



Chapter 224

Factors related to coping with the COVID-19 pandemic by nursing students from higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze the coping/resilience strategies developed by students from two higher education institutions (HEIs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Methods:** a descriptive, cross-sectional study with a qualitative approach, carried out in two HEIs, one public and one private, located in the Norte Fluminense region of the state of Rio de Janeiro. The sample of students who answered the questionnaire was 140 from the public institution and 150 from the private institution. The IRAMUTEQ® software was used to generate the similarity analysis and word cloud. **Results:** Of the 290 participating students, it was identified that the majority belonged to the female sex, 84.5% (n=246) and 15.1% (n=44) were male, the age profile was from 17 to 58 years, where 7.2% (n=21) were in the age group of fewer than 20 years, 81.1% (n=236) in the age group of 20 to 39 years, and 11.3% (n=33) aged 40 to 59 years. **Discussion:** From the deep analysis we presented two categories 1 Adaptive capacity of undergraduate nursing students in the COVID-19 pandemic period and 2 Spirituality, interaction with friends and family decreases the deleterious effects of social isolation **Conclusion:** it was evidenced the adaptive capacity and spirituality, as well as friends and family, was fundamental, as a form of resilience; it is explicit that knowing how to deal with day-to-day difficulties, having a support network, remaining psychologically positive helps in solving problems in various areas of life.

1 INTRODUCTION

During the undergraduate course of Nursing, the student must have contact with the population and the multidisciplinary team, which also allow the development of interpersonal relationships, since one of the main bases of nursing care is communication, which can be verbal or non-verbal, such as gestures, facial expressions and means of sensation. ¹

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was the implementation of government decrees and several activities were suspended, among them those related to educational institutions. Due to the speed of the changes that the students went through, with the sudden suspension of classes, there was some difficulty in adjusting to a new routine that triggered less positive emotional states.²

Anxiety and stress have the same combinations of sensations as worry, nervousness, and fear. It is usually directed to some problem that the individual has already encountered, so feelings and concerns are intensified, becoming evident with greater intensity in the pandemic and post-pandemic moment³.

About the academic environment, the changes in the teaching-learning process resulting from the implementation of remote teaching generated feelings of uncertainty and concern about the negative impact on academic progress, in addition to generating new stress in the adaptation of the return to face-to-face activities.^{4th}

In the case of university students, anxiety can be caused by several situations such as adaptation to perform activities, which were remote and became face-to-face, difficulties in understanding the contents that were taught remotely, and the need to adapt to the new reality presented.⁵

Thus, the adaptive process has not been and is not easy with the "new normal", because much has changed in all areas, perhaps in health where it was completely hit with COVID-19, the pandemic, and death as evidence, as it presented itself, bringing even more stress, and paths to be trodden by nursing students, inviting them to develop resilience.

Thus, this article aims to analyze the coping/resilience strategies developed by students from two higher education institutions (HEIs) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2 METHODOLOGY

This is an excerpt from research on sleep, anxiety, and resilience in nursing professors and students, characterized by a descriptive, cross-sectional study, with a qualitative approach, carried out in two HEIs, one public and one private, located in the Norte Fluminense region of the state of Rio de Janeiro. The population, 140 students from the public institution and 150 from the private institution agreed to participate in the research, totaling 290 participants. Students were asked to fill out an instrument through the Google Forms platform, answering the question: How are you coping with the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Free and Informed Consent Form (ICF) was attached with the link to the instrument and after its acceptance, the participant answered the questionnaire.

This research was approved by the ethics committee with CAEE: 39657620.3.0000.5243 and opinion 4.557.610, following the resolution 466/12, including the guidelines for Conducting Research and Activity of the RECs during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the study also followed the guidelines of the Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ)⁶.

The similarity analysis (figure 1) showed the co-occurrence of the words and their connection between them. The words divided into central and peripheral structures generated six communities. The words "to be" were noted; "well"; "try"; "better"; "activity"; "family" and "tranquil" as highlighted in the central nucleus and with interrelation with the peripheral communities composed of the axes that represented the main topics as perceptions and coping measures of the students in the pandemic, issues that allowed the construction of the categories to be analyzed.

Figure 2: Word Cloud



Source: Prepared by the authors, using the Iramuteq Software

The result of the word cloud (figure 2). The words were: to be; well; Very much; to cope; tranquility; to be careful; to try; to adapt; to accustom; to survive; to believe; to seek; to endure; survive; prospect. Converging with similarity analysis.

4 DISCUSSION

From the analyses it was possible to observe some resources that were used by the students to develop resilience, found seven categories in the discussion of this work, therefore we leave in evidence two categories, which will be discussed below.

The adaptive capacity of undergraduate nursing students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the Adaptive Theory, the individual is constantly changing, due to his interaction with the environment around him, causing him to develop mechanisms of adaptation. Thus, the health-disease process is related to the expected result from this change, they are considered good when it corresponds to the proposed stimuli.⁹

I can say that I am trying to pass every step! We are constantly adapting over time! Like in a game, every level has a rule! (D154)

I'm still adapting. (D232)

Adapting to what it has to be at the moment. (D237)

[...] As the days went by I got used to the changes that were made because of the pandemic. (D238)

With the pandemic, individuals have undergone an abrupt change in their routines, being pressured to seek resources to meet the demands that have been emerging. It was possible to perceive that the adaptation process presents its difficulties, especially when the changes occur suddenly and without prediction of duration. ^{10th}

Adaptation is properly related to resilience, being a positive adaptation when the individual can achieve his goals, regardless of adverse events, so that it corresponds to personal development. It is understood that the adaptation process is involved several risk and resilience factors, including physiological, affective, and socioeconomic, among others. ¹

Spirituality, and interaction with friends and family lessens the deleterious effects of social isolation

It should be considered that social support can reduce the destructive effects and potentiate the gains, in addition to generating a feeling of support and protection. It is perceived that affection is also positively associated with the ability to overcome adverse events. ^{12th}

It's very tiring all of this. But I have God, family, and friends, who are with me to face any adversities in life. (D44)

With lots of therapy and support from friends and boyfriend. (D138)

Spirituality can help maintain hope, provide social and institutional support, assist with coping with the disease, support the emotional side, support, and support when there are no longer possible treatments for the condition of the individual, and assist in the quality of life of those who face life-threatening diseases. ¹

Through the experience of difficult moments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, spirituality appears as an additional means, which results in hope in adverse situations, even with a feeling of fear, seeking encouragement. ¹

Social interactions are of paramount importance for the conservation of emotional stability and cognitive pattern. Since the individual needs to relate to other people, the lack of this conviviality can provoke psychosocial problems. ^{13th}

Social support is directly linked to the health of the individual, the pandemic has caused an overload of activities, stress, insecurity, anxiety, and uncertainty, for the near future. Evidencing a greater vulnerability in the individual and making social support a determinant for the maintenance of health. ^{14th}

Similarly, it was possible to analyze that adherence to the vaccine against COVID-19 was also a resource used to develop resilience.

5 CONCLUSION

With this study, it was possible to evidence the adaptive capacity and Religiosity/Religion/Spirituality, as well as friends and family of undergraduate nursing students were fundamental, as a form of resilience; it is explicit that knowing how to deal with the difficulties of everyday life and having a support network, In a period of social isolation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has become necessary and at the same time challenging, regardless of obstacles, and difficult situations, staying psychologically positive helps in solving problems in various spheres of life. It was evidenced that the adaptation corresponded to a process, in which the time factor was the main denominator for the construction/strengthening of resilience, besides evidencing that belief, family, therapy, and friends are fundamentals to help maintain this resilience.

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