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ABSTRACT

Stress, Anxiety and Depression Among Dental Students in Times of Covid-19 Lockdown.

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Introduction: Dental students in their clinical training face a higher risk of contracting the disease, COVID-19, as well as experiencing adverse psychological outcomes. Therefore, this study was done to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown on the mental health of dental students during the current pandemic.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional study conducted among dental students during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic to assess levels of depression, anxiety, and stress using the standardized DASS-21 scale. In addition, demographic, socio-economic, academic performance, sources of information about COVID-19, and perception of on-line education difficulties were collected.

Results: A total of 436 students completed the survey (55.18% response rate). In the current sample, 48% (n=209), 76% (n=33), 70% (n=305) showed different levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Dental students who stated that their family income was impacted by COVID-19 showed signs of depression, $X^2=7.3$, $p=.007$, and anxiety, $X^2=6.1$, $p=.013$. Dental students who faced difficulties in switching to e-learning reported different levels of depression, $X^2=14$, $p<.001$; anxiety, $X^2=9$, $p=.003$; and stress, $X^2=24$, $p<.001$.

Conclusions: In preparation for the next academic year, strategies to support the mental health of dental students in their clinical training and e-learning process should be in place.