Review of: "COVID-19: Health risk factors among students' population in Albania"

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The paper lacks some points.

The introduction provides an overview of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health, specifically among university students. It highlights the stressors experienced by individuals, such as fear, worry, and lifestyle changes due to quarantine measures. The references cited support the claim that the pandemic has led to an increase in mental health issues among students. However, there are a few areas that could be improved in this introduction:

1. Lack of contextualization: The introduction would benefit from providing a broader context for the significance of mental health among university students even before the pandemic. It would be helpful to mention the pre-existing challenges and the importance of addressing mental health concerns in academic settings.

2. Citation quality: The references provided are not clearly cited with complete publication details, making it difficult to verify the claims or access the sources directly. It is important to ensure that the references are accurately cited, including authors, titles, journal names, and publication years.

3. Overreliance on individual studies: The introduction mainly relies on individual studies to support its claims. While these studies provide insights into the mental health challenges faced by students during the pandemic, it would be beneficial to include a more comprehensive analysis, such as systematic reviews or meta-analyses, to provide a broader perspective.

4. Lack of objective presentation: The introduction appears to have a bias towards highlighting the negative impact of the pandemic on students' mental health. While it is important to address the challenges, it would be valuable to acknowledge any potential positive coping mechanisms or resilience factors that students might have developed during this period.

5. Research gap and aim of the study: The introduction does not explicitly state the research gap or the specific aim of the study being introduced. Clearly defining the research objectives and how the study intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge would provide a clearer focus for the reader.

By addressing these points, the introduction can provide a stronger foundation for the study and better engage the reader.

The Materials and Methods section provides details on the study design, sample selection, measures used, and data analysis. While it covers the necessary information, there are a few aspects that could be improved:

1. Sample selection: The study mentions a convenience sampling strategy, which may introduce bias and limit the

generalizability of the findings. It would be beneficial to acknowledge this limitation and discuss potential implications for the study's external validity.

2. Ethical approval: The study states that it received ethical approval from the Ethical Committee of the Department of Pedagogy-Psychology of LOGOS University College in Tirana. However, it would be helpful to provide additional information about the ethical considerations and procedures followed to ensure participant privacy, informed consent, and data protection.

3. Measures: The section briefly describes the measures used for assessing depression, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety. While it mentions the names of the questionnaires (PHQ-9 and GAD-7) and their general purpose, it would be valuable to provide more details about their psychometric properties, reliability, and validity in the context of Albanian population. This would enhance the readers' confidence in the measurement tools employed.

4. Data analysis: The section mentions the use of descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and binary crosstabulation. It would be beneficial to provide more information on the specific statistical tests or methods employed to analyze the data. Additionally, it would be valuable to mention any software or statistical packages used for the analysis.

5. Limitations: It is important to discuss the limitations of the study. For example, the use of self-report measures may be subject to response biases, and the reliance on a convenience sample limits generalizability. Acknowledging these limitations would provide a more balanced view of the study's findings.

Including these suggestions would strengthen the Materials and Methods section by providing a clearer understanding of the study design, measures, and data analysis procedures, while also addressing potential limitations.

The Results and Discussion section presents the findings of the study, highlighting the prevalence of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and generalized anxiety among the participants. However, there are some areas where improvement is needed:

1. Lack of statistical analysis: The section provides descriptive statistics and percentages but does not mention any statistical tests or analyses conducted to determine the significance of the findings. It would be valuable to include statistical tests such as chi-square tests or t-tests to support the observed differences and determine if they are statistically significant.

2. Incomplete reporting of participant numbers: The section often refers to the total number of participants in different analyses, but the numbers provided do not consistently match. For example, it is stated that 227 participants took part in the study, but subsequent analyses mention different participant numbers (e.g., 224, 225, 206). Clarifying and ensuring consistency in reporting the participant numbers would improve the clarity of the results.

3. Gender imbalance: The study acknowledges a significant gender imbalance in the sample, with a vast majority of female participants and only a few male participants. This imbalance could introduce bias and affect the generalizability of the findings. It is important to address this limitation and discuss the potential impact on the study's results and

interpretations.

4. Lack of context and comparison: The section presents the prevalence rates of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and generalized anxiety without providing context or comparing them to existing literature or relevant studies. It would be beneficial to discuss how the observed rates compare to previous research conducted in similar populations or in other countries. This would help readers understand the significance and implications of the findings.

5. Interpretation of results: The section lacks a comprehensive interpretation of the results. It mainly provides percentages and numbers without discussing the implications, potential explanations, or underlying factors contributing to the observed patterns. Including a more in-depth analysis and interpretation of the results would enhance the overall discussion.

6. Limited discussion of limitations: The section briefly mentions some limitations related to the gender imbalance and the use of self-report measures. However, it would be valuable to expand on these limitations and discuss other potential factors that may have influenced the results, such as the sampling strategy and the use of convenience sampling. Acknowledging and discussing these limitations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the study's scope and potential biases.

Overall, the Results and Discussion section would benefit from incorporating statistical analyses, providing clearer and consistent participant numbers, offering contextual comparisons, providing a more comprehensive interpretation of the results, and discussing the limitations in more detail. These improvements would strengthen the validity and interpretation of the findings.