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ABSTRACT

The Educational, Emotional and Physical Effects of Lock-Down Due to COVID-19 on Palestinian Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

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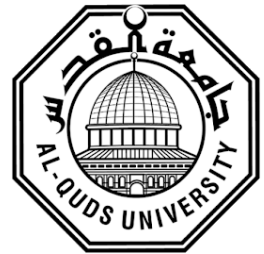
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Background: Corona-virus pandemic has affected millions of people worldwide. On March 5th 2020, the first cases were identified in Palestine, and a partial lockdown including schools was imposed and then being followed by a total lockdown from March 22nd until May 26th. Students stayed home and switched to online learning, for almost two months with restrictions on many aspects of their lives. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how the lockdown related to the current pandemic impacted the lives of a convenient sample of Palestinian students.

Methods: An online survey using google forms were sent out to a convenient sample of students participating in extracurricular programs offered by Al Nayzak Palestine, and Code Palestine. Fifteen questions asked about the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown imposed in the period between March 5th and May 26th on students' physical activity, emotions, social relationships and education. Gender and grade level data were also collected. Parental consent was obtained for all participants.



Results: One-hundred and four students completed the survey in September 2020. 39% were boys and 40% were in 11th grade, 30% in 9th grade and 24% were in 10th grade. Sixty-four percent did a little or no form of physical activity during this period and 61% increased their screen time due to gaming and online learning. Forty-two percent did not care about the Corona virus and 35% were worried, mainly because of the fear that their family may get infected. 30% reported that they had less contact with family and friends and 49% missed them very much during the lockdown. 30% percent thought that the current pandemic affected their learning a lot and 21% thought they should not go back to schools in person until the pandemic has completely gone away.

Conclusion: Data from this survey suggests that there is a significant physical, emotional and educational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students. Parents and teachers should be encouraged to discuss these major issues with students to address their challenges. Students' opinions and feelings need to be addressed in any future plan of changing the learning format in response to the current pandemic worries.

key words: COVID-19, Lock Down, pandemic, Coronavirus, Palestine.