Coping with Covid-19: Preliminary Results from Student Survey

The Psychosocial Impact of COVID-19 on WSU Students-Initial Results

Preliminary research has shown the growing mental health burden of COVID-19 and its mitigation policies. We contribute to this body of evidence examining psychosocial distress among college students using the COVID-19 Student Survey fielded at Wayne State University between May 27 and June 22, 2020. 2400 undergraduate students who were enrolled in Winter 2020 responded to the survey which measured challenges faced by students through the pandemic.

We focus our analysis on psychosocial distress, which we define using five Likert-scale questions on intensity of feelings of nervousness, anxiety, worry, and stress, ranging from 1 (does not apply at all) to 5 (strongly applies). We aggregate these questions into a single index using confirmatory factor analysis, ranging from 1 to 25, with a mean of 18.42, reflecting high levels of psychosocial distress.

Analyzing the factors contributing towards the index, we find that students who are female, whose family member had a job loss, and those who were caregivers showed higher levels of psychosocial distress. Our findings support the continuing need to provide psychological support for WSU students during the pandemic.

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