

## Use of Protection Motivation Theory to Assess Preventive Behaviors of COVID-19

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**Abstract :** Background: The global prevalence and morbidity of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) are high. Preventive behaviors are proven to reduce the damage caused by the disease. There is a paucity of information on determinants of preventive behaviors in response to COVID-19 in Mazandaran province, north of Iran. So, we aimed to evaluate the protection motivation theory (PMT) in promoting preventive behaviors of COVID-19 in Mazandaran province. Materials and Methods: In this descriptive cross-sectional study, 1220 individuals participated. They were selected via social networks using convenience sampling in 2020. Data were collected online using a demographic questionnaire and a valid and reliable scale based on PMT. Data analysis was done using the Pearson correlation coefficient and linear regression in SPSS V24. Result: The mean age of the participants was  $39.34 \pm 8.74$  years. The regression model showed perceived threat ( $\beta = 0.033$ ,  $P = 0.007$ ), perceived costs ( $\beta = 0.039$ ,  $P = 0.045$ ), perceived self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.116$ ,  $P > 0.001$ ), and perceived fear ( $\beta = 0.131$ ,  $P > 0.001$ ) as the significant predictors of COVID-19 preventive behaviors. This model accounted for 78% of the variance in these behaviors. Conclusion: According to constructs of the PMT associated with protection against COVID-19, educational programs and health promotion based on the theory and benefiting from social networks could be helpful in increasing the motivation of people towards protective behaviors against COVID-19.

**Keywords :** questionnaire development, validation, intention, prevention, covid-19

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