

Student name: SYLWIA BRYLEWICZ

Student ID: 2112267

Module name: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

Module code:

Lecturer name: ELENI

Introduction

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (WHO, 2021). On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a public health emergency of international concern, and since then, within a few weeks, 172 countries from around the world introduced various types of restrictions, including those regarding the functioning of universities (World Health Organization, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very strong and wide-ranging impact on young people's well-being, mental health and security. Our mental health includes all aspects of our physical, psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. It has an impact on our attitudes, feelings, and actions. It also affects our decision-making, interpersonal interactions, and stress responses. Every stage of life—from childhood and youth through adulthood—is crucial for maintaining mental health (Mentalhealth.gov, 2022). University students' mental health has been a concern even before the COVID-19 pandemic. University students are now more susceptible to mental health problems due to the pandemic's stressors and constraints, which could have a negative impact on their academic performance, social relationships, and future professional and personal chances (Chen and Lucock, 2022).

The aim of this study is to analyse the latest research on the effects of putting these restrictions into place in the UK, on the mental health issues of university students during the pandemic (COVID 19) From the point of view of their development in cognitive educational health, emotional, as well as social.

Background

As a result of learning, university students anticipate significant changes in their lives. It can be challenging, interesting, and enjoyable. Students are more likely to have mental health problems than the general population since many people initially struggle with them or seek help for them at university. (Johnson and Crenna-Jennings, 2018)

For university students the spread of online learning and support services, which many students found difficult to use effectively, was one of the specific challenges brought on by the epidemic. This challenge prompted students to be more apprehensive and worried about their academic achievement and long-term employment. (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020) Closing student residence halls, delaying exchange programmes and commencement rituals, losing part-time jobs, and increasing confusion about career options are further repercussions. The lockdown and social isolation tactics may have also led to chronic loneliness by reducing options for connecting and socialising and increasing reliance on social media. (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020) Interpersonal relationships help regulate emotions, which also aid in emotional regulation, stress management, and resilience in trying circumstances. Connections with other individuals help one feel satisfied with life and are beneficial for one's mental and physical health (psycnet.apa.org, n.d.).

Researchers at the University of Surrey surveyed 259 college students for depression, anxiety, general well-being, alcohol consumption and sleep quality. The research was conducted in autumn 2019, i.e., before the epidemic and during the first lockdown - at the turn of May and June 2020. (www.surrey.ac.uk, n.d.) First, during the epidemic, they noticed an increase in the risk of developing symptoms of depression and a decrease in general well-being. The incidence of clinical depression more than doubled, from 14.9 percent to 34.7 percent. Sleep quality overall did not deteriorate among university students, but researchers did find a link between poorer sleep and depression risk. (www.surrey.ac.uk, n.d.)

The rationale of researching the mental health issues of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic is to identify the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of this population. As universities around the UK had shifted to online learning and social distancing measures, it is essential to understand the extent to which these changes have affected students' mental health. The research will help to provide a comprehensive understanding of the specific mental health issues faced by university students during the pandemic. This understanding can inform the development of targeted interventions and support services for this population. Moreover, the research can identify the factors that contribute to the mental health issues experienced by university students during the pandemic. Such factors could include academic stress, financial concerns, and social isolation. By identifying these factors, universities can address them proactively and help mitigate their impact on students' mental health.

Methods

To collect data on the mental health issues of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following search strategy can be employed. Start by identifying the relevant keywords and phrases related to the research topic. These may include terms such as "COVID-19," "pandemic," "mental health," "university students," "college students," "anxiety," "depression," "loneliness," and "isolation." Use academic search engines such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and PsychInfo to search for relevant articles, reports, and studies. The search can be narrowed down by using filters such as publication year, study design, and keywords. Scan the abstracts and summaries of the articles to determine their relevance to the research topic. Identify the key findings, methodologies, and limitations of each study. Check the reference lists of the articles to identify additional sources of information on the topic. Conduct a systematic review of the literature using a structured approach to identify all relevant studies and synthesize their findings. Consider including qualitative data such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews with university students to gain a more in-depth understanding of their experiences during the pandemic.

To analyse the data collected on the mental health issues of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following steps can be taken, transcribe any qualitative data collected from surveys, focus groups, or interviews. Organize and categorize the data based on the research questions or themes. Use statistical software to analyse any quantitative data collected, such as survey data. Summarize and interpret the findings of the data analysis and draw conclusions based on the findings and answer the research questions. Consider the limitations of the study and provide recommendations for future research.

You must obtain informed consent from participants before collecting data. Provide information on the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and privacy measures, and allow participants to withdraw from the study at any time. Ensure that participants' data is kept confidential and that their privacy is protected throughout the study. Store data securely and use anonymization techniques to protect participants' identities. Take measures to prevent harm to participants, such as providing support resources or referrals for those experiencing mental health issues.

References

World Health Organization (2022). Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic. [online] www.who.int. Available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/emergencies/situations/covid-19>.

Chen, T. and Lucock, M. (2022). The mental health of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic: An online survey in the UK. PLOS ONE, [online] 17(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0262562>.

Adedoyin, O.B. and Soykan, E. (2020). Covid-19 pandemic and online learning: the challenges and opportunities. Interactive Learning Environments, pp.1–13. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1813180>.

Johnson, J. and Crenna-Jennings, W. (2018). Prevalence of mental health issues within the student-aged population - Education Policy Institute. [online] Education Policy Institute. Available at: <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/prevalence-of-mental-health-issues-within-the-student-aged-population/>.

www.surrey.ac.uk. (n.d.). Covid-19 pandemic severely impacts mental health of young people | University of Surrey. [online] Available at: <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/news/covid-19-pandemic-severely-impacts-mental-health-young-people>.

psycnet.apa.org. (n.d.). APA PsycNet. [online] Available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-34899-001>.

