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Oct 30th, 12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

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#### Recommended Citation

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**Psychological Concerns and the Level of Seeking Professional Help for Mental Health Care  
During the COVID-19 Pandemic among Students in Kosovo**

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**Abstract**

During the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately whole lives were lost, but it has also affected everyone's mental health. Through this study, readers will be enriched with abundant information about mental health, especially about mental health of students during the pandemic. The purpose of this paper is to understand and put to highlight the knowledge of university students in Kosovo about psychological concerns, types of the concerns they experience, as well as the level of seeking professional help for mental health care among students during this pandemic. There were 228 participating students in this quantitative research. The data were collected through a questionnaire, which consisted of eighteen closed questions. From this research it is concluded that psychological concerns have been expressed in students during this time, the levels of psychological distress have been increased during the pandemic period, some of the discussed concerns have emerged for the first time during the pandemic, students found help in their families, and some of the participants had the opportunity to keep in touch with the psychologist/psychiatrist, and the contact has helped. The results show that the most pronounced psychological concerns among students were: mood disorders, stress, depressive mood and anxiety. To address different types of psychological distress, usually psychological counseling is recommended. Also, to have the best possible mental health, physical activity is recommended too.

*Keywords:* psychological distress, COVID-19 pandemic, students, psychological counseling

### **Introduction**

The main purpose of this study is to observe psychological concerns and the level of seeking professional help during this period among students in Kosovo. During the research and collection of the material, various articles were reviewed where it is really noticed that the pandemic has had a great impact on the mental health of everyone. In this thesis there is various information which for some may be new but may also be known by readers. During this paper, psychological concerns in general were initially discussed, including: anxiety, mood disorders, depression and stress, including their symptoms and treatments. Then, it is discussed which psychological concerns are most common in students and their reasons, because the focus of this research is them. After that, the essence of the literature review is reached, which is the level of psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic among students, where there are various data from different countries of the world, but also from Kosovo. In the end, it's talked about psychotherapy during this period. The importance of this research is to provide new information regarding psychological concerns and the level of seeking professional help for mental health care during the COVID-19 pandemic among students in Kosovo. In the rest, after the literature review the problem is discussed, and the found results related to students data (gender, age, place of residence and institution where they study), general knowledge of students related to psychological concerns, their level during the pandemic period compared to the time before it, their types, their first appearance during the pandemic, their opinion about the role of the mental health professional during this time, their opinion about visits to the mental health professional, how lonely they felt during the pandemic, their need to talk to someone, help received, seeking professional help, knowledge of where to seek that help, opportunities to stay in touch with the mental health professional and whether it has had an effect.

## **Psychological Concerns and the Level of Seeking Professional Help for Mental Health Care During thVID-19 Pandemic among Students in Kosovo**

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### **Literature review**

To some, the concept of psychological distress is unclear. A closer look at the scientific literature, shows that the term "psychological distress" is often applied to undifferentiated combinations of symptoms ranging from depression and generalized anxiety symptoms to personality traits, functional disabilities, and behavioral problems (*Drapeau et al. 2012*). Psychological distress is an emotional state of suffering associated with stress and demands that are difficult to cope with in daily life. Since psychological distress can be a warning of mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion, there is a need to initiate preventive or early intervention to avoid mental, physical, and emotional chaos in individuals. People with psychological disorders should be involved in a person-centered salutogenic dialogue, in collaboration with the health professional, to become aware and strengthen their capacities, to regain health and well-being (*Arvidsdotter et al 2015*).

### **2.1 The most common psychological concerns**

#### **2.1.1 Anxiety**

Anxiety is the feeling of fear that occurs from dealing with threatening or stressful situations. It is a normal response when individuals face risk. but, if it is prevalent or the feeling persists, it can be considered an anxiety disorder (*Dean, 2016*). The five most common Anxiety Disorders include: Panic Disorders, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (*Roy-Byrne, 2015*). Depending on the type of anxiety disorder, there are the following symptoms: palpitations, sweating, tremors, dry mouth, dyspnea, feeling of suffocation, unreality, chest pain, abdominal discomfort, dizziness, nausea, muscle tension, insomnia, constant anxiety, fear of being locked up, and much more (*WHO, 1991*). All people with anxiety disorders require supportive conversations and attention to the emotional problems associated with anxiety disorder. The treatment plan

should include psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy and other interventions, which should be selected after careful consideration of factors such as: individual preference, history with previous treatment attempts, local availability of treatment methods, waiting time for psychotherapy appointments, costs and other factors (*Bandelow et al. 2017*).

### **2.1.2 Mood disorders**

Mood disorders or affective disorders are characterized by noticeable disruptions in emotions, severe ups and downs, downs called depression, and downs called hypomania or mania. (*Sekhon & Gupta, 2020*). According to (DSM-5), mood disorders are broadly categorized as bipolar disorder and depressive disorder (*Spijker & Claes, 2014*). Major depressive disorder is diagnosed by the presence of 5 out of 9 mood symptoms, which are: feeling sad, insomnia, guilt, decreased energy levels, decreased concentration, decreased appetite, decreased activity. pleasant, increase or decrease in psychomotor activity and repetition of suicidal ideation / self-harm acts / suicide attempt for a period of two weeks. Pharmacotherapy is recommended for some disorders. In addition to pharmacotherapy, people with depression and other mood disorders may benefit from several types of non-pharmacological therapies, which are: mind-based cognitive therapy (MBCT); interpersonal psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and dialectical behavioral therapy (*Sekhon & Gupta, 2020*).

### **2.1.3 Depression**

Depression is a widespread, mental disorder that can affect mental, emotional, and physical health. Characterized by low mood, lack of energy, sadness, insomnia and inability to enjoy life (*Cui, 2015*). In depression, symptoms range from loss of motivation and energy, to suicidal thoughts (*Mendoza, 2019*). Cognitive-behavioral therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy, and behavioral activation therapy have been found to be effective in treating mild to moderate depression with results comparable to antidepressant medications (*Hougaard & Jørgensen, 2007*).

#### **2.1.4 Stress**

Some authors define stress as the body's response to a change that requires adjustment or a physical, mental, or emotional response (*Morrow, 2019*). According to *McEwen (2007)*, in medicine and biology, stress is any physical, psychological and / or emotional factor that results in physical and / or psychological stress. Symptoms and signs of stress are divided into: cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral. Some of those symptoms include: memory problems, inability to concentrate, poor judgment, anxiety and agitation, low mood, nausea, rapid heartbeat, distancing oneself from others, excessive or scanty sleep and many others (*Segal et al. 2020*). When it comes to managing stress, psychotherapy is a popular method for most stress-related emotional issues. There are also alternative ways to manage stress, they include: physical activity, meditation, and more (*Cohen, 2019*).

#### **2.2 Student-related psychological concerns**

Although mental health problems affect the general population, students are very vulnerable to psychological distress. Mental distress among students is an important issue, as it can impair their behavior and reduce learning, which can negatively affect their academic performance (*Tessema et al. 2019*). University students are found to have a high susceptibility to psychological disorders, due to the fact that university students have to deal with multiple stressors such as: academic demands, workload and pressure to succeed, pressure from professors and parents, financial burdens and worries about the future. Worldwide studies have shown that the most common mental health concerns found in college students are depression, anxiety and stress (*Kumar et al. 2016*). Risk factors identified to increase the likelihood of mental distress among university students include: financial difficulties, not having a satisfying family relationship, poor prospect of finding a job, emotional breakdown, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, lack of interest in the discipline pursued, frequent conflicts with society, etc. (*Hersi et al. 2017; Dessie et al. 2013*).

### **2.3 The level of psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic among students**

The literature on COVID-19 shows that many people have experienced psychological suffering, and psychological support has proven to be important in encouraging adaptation and resilience in the wider community (*Savarese et al. 2020*). In a large-scale study of college students in China, acute stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms are prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous epidemic and psychosocial factors, such as family members becoming infected, mass media exposure, low social support, the last year of studies, and previous mental health problems were associated with an increased risk of mental health problems (*Ma et al. 2020*). It is suggested that students' mental health should be monitored during epidemics (*Cao et al. 2020*). The biggest contributor to increased stress was the stress associated with academic work, from the added difficulty due to the rapid transition and holding of online classes, followed by growing concerns about grades, and late graduation (*Wang et al. 2020*).

In a study in Kosovo, in terms of psychological stress findings, 50.6% of students did not have any psychological distress, 24.7% reported mild psychological distress, 13.3% reported moderate psychological distress and 11.4% reported severe psychological distress. According to the authors, the results of this study should be taken with caution, as the study was done in the first week of the pandemic (*Arënliu & Bërxulli, 2020*). In another study in Kosovo, the findings show that from the period of initiation of preventive measures against COVID-19 (March 16, 2020) to the period of implementation of that study (April 19-25, 2020), students have undergone changes in mental health. Most participants reported moderate levels of stress (65.4%), while more than a quarter of other participants reported high levels of stress (26.9%). Most students reported having a mild psychological anxiety (74.4%), while 23.1% reported having a moderate anxiety, and 2.6% reported having a high psychological anxiety. This study also confirms that changes due to circumstances caused by preventive measures against COVID-19, change in student residences, return to their families, limited space of current residences, large number of family members, terminations by members of the family, in interaction with the workload of students, have affected the level of stress of students, including the level of ability to stay attentive and focused on lessons (*Hyseni-Duraku & Hoxha, 2020*).



## **2.5 Psychotherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Psychotherapy is an essential part of the COVID-19 crisis response (Swartz, 2020). This current pandemic, forced many psychotherapists to abruptly discontinue their face-to-face sessions and switch to online psychotherapy (Békés & Aafjes-van Doorn, 2020). The University of Oregon is committed to ensuring that students take care of this time of uncertainty. University counseling services have successfully transferred most of their services to an online / teletherapy format and they show you how to schedule an appointment (University of Oregon-Counseling Services, 2020). At another university, university counseling services are dedicated to supporting the mental health, well-being, and academic success of students during this challenging time (California State University Northridge-University Counseling Services, n.d).

Regarding the state of Kosovo, a website has been launched, where at the moment the site is conceived in four sessions (although other sessions are likely to take place). Sessions are actually informative videos, or videos that suggest, what you should and can do about these psychological states. The site also offers counseling services through chat or conversation with volunteers who provide psychological first aid. They emphasize that sessions and counseling through chat are not a substitute for the usual psychological or psychiatric treatment. They are psychoeducational and informational sessions and the chat service serves to provide psychological first aid, they also indicate that if individuals have expressed concerns, seek help from mental health services in the nearest municipality or city and have listed public institutions, where they can seek that help (Shëndeti mendor, n.d).

In Kosovo at UBT College, there is a Student Counseling Center. This center has provided online psychological counseling for all UBT students, has organized online workshops to support students in adapting online learning skills, and to manage stress, has organized the Summer Academy “Human Resilience in the Face of Difficulties: Overcoming effects of COVID-19” (UBT- Counseling Center, 2020).

### **Statement of the problem**

Throughout the work on this topic, it has been seen that psychological concerns are expressed in every individual. Also, psychological concerns are discussed and highly researched, ranging from childhood to adulthood. There have also been numerous studies on psychological disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic, what role this pandemic has played in the mental health of the population, and many others. During the research of this very rich and extensive topic, different studies by different authors have been reviewed. Throughout the research it has been observed that the much-mentioned pandemic, has had a major impact on the entire population of the world. Psychological disturbances during this time, for some have been inevitable. For those concerns presented, many factors have influenced, including the fear of infecting our loved ones, the fear of employment and many others. Through this paper, it will be seen how this pandemic has affected the mental health of Kosovo students. How many of them have experienced anxiety, stress, mood disorders and depressive mood, how many of them have asked for help, and many other information where they will appear in more detail after the next chapter.

The main interest of this research were the students of Kosovo universities. The hypotheses raised were that:

1. Students will present a high level of psychological distress,
2. Students will show a high need for professional psychological support, but will be reluctant to seek this type of support.

### **Methodology**

This dissertation is quantitative research. The following study methodology was used to carry out this paper:

- Literature review (secondary research) - which is used to study the theoretical concepts of psychological distress in general, and other information contained in this paper. Numerous study articles, books from various publications by world famous publishers have been used for this.
- The instrument used was a questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire is not standardized. It is designed that way, just to get the needed data for this research. The questionnaire consists of 18 closed questions, is developed through Google Forms, and is distributed online through social networks to students from different municipalities of Kosovo. Respondents were told that the information provided by them was confidential and would not be misused.
- The Snowball Method – is used collecting the data from the questionnaire, where through social networks, participants were kindly asked to, after completing the questionnaire, distribute the same to other students they know. Social networks have been a great help for the realization of this paper, because it was the best way to have access to the surveyed students.
- The research was conducted during November, 2020. The sample includes 228 participants, of which 166 are female and 62 are male. The questionnaire starts with obtaining demographic data which are: gender, age, place of residence, and institution where participants study. After that, knowledge about psychological disorders is sought, noting the increased level of psychological disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the period before it, what psychological disorders were present, their first appearance, the role of the psychologist during this time and many other important issues which are shown in more detail in the next chapter.

**Presentation and analysis of results**

This chapter will describe the main findings of the research ranging from data on the characteristics of survey participants, such as gender, age, place of residence, institution where they study, to knowledge about psychological distress, level of psychological distress during the pandemic, compared to the period before it, the types of psychological distress, and others where you will see them below. In total, the respondents were students from different parts of Kosovo, aged 18-30.

**Figure 1.** Gender structure

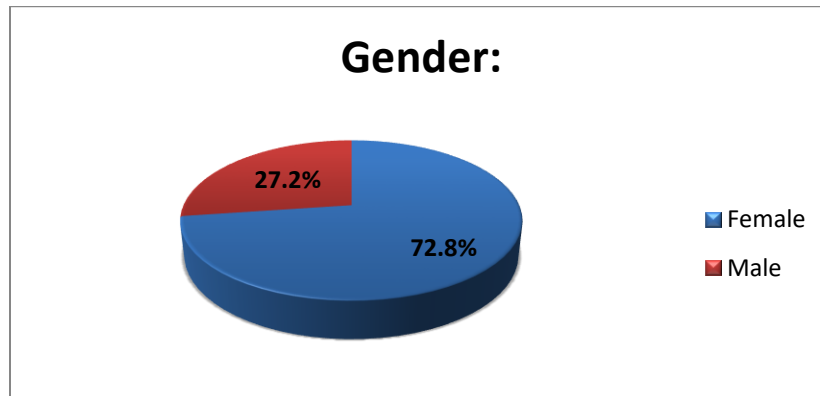


Figure 1 shows the gender structure of the participants. From these data, the following results appear: 166 or 72.8% of respondents are female, and 62 or 27.2% are male.

**Table 1.** Age

Age:	No. of responders:	Percentage:
18-20	96	42.1%
21-23	112	49.1%
24-26	14	6.1%
27-29	5	2.2%
30+	1	0.4%

Table 1 presents the age data of the participants. From the age of 18-20 are 96 or 42.1%, 21-23 years old are 112 or 49.1%, 24-26 years old are 14 or 6.1%, 27-29 years old are 5 or 2.2% and, 30+ years old is 1 or 0.4 %.

Figure 2. Residence

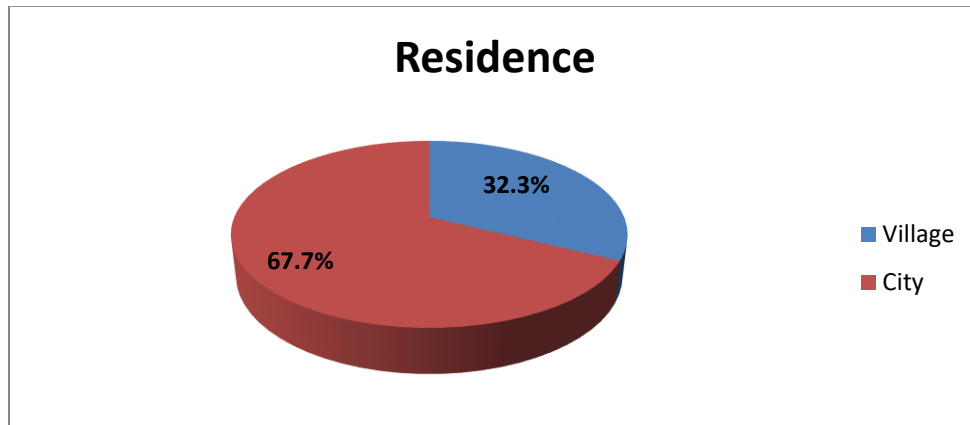


Figure 2 shows the residence of the participants. 73 or 32.3% of them live in the countryside, while 153 or 67.7% live in the city. For this question, there were only 226 answers, where two participants decided not to answer.

Table 2. Institution of studies

Institution of studies:	No. of responders:	Percentage:
Private	119	53.8%
Public	102	46.2%

Table 2 presents the data related to the institution where the respondents study. 119 or 53.8% belong to private institutions, while 102 or 46.2% to public ones. From this question 221 answers were received, where seven participants decided not to give answers.

Figure 3. Knowledge about psychological disorders

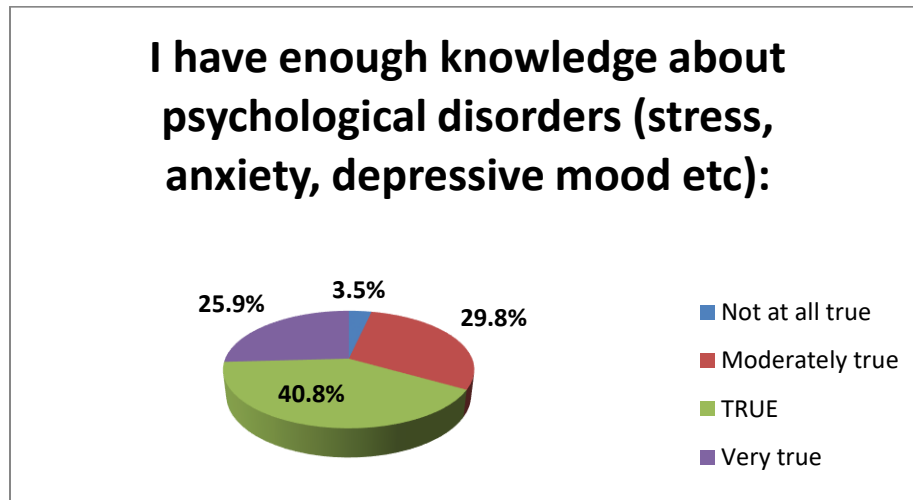


Figure 3 presents data on knowledge about psychological disorders. The question asked was "I have enough knowledge about psychological disorders (stress, anxiety, depressed mood, etc.)". Of the respondents, 8 or 3.5% answered not at all true, 68 or 29.8% answered moderately true, 93 or 40.8% true, and 59 or 25.9% very true.

Table 3. Increased level of psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the period before it

<b>I have noticed an increased level of (stress, or anxiety, or depressed mood, etc.) during the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the pre-pandemic period:</b>	<b>No. of responders:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Not at all true	29	12.7%
Moderately true	71	31.1%
True	62	27.2%
Very true	66	28.9%

Table 3 contains the data of the question "I have noticed an increased level of (stress, or anxiety, or depressed mood, etc.) during the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the period before the pandemic". 29 or 12.7% stated that it is not true at all, 71 or 31.1% moderately true, 62 or 27.2% true, and 66 or 28.9% very true.

**Figure 4.** *Types of psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic*

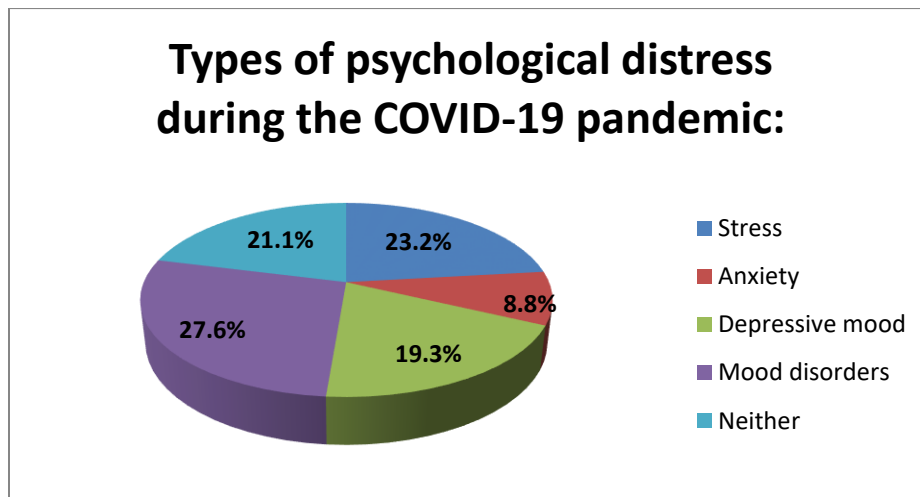


Figure 4 describes the data on the types of psychological disorders, the question was "I had these types of psychological disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic", where respondents, 53 or 23.2% had stress, 20 or 8.8% anxiety , 44 or 19.3% depressed mood, 63 or 27.6% mood disorders, and 48 or 21.1% had neither

**Table 4.** *Psychological concerns first manifested during the COVID-19 pandemic*

<b>These concerns first appeared to me during the COVID-19 pandemic:</b>	<b>No. of responders:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Not true at all	85	37.3%
Moderately true	94	41.2%
True	43	18.9%
Very true	6	2.6%

Table 4 contains data on psychological distress, which appeared for the first time during this time. More precisely, the question was "These concerns first appeared to me during the COVID-19 pandemic", and 85 or 37.3% indicated that it is not true at all, 94 or 41.2% moderately true, 43 or 18.9% of true, and 6 or 2.6% very true.

**Figure 5.** *The importance of the psychologist / psychiatrist during the COVID-19 pandemic*

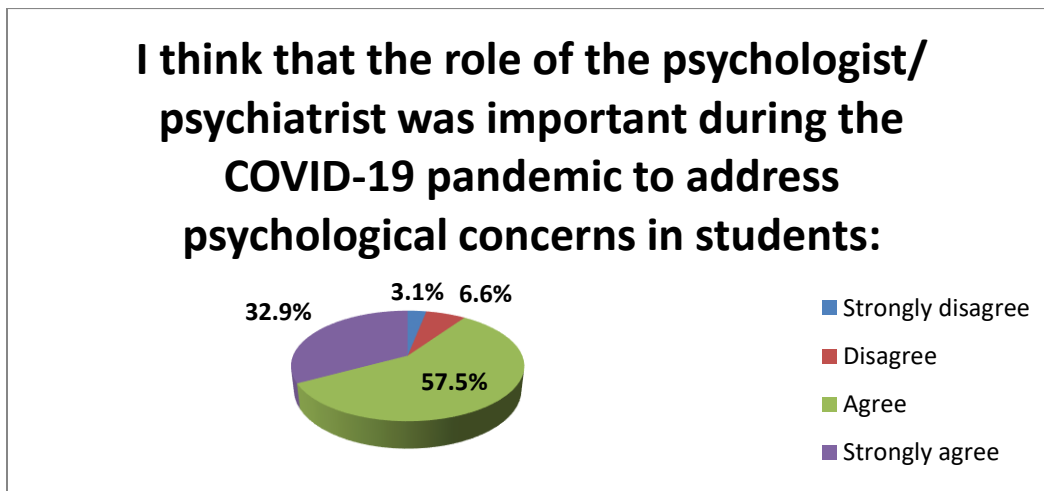


Figure 5 shows the data regarding the opinion on the role of the mental health professional during this time, the question that was asked was "I think the role of the psychologist/ psychiatrist was important during the COVID-19 pandemic to address the concerns psychological to students". 7 or 3.1% of participants stated that they strongly disagree with this, 15 or 6.6% disagree, 131 or 57.5% agree, and 75 or 32.9% strongly agree.

**Table 5.** *Who visits the psychologist/psychiatrist has mental problems*

<b>I think the person that visits the psychologist/psychiatrist has mental health problems:</b>	<b>No: of responders</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Strongly disagree	117	51.3%
Disagree	92	40.4%
Agree	18	7.9%
Strongly agree	1	0.4%



Table 5 shows the data of the question "I think that the person who visits the psychologist/psychiatrist has mental problems" and 117 or 51.3% strongly disagree, 92 or 40.4% disagree, 18 or 7.9% agree, and 1 or 0.4 % strongly agrees.

**Figure 6.** *If I were experiencing psychological distress, I would not hesitate to visit a psychologist/psychiatrist*

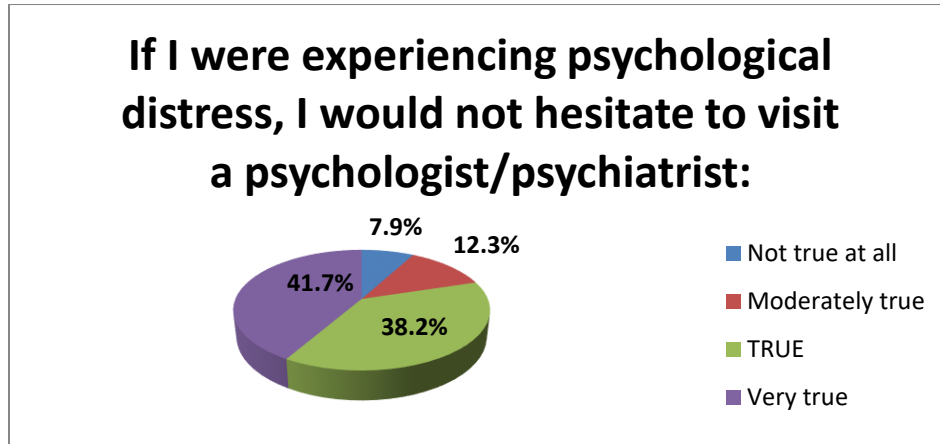


Figure 6 shows the data on whether one were to experience psychological distress would one hesitate to visit the mental health professional. The question was "If I were experiencing psychological distress, I would not hesitate to visit a psychologist/psychiatrist." Of the participants, 18 or 7.9% stated that it is not true at all, 28 or 12.3% moderately true, 87 or 38.2% true, and very true 95 or 41.7%.

**Table 6.** *I felt lonely during the COVID – 19 pandemic*

<b>I felt lonely during the COVID – 19 pandemic:</b>	<b>No. of responders:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Not true at all	96	42.1%
Moderately true	81	35.5%
True	29	12.7%
Very true	22	9.6%

Table 6 shows the data from the question "I felt lonely during the COVID-19 pandemic". 96 or 42.1% stated that it is not true at all, 81 or 35.5% moderately true, 29 or 12.7% true, while 22 or 9.6% very true.

**Figure 7.** *I had an added need to express my concerns to someone I trusted during the COVID-19 pandemic*

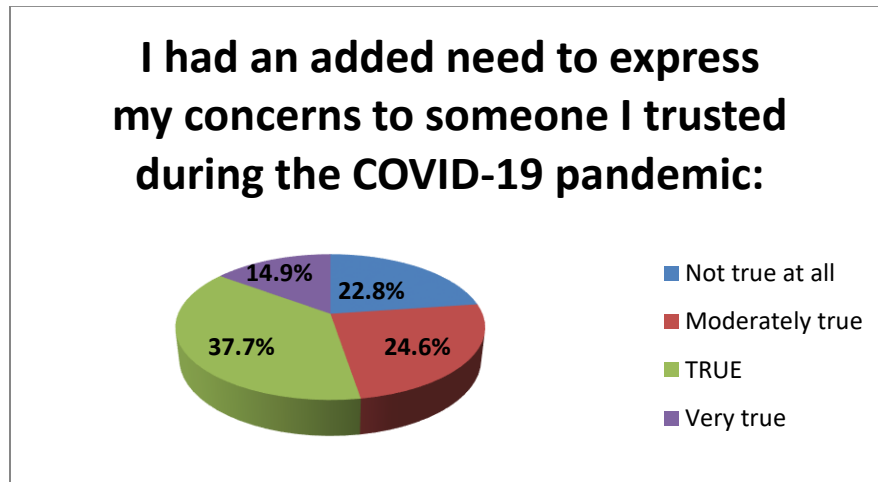


Figure 7 shows the statements of the respondents, regarding the increased need to express their concerns with someone trustworthy during this time. The question was "I had an added need to express my concerns to someone I trusted during the COVID-19 pandemic." 52 or 22.8% answered not at all true, 56 or 24.6% moderately true, 86 or 37.7% true, and 34 or 14.9% very true.

**Table 7.** *For my concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following helped me:*

<b>For my concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following helped me:</b>	<b>No. of responders:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Family	145	63.6%
Friends	47	20.6%
Psychologist / psychiatrist	4	1.8%
No one	16	7%
Neither	16	7%

Table 7 presents data on who helped students during the pandemic. The question posed was "For my concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, it helped me." 145 or 63.6% of respondents chose family, 47 or 20.6% society, 4 or 1.8% psychologist / psychiatrist, 16 or 7% nobody, and 16 or 7% neither.

**Figure 8.** *During the COVID-19 pandemic, I sought professional help when I felt I could not do it alone*

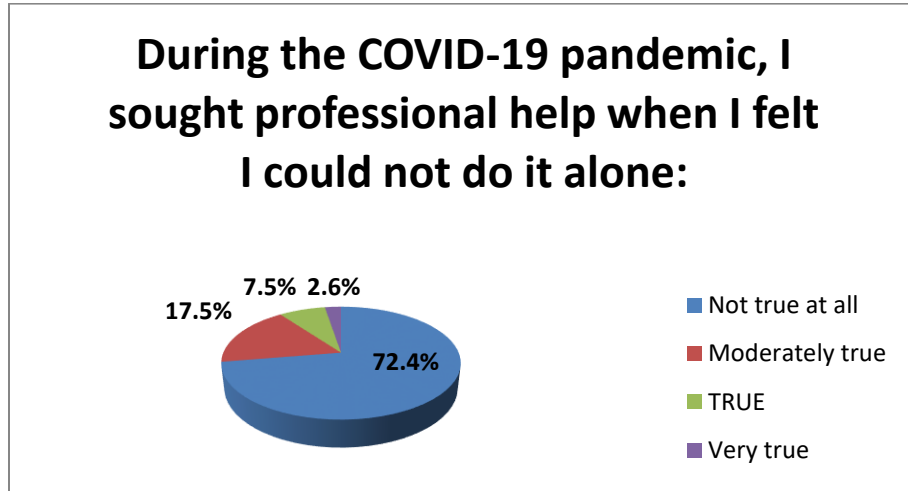


Figure 8 shows the data of the question "During the COVID-19 pandemic, I sought professional help when I felt I could not do it alone." Of this, 165 or 72.4% of participants indicated that it is not true at all, 40 or 17.5% moderately true, 17 or 7.5% true, and 6 or 2.6% very true.

**Table 8.** *I had sufficient knowledge of where to seek professional help during the COVID-19 pandemic*

<b>I had sufficient knowledge of where to seek professional help during the COVID-19 pandemic:</b>	<b>No. of responders:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Not true at all	40	17.5%
Moderately true	60	26.3%
True	95	41.7%
Very true	33	14.5%

Table 8 presents the data of the question "I had enough knowledge about where to seek professional help during the COVID-19 pandemic", where 40 or 17.5% said that it is not true at all, 60 or 26.3% on average true , 95 or 41.7% true, and 33 or 14.5% very true.

**Figure 9.** *I was able to keep in touch with a psychologist/psychiatrist during the COVID-19 pandemic*

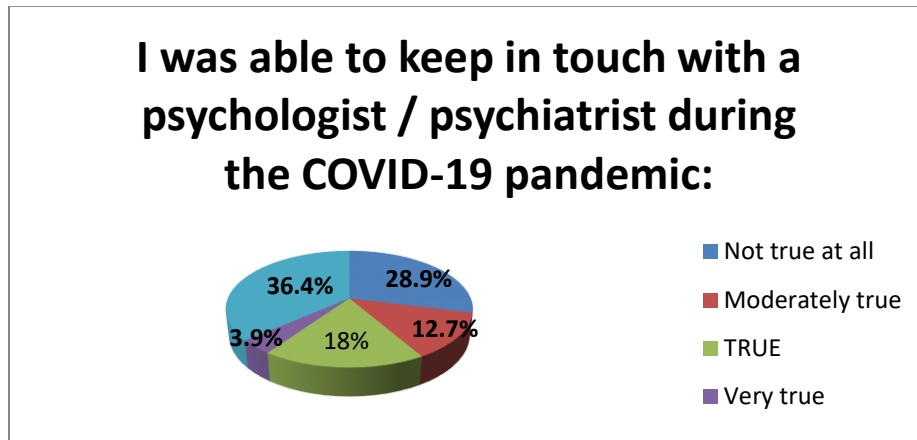


Figure 9 will show how many have been able to maintain contact with their psychologist or psychiatrist. The question asked was "I had the opportunity to contact a psychologist/psychiatrist during the COVID-19 pandemic" and 66 or 28.9% stated that it is not true at all, 29 or 12.7% moderately true, 41 or 18% true, 9 or 3.9% very true, and 83 or 36.4% none of these.

**Table 9.** *Contact with a psychologist/psychiatrist has helped me feel less distressed*

Contact with a psychologist/psychiatrist has helped me feel less distressed:	No. of responders	Percentage:
Not true at all	40	17.5%
Moderately true	20	8.8%
True	46	20.2%
Very true	14	6.1%
Neither	108	47.4%

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCERNS AND THE LEVEL OF SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP  
FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AMONG  
STUDENTS IN KOSOVO

20

Table 9 presents the data of the question "Contact with a psychologist / psychiatrist has helped me feel less anxious". 40 or 17.5% indicated that it is not true at all, 20 or 8.8% moderately true, 46 or 20.2% true, 14 or 6.1%, and 108 or 47.4% neither.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

From all this research that has been treated so far, from the literature review to the presentation and analysis of the results, conclusions are reached. From this research it can be concluded that, out of 228 participants, the female gender dominates with 72.8% (no. 166), while the male participants were 27.2% (no. 62). Most of the participants (49.1%) were 21-23 years old. More than half (67.7%) are city dwellers. 53.8% of the students of this research belong to private university institutions. After the demographic data of the paper, knowledge of psychological disorders is reached, where 40.8% stated that it is true, that they have sufficient knowledge about psychological disorders. Of the respondents, 31.1% of them said that it is moderately true, that they noticed an increased level of concern during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the period before it. Regarding the types of psychological disorders, the most pronounced were mood disorders with 27.6%. The appearance of these concerns for the first time during the pandemic, has been for 41.2% of students who have answered with average truth to this part. Regarding the role of psychologist / psychiatrist, 57.5% agreed that it was important in addressing psychological concerns to students, and 51.3% of participants do not think that the person visiting the mental health professional has mental problems. If students were to experience psychological distress, 41.7% of them would not hesitate to visit a mental health professional. During this pandemic, 35.5% of the participants felt moderately lonely, and 37.7% of them had an increased need to express their concerns to someone they trusted. For the help with psychological distress during the pandemic, the role of the family has shown a higher percentage, with 63.6% of students indicating that they have found help in the family. When students felt that they could not cope alone during the pandemic, professional help was sought by 17.5% of them, 41.7% of students had knowledge of where to seek professional help during this period. 18% of participants had the opportunity to keep in touch with the relevant psychologist / psychiatrist. Contact with a mental health professional helped 20.2% of respondents feel less distressed.

Briefly, from this paper it is observed that students possess knowledge about psychological disorders, have noticed an increased level of them during this period, those types of psychological concerns have been expressed during this time, concerns first appeared during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the health professional has been important in addressing concerns among

students, most students have felt lonely during this time and have needed to express their concerns to someone they trust, most help was found in the family, during the pandemic professional help was not requested much (according to the answers received in this research), students have had knowledge of where to seek professional help, contacting a psychologist / psychiatrist has been possible and that for some of the students participating in this research, this contact has helped them feel less anxious.

Psychological concerns have been expressed in other countries, as well as in Kosovo. In this paper the most pronounced are mood disorders, but also other psychological concerns have been present in the students of this research. Students agreed that the role of the mental health professional was important during the COVID-19 pandemic, and most stated that they would not hesitate to visit it, also they had knowledge of where to seek help, but, a low percentage of them indicated that they sought professional help, and the same percentage indicated that contact with the health professional has helped them feel less anxious. Since concerns have been present in the students, and they have agreed to the above statements, it can be assumed that they have felt stigmatized in seeking professional help.

To address and treat psychological concerns, usually psychological counseling and psychotherapy are recommended. A large amount of research has accumulated data on the efficacy and effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for anxiety disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder social anxiety disorder and specific phobia (*Kaczurkin & Foa, 2015*). Psychotherapy includes scientific and local evidence, such as individual diagnostic information, situational information including cost, time, judgment, and experience of the provider to achieve the best outcome (*Rousseau & Gunia, 2016*). To have a good mental health, there are various studies that recommend physical activity. Physical activity is an important public health tool used in the treatment and prevention of various physical ailments, as well as in the treatment of some psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders (*Peluso & Guerra de Andrade, 2005*). According to a study of students, it was found that, students who met strong recommendations of physical activity were less likely to report poor mental health, compared to

students who did not meet the recommendations (*VanKim & Nelson, 2013*). From another study, it is said that meditation can reduce the negative dimensions of psychological stress. Attention meditation programs, in particular, show small improvements in anxiety, depression, and pain with moderate evidence, and small improvements in stress (*Goyal et al. 2015*).

It should be noted that in this research, only 228 students participated. Not all students of Kosovo universities were surveyed, but a small number of them. Therefore, the level of psychological distress among students may be even higher. Further studies on this topic, and mental health in general during the COVID-19 pandemic, need to be conducted. According to many researches, it is concluded that psychological counseling helps to improve various moods. Therefore, do not hesitate to seek professional help. Performing any activity that brings pleasure such as spending time with friends, going out in nature, engaging in physical activities to maintain good physical and mental health, reading, meditation and more. From this research, readers are enriched as little as possible with new knowledge about the mental health of university students, and it is recommended to study as much as possible about it, for better health.

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