

Module: Introduction to Research (BMHP5005)

Assessment 2: Viva Voce

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Introduction

Literature review about: Mental health issues of university students during the pandemic (COVID 19)

- COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (World Health Organization, 2021)
- Mental health: a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being (Mentalhealth.gov, 2022)
- COVID-19 has caused disruptions to daily life and unique stressors for university students.
- Research can identify challenges faced by students and inform interventions to support their well-being.
- Understanding the effects on cognitive, educational, emotional, and social development can have broader implications for society and public health.
- Findings can contribute to better policies and practices to address the mental health needs of university students during and after the pandemic.

Aim:

- ~ Examine the most recent studies on how COVID-19 restrictions have affected the mental health of university students in the UK
- ~ Examine effects on cognitive, educational, emotional, and social development during pandemic of university students in UK

Objectives:

- Identify mental health issues experienced by UK university students during COVID-19.
- Assess the pandemic's impact on UK university students' mental health.
- Examine coping strategies used by UK university students during COVID-19.
- Identify barriers and facilitators to accessing mental health support for UK university students during COVID-19.
- Provide recommendations for supporting UK university students' mental health during and after the pandemic
- Conduct a systematic literature review

Methods

- A systematic literature review was conducted to collect data on the mental health issues of UK university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Database used: PubMed and Google Scholar
- Keywords: University students, Covid 19, mental health
- Inclusion criteria for data collection included studies conducted in the UK, published between January 2020 and present, that focused on mental health outcomes among university students during the pandemic, type of source academic articles
- Exclusion criteria included studies conducted outside the UK, that did not specifically focus on mental health outcomes among university students during the pandemic
- A thematic analysis was conducted to identify and analyse patterns and themes within the collected data.
- Ethical considerations were taken into account to maintain objectivity

Literature Review

Author(s), title, and year of publication	Aim of study	Methods and Sample size and characteristics	Summary of main findings
(Chen and Lucock, 2022)	Examine the mental health status of university students in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Identify factors that may be associated with higher levels of distress among university students. The study highlights the importance of providing ongoing mental health support and monitoring for university students.	online survey to collect data from 1173 students at one university in the North of England. Survey included questions about lifestyle/living situations, mental well-being history. The majority of the participants were female (67%) and undergraduate students (81%).	Emphasizes the importance of longer-term monitoring. COVID-19 pandemic has put university students at greater risk of developing mental health issues. High levels of anxiety and depression.
(Carr et al., 2021)	Investigate changes in mental health and wellbeing outcomes for UK university students since the pandemic began Examine whether more vulnerable groups were disproportionately impacted	online surveys in 2019 and 2020 Measures of depression, anxiety, and subjective wellbeing	increase in anxiety and subjective wellbeing among UK university students in 2021 findings suggest that there is a need for comprehensive strategies – including suitable treatment options for students with mental health difficulties, and continuous monitoring after the pandemic.
(Bennett et al., 2022)	Analyse depression and anxiety among postgraduate research students and staff members at a large UK university during April/May 2020.	online survey was distributed via email to staff and postgraduate research students – 2020 questions on depression and anxiety, which were assessed using the Patient Health Questionnaire.	Approx 20% of the university staff and 30% of postgraduate research students had symptoms of depression or anxiety Female gender, belonging to an ethnic minority group, having caregiving responsibilities, and being in a shielding or isolating situation were associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety

Results

The key themes for this research are:

- Increased rates of anxiety, depression (Chen and Lucock, 2022)
- Loneliness and social isolation (Carr et al., 2021)
- Academic pressure, financial concerns (Bennett et al., 2022)
- Barriers to accessing/ lack of mental health support for UK university students during the pandemic

Discussion

- **Theme 1:** Increased rates of anxiety, depression – University students can face long-term effects on their well-being and academic success
- **Theme 2:** Academic pressure, financial concerns - Addressing academic stress and financial concerns can help reduce the burden on students and promote better mental health
- **Theme 3** - Loneliness and social isolation - The importance: loneliness and social isolation can have negative impacts on mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being
- **Theme 4:** Barriers to accessing/ lack of mental health support –
- **Recommendations:** Universities should provide increased access to mental health resources, address academic stress and financial concerns, and provide opportunities for students to connect with each other and with their communities.

Conclusion

- **Aim:** Investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of university students.
- **Findings:** Pandemic had significant impact on students' mental health, including increased rates of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and social isolation.
- **Contributing factors:** Academic pressure, financial concerns, and social disconnection.
- **Recommendations:** Universities should provide increased access to mental health resources, address academic stress and financial concerns, and provide opportunities for students to connect with each other and with their communities.
- **Significance:** Mental health issues can have long-term effects on well-being and academic success.
- **Limitations:** Study has a limited area of study.

References

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