

A QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED SURVEY ON AWARENESS STATUS ON AFLATOXINS AMONG EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS AT THE INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of aflatoxin awareness among employees and students at the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in Tanzania, as a baseline study for understanding the level of aflatoxin awareness within the Tanzanian population. This study employed a quantitative research approach. The study adopted a descriptive design. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used in this study. A total of 68 respondents were included in the study. Before questionnaire administration, it was pre-tested and the internal consistency of components was assessed. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.8142 was obtained indicating acceptable reliability of the questionnaire used in this study. Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. A threshold of significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Wilcoxon-paired sample test was used to compare respondents' familiarity with the terms mold, fungi, and aflatoxins. Results were presented as descriptive statistics in tables, and graphs to facilitate interpretation. Results from the study indicated that most respondents (82.4% of $n=56$) had not heard about aflatoxins, suggesting a potential lack of awareness about this topic. There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and awareness and knowledge of aflatoxin. A relatively small percentage of respondents (23.5% of $n=16$) were aware that aflatoxins are produced by fungi/molds. A substantial number of respondents (32.4% of $n=8$) have observed molds on their food items. It is recommended that sufficient resources be committed to improving aflatoxin awareness levels in Tanzania, through public enlightenments and collaborations among local, regional, national, and international governmental and non-governmental agencies. The study concludes that the respondents had no adequate knowledge of aflatoxin contamination. Awareness campaigns and training through local televisions, radio stations, newspapers, social media, and agricultural extension services should be fast-tracked.

Keywords: Aflatoxins, fungal contamination, employees, students, awareness, Tanzania.