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STRESS AMONG NON-MEDICAL STUDENTS CAUSED BY COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that studies conducted before the global outbreak of the pandemic showed that students usually experience increased levels of stress during their education and often suffer from diseases of stressful etiology it should be noted that the pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has created conditions for the simultaneous existence of completely new multiple negative factors that could significantly affect the psychoemotional status of medical and non-medical students [Avilov, Galiulina, 2020].

Purpose:

to identify pandemic-related stress factors experienced by non-medical students of Chelyabinsk during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to determine the difference between the levels of stress among medical and non-medical students and the reasons playing imperative role in causing this difference (on the basis of our previous study).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 200 non-medical students (including both male and female) were taken for questionnaire filling. Students were asked to choose the most significant, in their opinion, stress factors, as well as to answer questions regarding the presence of anxiety, aggression and their severity. In aim to to measure the phenomenological structure of stress experience we used the PSM-25 Lemur-Tessier-Fillion scale of psychological stress (adapted by N. E. Vodop'yanova).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fear for life and health of relatives and friends, discomfort caused by disruption of plans, uncertainty regarding the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, financial distress, decreased social activity, inconsistency of information about COVID-19, high duration of isolation, insufficient provision of medicines, medical services during the period of restrictions, the need to comply with preventive measures (wear-

ing masks, gloves, etc.), fear of infection, boredom during restrictions were noted as significant stress factors (ranked by importance). The stress levels of non-medical students have been found to be significantly higher than those of the medical students. The factors that could be attributed to this difference were: uncertainty over duration of COVID-19 pandemic, financial problems, high duration of isolation (p value $< 0,05$). The percentage of students with adequate psychological adaptability (integral score of psychological stress from 0 to 100 points) amounted to 74% ($n = 148$), which testified to the state of psychological adaptation to stress, however, 26% of non-medical students ($n=52$) had an average stress level/high stress level, the state of maladjustment and mental discomfort (integral score of psychological stress was more than 155 points) was recorded. We have to point out that the scale of psychological stress (PSM-25) turned out to be insufficiently sensitive to identify differences between the psychological statuses of medical and non-medical students.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in changing the psycho-emotional background of students in Chelyabinsk (more than a quarter of the respondents had an average or high level of stress). Denial of the impact of the most significant stress factors that that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic (situations associated with fear for the life and health of relatives and friends, discomfort caused by disruption of plans et al.) indicates the need to continue research in the direction of searching for measures to stabilize the psychological state of students.

Keywords:

stress, stress resistance, COVID-19, students.