Assessing the Prevalence of Taste Loss Among Adults Who Have Contracted SARS-CoV-2

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Abstract : COVID-19 is threatening the lives of people all over the world. A number of health problems, including oral health problems, have been linked to SARS-CoV-2 infection. Loss of taste is one of the initial symptoms presented by patients who have COVID-19. Purpose: The aim of the current study is to determine the prevalence of taste loss in young adults aged 18 to 26 who have contracted SARS-CoV-2. Materials and methods: This study is analytical cross-sectional research conducted in Albania from March 2023 to September 2023. Our research included a total of 157 students, of which 100 (63.7%) were female and 57 (36.3%) were male. They were divided into three age groups: 18-20, 21-23, and 24-26 years old. Students willingly agreed to participate in the current study and were assured that their participation would be kept anonymous. The study recorded no dropouts and was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 23.0 on Microsoft Windows Linux, Chicago, IL, USA. The evaluation of data was done using analysis of variance (ANOVA), with a significance level set at $P \leq 0.05$. Results: 113 (72%) of the participants reported loss of taste, while 44 (28%) did not experience any loss of taste. According to the study's data analysis, taste problems typically manifest over three days, with the lowest frequency occurring on the second day and the highest frequency occurring on the fifteenth. 68.7% of participants reported experiencing taste recovery after three weeks. The present study's findings demonstrated a substantial correlation between the duration of the individuals' COVID-19 infection and taste loss ($P < 0.0003$). Based on the statistical analysis of the data, this study shows that there is no association between gender and loss of taste ($P = 0.218$). The participants reported having undergone the following treatments: prednisolone sodium phosphate (15 mg/5 mL daily), vitamin C (1000 mg), azithromycin (500 mg daily), oral vitamin D3 supplementation of 5000 IU daily, vitamin B12 (2.4 mcg daily), zinc 20 mg daily, Augmentin tablets (625 mg), and magnesium sulfate (4 g/100 mL). Conclusion: Within the limitations of this study conducted in Albania, it can be concluded that loss of taste was present in 72% of participants infected with COVID-19 and recovery was evident after three weeks.

Keywords : adult, Albania, COVID-19, cross-sectional study, loss of taste
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