

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON STUDENTS PREPARING FOR THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM: QUALITATIVE STUDY

Abstract

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It is aimed to examine the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic on the psychological, social and family relationship, exam preparation process of students preparing for the university entrance exams. Universe selection has not been made. Participants were reached using the snowball sampling method. In this phenomenological qualitative study, four main themes were created with the method of description and examined. It has been determined four theme that the Covid-19 epidemic process affects students' psychological, social and family relationships, and their exam preparation processes. This study has shown that the pandemic process negatively affects the mental health of young people and that the family and friends relations of the young people deteriorate. In addition, it has been revealed that the preparation for the university entrance exam, which affects the lives of young people, has turned into a huge chaos due to the pandemic, and have difficulty coping with this process. Young people who experience excessive anxiety and fear experience uncertainties about their future.

Keywords: Covid-19, University Entrance Exam, Student

COVID-19'UN ÜNİVERSİTE GİRİŞ SINAVINA HAZIRLANAN ÖĞRENCİLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ: NİTEL ÇALIŞMA

Öz

Covid-19 salgınının üniversite giriş sınavına hazırlanan öğrencilerin psikolojik, sosyal ve aile ilişkileri ile sınava hazırlık süreci üzerindeki etkilerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Evren seçimi yapılmamıştır. Katılımcılara kartopu örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak ulaşılmıştır. Bu fenomenolojik nitel çalışmada, tanımlama yöntemi ile dört ana tema oluşturulmuş ve incelenmiştir. Covid-19 salgın sürecinin öğrencilerin psikolojik, sosyal ve aile ilişkilerini ve sınava hazırlık süreçlerini etkilediği dört tema belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışma, pandemi sürecinin gençlerin ruh sağlığını olumsuz etkilediğini ve gençlerin aile ve arkadaş ilişkilerinin bozulduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca gençlerin hayatını etkileyen üniversite giriş sınavına yapılan hazırlıkların salgın nedeniyle büyük bir kaosa dönüştüğü ve bu süreçle baş etmekte güçlük çektiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Aşırı kaygı ve korku yaşayan gençler, gelecekleri hakkında belirsizlikler yaşamaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, Üniversite Giriş Sınavı, Öğrenci

1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus (Covid-19) infection that emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019 has affected the whole world and affected adversely all humanity (1). Coronavirus (Covid-19) belongs to the same group of viruses that cause Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The virus causes severe acute respiratory tract infections and progresses as asymptomatic, mild or severe symptomatic (2,3). In March, the coronavirus (Covid-19) was declared as a pandemic epidemic by WHO. According to the latest data of WHO, coronavirus (Covid-19) has been seen in 213 countries (4). It was first begun to see in our country in March 2020 and as of September 20, 2020, the total number of tests is 9,269,015, the total number of cases is 302,867 and the total number of deaths is 7506 (5). In the first phase of the outbreak, experts explained ways to protect physical health. Later, as the disease spread, the importance of maintaining mental health began to be emphasized (6).

Young people preparing for the university entrance exam are an important group who are psychologically affected by this pandemic process. Covid-19 studies conducted before the epidemic process in Turkey preparing for university entrance exams, In Turkey, many college students who are preparing for university entrance exam experienced has demonstrated such as anxiety, decreased self-esteem, inability to cope individually. In addition, it is known that the exam creates great pressure on students and families, exam anxiety is central to their lives (7,8,9).

The Covid-19 pandemic emerged as a major problem during the exam preparation period, when young people had difficulties even in normal times. In this pandemic process, it is foreseen that it is necessary for adolescent health to determine the negativities to be experienced when a fatal disease threat (Covid-19) occurs in front of students. Nurses who know the possible risks in advance and are well-equipped about the developmental period of adolescents are the best occupational group that can support adolescents during the epidemic process. In addition, in the light of the results of the study, this patient group can be analyzed better and nurses can present more equipped services in the treatment and care process and in taking measures to protect adolescent health. Therefore, in the study to increase the quality of service to be provided and to protect adolescent health, it was aimed to examine the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic on the psychological, social and family relationships, exam preparation process of young people preparing for the university exam.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Type of Research: It is a qualitative study.

Research Questions

- 1- How did the Covid-19 outbreak affect the psychological status of young people preparing for university entrance exams?
- 2- How did the Covid-19 outbreak affect the social relations of young people preparing for university entrance exams?
- 3- How did the Covid-19 outbreak affect the family relationships of young people preparing for university entrance exams?
- 4- How did the Covid-19 outbreak affect the exam preparation process for young people preparing for the university entrance exam?

Research Universe and Sample: The universe of the research consisted of all young people preparing for the university exam. Sample; Young people who were volunteers to participate in the study and who were in a study center in Gaziantep province and who could be reached via social media were formed. Participation in the study was based on volunteerism.

Collection of Research Data

The data of the study were collected by distance phone calls and a questionnaire created in Google forms due to the epidemic. The forms sent to the participants were completely filled in with the participant's approval.

Question form

It consists of questions about the demographic data and the impact of the Covid-19 process on the exam preparation process of young people (psychological conditions, social and family relationships, exam preparation process) created by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the data. First of all, a framework was created for data analysis and the themes under which the data would be organized were determined with this framework. Then, the data obtained according to the frame created were read and classified and defined.

Ethical Aspect of the Research

In order to conduct the research, permission was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Kilis 7 Aralık University on 17.07.2020 (2020/20 permission number). The digitally prepared form contains information about the purpose and content of the research and that participation in the study is voluntary. The identity information of the participants was not recorded in the form. This study has been planned and conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration Principles.

3. RESULTS

Theme 1: Psychological State

Question: Could you tell us about the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on your psychology?

"I constantly cry, sleep, do not want to wake up, I am not studying." (Participant 1)

"I constantly cry, I was depressed, I have concerns about the future, I am afraid." (Participant 6)

"The effect of the coronavirus on my psychology is negative of course. Also, it affects everything negatively. The exam dates are constantly changing, it is unknown whether we can take the exam, we cannot go to the classroom, we are behind the lessons, nothing can be understood with distance education, everything is very bad, I hope good days will come". (Participant 9)

"I am trying to study, but I am not focusing longer my lessons, I am disconnected, I always have fears about the disease in my mind. I think I'm depressed, constantly sleepy state, not communicating with anyone. " (Participant 12)

"My daily routines are disrupted, I have no sleep patterns, my diet is disrupted, even my intestinal system is broken, I am so stressed." (Participant 15)

"This outbreak affected me very much, I am depressed, the uncertainties about the exam affect and worry me a lot. (Participant 16)

"I'm really bored and overwhelmed with being at home all the time. Each passing day is the same and disturb my psychology. I became aggressive and didn't begin to enjoy living. My concerns about how to prepare for the exam increased because I was going to the classroom before the outbreak happened. I'm afraid of not being able to prepare for the exam on my own. " (Participant 25)

"The insusceptible of the people makes me nervous and afraid. But people are very comfortable. " (Participant 28)

"I am depressed, I am really bored. Normally I am an emotional person, but after the outbreak, this situation has increased even more. " (Participant 29)

"I was very worried that I could not continue the study discipline applied in the classroom, but I tried to maintain it as much as I could. From time to time I was overwhelmed and my motivation dropped, but I overcame it. "(30. Participant)

Theme 2: Social Relations

Question: How did the Covid-19 pandemic process affect your social relationships?

"I cannot go anywhere, I am always at home, I miss our chats and meetings with my friends." (Participant 3)

"We cannot sit comfortably and chat with anyone, we cannot drink coffee, we cannot communicate." (Participant 7)

"I am very nervous rather than boredom, we are in a fearful environment, we meet with friends via social media to comfort myself, but it is not the same, no matter what we do, we are unhappy. (Participant 8)

"I don't have a social environment, unfortunately, we can't go out in this process." (Participant 14)

"This epidemic destroyed our social environment, not being able to meet with my friends caused me to break up." (Participant 15)

"I miss my friends so much, we can only talk to them on social media in this process, it is not enough, everything is getting worse." (Participant 16)

"Our friendships are broken. Nobody wants to meet with each other, they are afraid that Covid-19 is transmitted. They are right somewhere, if we become Covid-19, our life will be over, what we have worked all year will be wasted. " (Participant 17)

"I cannot meet my friends. I can not travel, comfortably. I'm so bored and overwhelmed, we can't even go out of fear. " (Participant 22)

"Before the outbreak, I used to do many social activities (cafe, cinema, shopping mall etc.). I can't do these now. It is boring to stay at home all the time. "(Participant 27)

"My social activity was fine before the outbreak. Since I did not meet with anyone due to the epidemic, the call with my friends has gotten a distance. " (Participant 28)

Theme 3: Domestic Relations

Question: How did the Covid-19 process affect your family relationships?

"Nobody in the family is talking to anyone at the moment, we argued, it is not nice to be in a house all the time." (Participant 1).

"We cannot come together at all, everyone has separate jobs, my father's truck driver is always out, my mother works at the hospital, so we cannot come together much." (Participant 2).

"We are all bored of being at home. However, what we always wanted was to be together. Covid-19 has given us the opportunity to do this, Covid-19 was good in this aspect" (Participant 3).

"Our family relationships got stronger during this process, we had the opportunity to spend more time." (Participant 4).

"We are in the village, the whole family is together, we are having a great time." (Participant 5).

"It is good to meet with my family, to be together with them, it is not good to be together all the time, we don't have any private lives." (Participant 17).

"In some ways it was good, we were together, but in some ways it was bad, we cannot listen to ourselves." (Participant 18).

"I cannot say that it is very beneficial for my family relationships. When we are together constantly, conflicts and arguments increased." (Participant 21).

"It affected my family relationships before we did not see each other much because we did not see each other, we were taking some things from the bottom, but after the epidemic, the undercuts and ignores decreased, which led to fights and discussions." (Participant 24).

"It helped me communicate more with my family and provide to us know each other." (Participant 29).

Theme 4: Exam Preparation Process

Question: How did the Covid-19 outbreak affect your preparation process?

"We were very impressed, we don't even know how to work anymore." (Participant 5).

"It affected very negatively, I am under such stress now that I am not focusing and studying." (Participant 10)

"We are honestly motivated and unable to work, there is a constant fear, the uncertainties about the exam annoys me, they delay it and pull it back." (Participant 13)

"The process of preparing for the exam had positive aspects and negative aspects, as if working at home was more efficient, I got enough sleep, I had a balanced diet, I worked whenever I wanted, but there was no one to immediately ask questions I could not solve the questions, and when we were in the classroom, we could reach our teachers one-on-one. In addition, it is difficult to constantly fear the Covid-19 process and try to deal with this fear. " (Participant 14)

"We were very impressed, the money we gave to the classroom was wasted, we could not learn anything properly, the education they gave from a distance was useless, we could not return to the classroom, we could not get our money back, if we do not achieve the exam, we will go to the classroom again. I have no strength to go through this preparation process" (Participant 19)

"I cannot work at home, my siblings constantly divide me, my mother constantly does work, guests come too, there is a Covid-19 epidemic or it was not in our village, everything continues in its normal course." (Participant 20)

"I always want to deal with other things because I am at home. I was seeing that my scores increased in the classroom, but I did not see that my scores increased at home. There was discipline in the classroom and I do not want to work because I am comfortable at home. " (Participant 23)

"It had a lot of impact. Frankly, I didn't work before the epidemic, because my friends were constantly calling out. But since we are always at home due to the epidemic, I also study when I cannot find anything to do at home and we had curfew so I can say that it has a positive effect on me. " (Participant 28)

"I started working less than in the classroom. There was discipline there, I was working better, but since I was more comfortable at home since my studying decreased. "(Participant 29)

"It did not have any negative effect as I continued my discipline in the classroom." (Participant 30).

4. DISCUSSION

1. Psychological condition

It is stated that the coronavirus (Covid-19), which not only affects the elderly population but also affects all age groups, is more effective in spreading the epidemic, as young people and children experience milder and even pass as carriers without symptoms³. For this reason, in many countries, in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic, education is given distance and students are invited to stay at their homes. While providing distance education in our country, the population under the age of 20 is restricted from going out to the streets (10,11,12).

This situation caused many problems for the students. One of the main problem is that the psychological situation is affected negatively. In the study of Yavaş Çelik (2020), it was stated that university students were psychologically affected by this situation (59.4%) (13). In their qualitative study, In a qualitative study, Kürtüncü and Kurt (2020) determined that students' psychological conditions were affected negatively and that students fear being Covid-19 (14). In the study conducted by Cao et al. (2020), it was determined that students were stressed, psychologically impaired and unable to study due to fear of Covid-19 disease (15). One of the most important problems in the Covid-19 epidemic process is the concerns people experience. Uncertainties about the future, disease transmission, fear of contagion prevented students from focusing on their lessons (16,17). In this study, it was revealed that the psychological conditions of the students were worse. Participant 1: "I constantly cry, sleep, do not want to wake up, am not studying". Participant 2: "I am constantly crying, depressed, worried about the future, I'm afraid"

Theme 2: Social Relations

Another fundamental problem is the changes in the social relationships of young people. Studies also show this situation. In the study of Yavaş Çelik (2020), it was revealed that the social competencies and life satisfaction of young people, which are among the elements of social life, are negatively affected (13). In addition, in the study of Kurtüncü and Kurt (2020), it was stated by students that the social lives of young people were negatively affected during the Covid-19 process (14). In this study, students also expressed the changes in their social lives. Participant 7: "Our friendships have deteriorated. Nobody wants to meet with each other, they are afraid of Covid-19 transmission. They are right somewhere, if we become Covid-19, our life will be over, what we have worked all year will be wasted. " Participant 10: "My social activity was very good before the epidemic. Since I have not seen anyone from the epidemic, the call with my friends has gotten a distance. "

Theme 3: Domestic Relations

Staying at home for young people during the Covid-19 epidemic has caused changes in family processes. While some participants expressed positively (Participant 4: "Our family relationships got stronger during this process, we had the opportunity to spend more time."), Some participants were negative (9th Participant: "It affected my family relationships, because we did not see each other too much before. We did not see it, we were taking it from the bottom, but after the epidemic, when the house was closed, the undermining and ignoring decreased, which led to quarrels and discussions. In a study conducted in Italy, it was determined that the relations of families with their children changed, families experienced difficulties in their children's education and relations with their children (12). In another study, it was reported that being at home all the time caused conflicts between families and children (18).

Theme 4: Exam Preparation Process

Finally, when we evaluate the preparation processes of young people for the exam during the Covid-19 epidemic, While most of the students defended the view that they were negatively affected, there were also participants who stated that they had a positive effect. Participant 5: "We were very impressed, the money we gave to the classroom was wasted, we could not learn anything properly, the education they gave from a distance was useless, we could not return to the classroom, we could not get our money back, if we could not achieve the exam, we will go to the classroom again I don't have the strength to go through this preparation process again. " Participant 8: "It had a

lot of impact. Frankly, I wasn't working before the epidemic, because my friends were constantly calling out. But since we are always at home due to the epidemic, I also study when I cannot find anything to do at home, so I can say that it has a positive effect on me. " In their study, Kürüncü and Kurt (2020) determined that students found distance education insufficient and stated that working at home was difficult (14). In another study, it was determined that young people preparing for university during the Covid-19 epidemic experienced burnout and anxiety and were unable to study (13). Wang et al. (2020) reported that the interruption of the education process of young people creates negative situations for young people and they experience excessive anxiety about this issue (18).

5. CONCLUSION

As a result, young people fear Covid-19, and worry about themselves and their families. They complain about the inability to go to the private teaching center and the inadequacy of distance education due to the limitations brought about by the epidemic. They stated that their psychological conditions were deteriorated and that they suffered from negative effects on social and family relationships. As nurses, we should address these problems of young people and plan our care and treatments, taking into account the difficulties they experience, and arrange environments that allow them to express themselves. In addition, academic nurses should reveal these problems of young people and ensure that young people receive adequate support by not seeking solutions to their problems.

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Table 1. Teenagers' demographic and Covid-19 information

Age	n=30	%=100
15-16 age	8	26.7
17-18 yage	22	73.3
Family		
Nuclear family	18	60.0
Extended family	12	40.0
The effect of study centers or school closures on young people		
Negative	21	70.0
Positive	3	10.0
No differences	6	20.0
Compliance with mask use		
I use it regularly	17	56.7
Sometimes I don't mind	13	43.3
Compliance with social distance		
I sleep regularly	13	43.3
I don't fit	17	56.7
Covid-19 positive status in family and relatives		
Yes	7	23.3
No	23	76.6
Chronic Illness status		
No	25	83.3
Yes	5	16.7