importance in a country where Muslims constitute most of society. In addition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (www.ohchr.org, 2021). is evidence of how the state should behave towards its citizens.

On the other hand, the question, which is one of the questions with the highest average according to the answers given by the participants in the research, "The application of Cleaning-Mask-Distance by the Ministry of Health was the right decision." it was the question that the participants reached a consensus again. The World Health Organization has stated that attention should be paid to hygiene in this process. Likewise, this practice in Turkey, has been recognized by citizens as a right decision. These questions, which have high

averages, were accepted by the citizens as correct. "I think the" (HES) "application created by the Ministry of Health during the Covid-19 process is useful." and "Life Fits Into Home (HES) Code application provides benefits in combating the pandemic." "HES" application is an application that shows the risk status of individuals and can see the case density with a map. Also, the normalization process in Turkey must deliver the code at the entrance of palaces where people stay inside was introduced.

When the results obtained from the research are examined in general, it can be said that the questions with an average of over 3 reflect the reality of the country. "The Ministry of Health effectively uses the national press, social media and public spots to manage the Covid-19 process." According to this information, it can be concluded that citizens frequently see the Ministry of Health advertisements in areas such as television, internet and social media. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were also found to be correct by the citizens. Citizens, for example, rely on scientific board decisions. The opinions of scientists on this issue are essential for the accurate and rapid management of the process. As a result of the pandemic process of Turkey's health system is effective. But only those who participated in this research think this way. In general, no country's health system has been influential in the pandemic process. No country has corrected its health systems, taking into account the pandemics in the past. The slightest loss of outbreaks depends on the prediction of some situations.

When the origin of the Covid-19 pandemic was examined, the news transmitted from an animal first came to the fore widely. The statements made later were similar. However, the theory that this pandemic was produced in a laboratory environment reflects the truth. Although this is put forward as a theory, the view that the Covid-19 epidemic is a biological weapon is common (www.dw.com, 2021; www.hurriyet.com.tr, 2021). Various sources want to hide this information. In addition, according to the research report of the World Health Organization in China between January 14 and February 10, four different scenarios have been put forward. These scenarios are the transmission of the virus from an animal, its transmission through food, its transmission from a bat, and its accidental production in the laboratory (www.ntv.com.tr, 2021). The World Health Organization has revealed the possibility of the Covid-19 outbreak being produced in the laboratory as a scenario in its latest research. Shortly, designs similar to the Covid-19 episode are created. One of them, the SPARS pandemic, is a pandemic that may appear soon. The article published by Brunson et al. (2020) suggests that a virus named SPARS will emerge between 2025 and 2028. Considering there was scientific foresight before The Covid-19 outbreak, the research claiming that the SPARS virus would appear the healthcare

management systems of countries take precautions in advance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study described the application of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health's Covid-19 process. Different researches can be done by developing these issues. In particular, the psychological effects of the pandemic can be examined. Qualitative and quantitative studies can be done too. In addition, it is recommended that the Ministry of Health take this research as a basis for its applications in future outbreaks.

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