

Training needs assessment of AUB employees during the COVID-19 outbreak

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Like other coronaviruses, COVID-19 has the potential to spread in the workplace causing an alarming outbreak. To ensure business continuity and employment, the COVID-19 crisis has exerted pressure on work organizations to develop and implement new procedures and practices to ensure the health and safety of employees and prevent the spread of the infection. Workplace policies and control measures such as engineering and administrative controls and use of personal protective equipment, should be evidence-based and informed by timely measures of employees' knowledge gaps and needs. A needs assessment is necessary to prioritize workers' needs vis-à-vis their job tasks and the strategies they employ to perform their work duties and to ensure the provision of effective interventions that address the needs of workers performing specific tasks in specific locations in the workplace. This study aims to (1) identify COVID19-related knowledge of AUB employees in various occupations, (2) conduct a training needs assessment to identify priority training needs, (3) propose educational and training programs to respond to the identified knowledge gaps, and (4) recommend appropriate cost-effective and evidence-based interventions combining engineering and administrative controls to prevent transmission of the virus. We will collect data using web-based surveys, either self-administered or interviewer-administered over the phone (to increase the response rate). The survey population includes all AUB employees from all jobs, professions, and grades. The questionnaire will collect information on their working conditions, COVID19-related knowledge, preventive behaviors, and areas of perceived training needs. Participants will be invited to participate via email or via phone. Descriptive analysis and comparisons among different job categories and work locations will be conducted. The findings of this study are expected to provide insight on the current working conditions and safety practices adopted during the recent outbreak. They will also inform recommendations for the subsequent job-specific training programs and interventions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the workers, provide a safe and healthy working environment during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and maintain workers' productivity.