

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON THE EMOTIONAL STATE OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

The article considers the dynamics of emotional states of student youth in the implementation of quarantine measures in Ukraine, such as: anxiety-cowardice, comfort-discomfort, orientation-disorientation, fear for their own health. Students also assessed the threats to them and their families in connection with the spread of COVID-19.

Keywords: emotional states, global pandemic, current threats, quarantine measures, student youth.

Formulation of the problem. Perhaps the most pressing problem today is the Crown virus pandemic among the population not only in Ukraine but also around the world. For almost a year, all the inhabitants of the planet have been living in unusual conditions caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus, as a result of which everyone has begun to understand what quarantine, masks, gloves and antiseptics are. All these restrictions directly affected not only the way of life, but also the psychological state of people.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The introduction of quarantine measures due to the spread of COVID-19 deprives people of the usual forms of life, which, of course, affects the emotional well-being of each person. Recent scientific and practical conferences in various fields of science present the results of studies of changes and features of the experience of quarantine restrictions and features of postcoid syndrome [2]. Quarantine restrictions cause a stress response, which is often the subject of research by modern psychologists [1]. But the emotional series is not limited to stress and is manifested in other emotional experiences [3].

So, immediately after the introduction of quarantine in Vinnytsia National Medical University named after MI Pirogov (VNMU) from March 12, 2020, after

the students went to distance learning, we developed an author's questionnaire to diagnose the emotional state of VNMU students in a pandemic.

The purpose of this study was to empirically investigate the impact of quarantine measures on the emotional well-being of student youth.

The study was conducted among students of 1-6 courses of specialties "Medical Psychology", "Medical Affairs", "Pediatrics", "Dentistry" VNMU. For 4 weeks, every Monday, the same students answered the author's questionnaire so that we could investigate changes in their emotional state with the prevalence of COVID-19 and its gradual introduction. quarantine measures in Ukraine. The study involved 86 people. The percentage of the sample by gender is presented on the slide. We asked students whether they belong to the "risk groups" of coronavirus (diabetics, people with cardiovascular or respiratory diseases, etc.). 65.1% of students stated that they do not have chronic diseases and 34.9% - belong to the "risk groups".

Presenting main material. In order to study the dynamics of their attitude to quarantine measures, students were asked the same questions four times a week.

Answers to the question "Do you monitor the development of the epidemiological situation in Ukraine and the world?" presented in Figure 1.

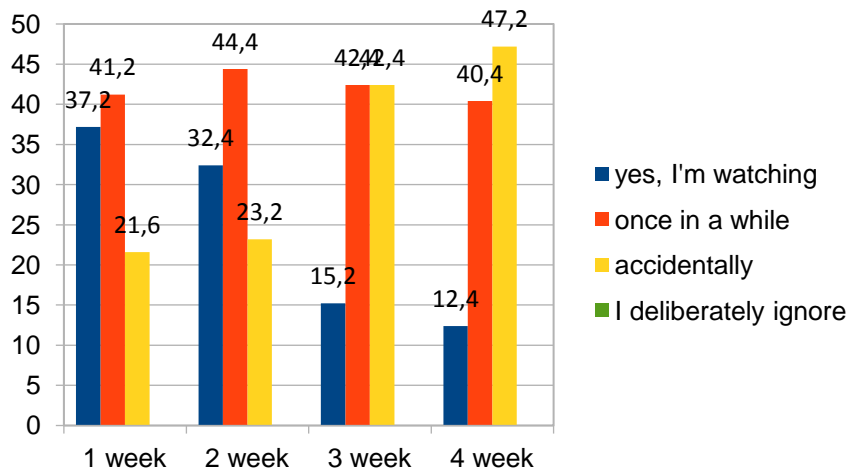


Fig.1. Percentage display by students of the situation around the COVID-19 pandemic

As we can see from the figure, in the first week, students monitored more news and information about the pandemic. In the second, third and fourth weeks, this activity decreased. It is gratifying that there are no people in the sample of medical students who deliberately

ignored information about the spread of the disease and who did not believe in the existence of such a disease.

To the question "To what extent do you adhere to the quarantine regime (social restrictions, self-isolation)?" students' responses were as shown in Figure 2.

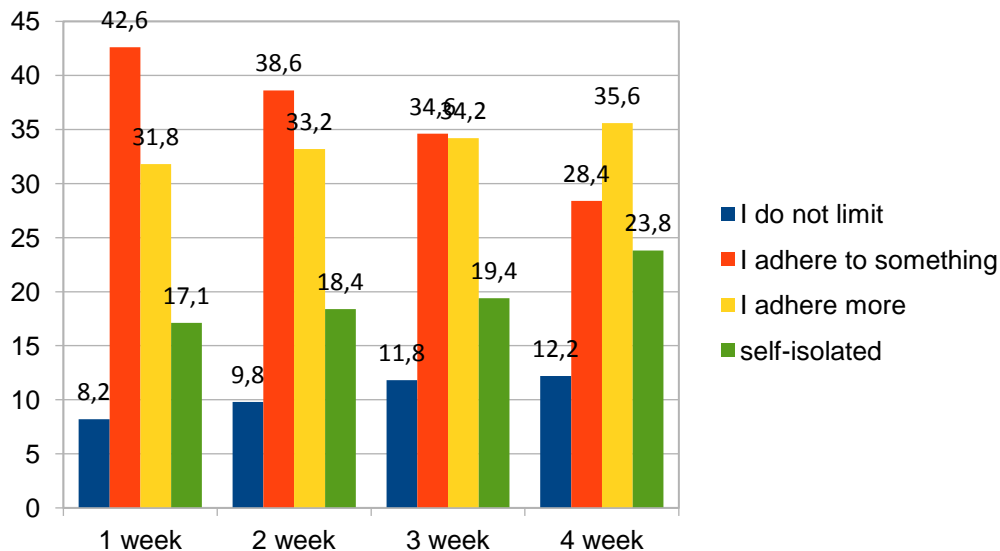


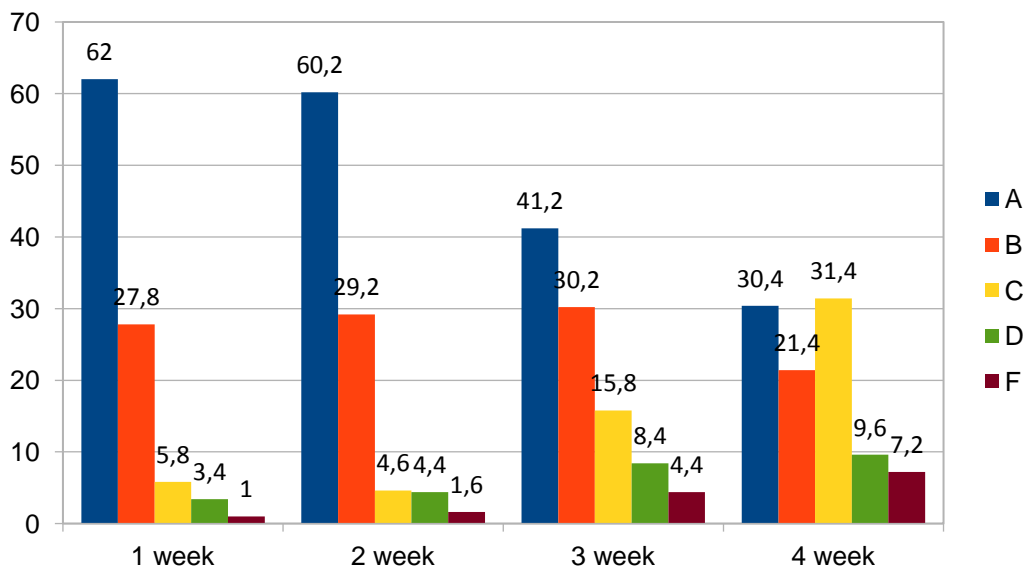
Fig.2. Reflection as a percentage of students' compliance with quarantine standards

The answer "no, I'm not limiting myself at all" was consistently the least chosen by students throughout the four-week survey.

The percentage of students who isolated themselves from other people due to the introduction of quarantine measures has increased. In our opinion, this is due to the professional affiliation of students. After all, medical students understand the specifics of the spread of the virus and follow the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

Next, we asked students - in their opinion, whether studying at a medical university affects their attitude to the epidemic. 90.1% of VNMU students believe that their attitude to the global pandemic is more serious, and their actions are more responsible during the implementation of quarantine measures than other people.

The next step was to study the dynamics of students' emotional states during the introduction of quarantine measures. In Figure 3, we see a reflection of students' concerns about the presence of crown viral infection in Ukraine.



where A - is very worried, B - is worried, B - is worried enough, D - is a little worried, F - is absolutely calm
 Fig.3. Percentage of concerns of student youth in connection with the global pandemic

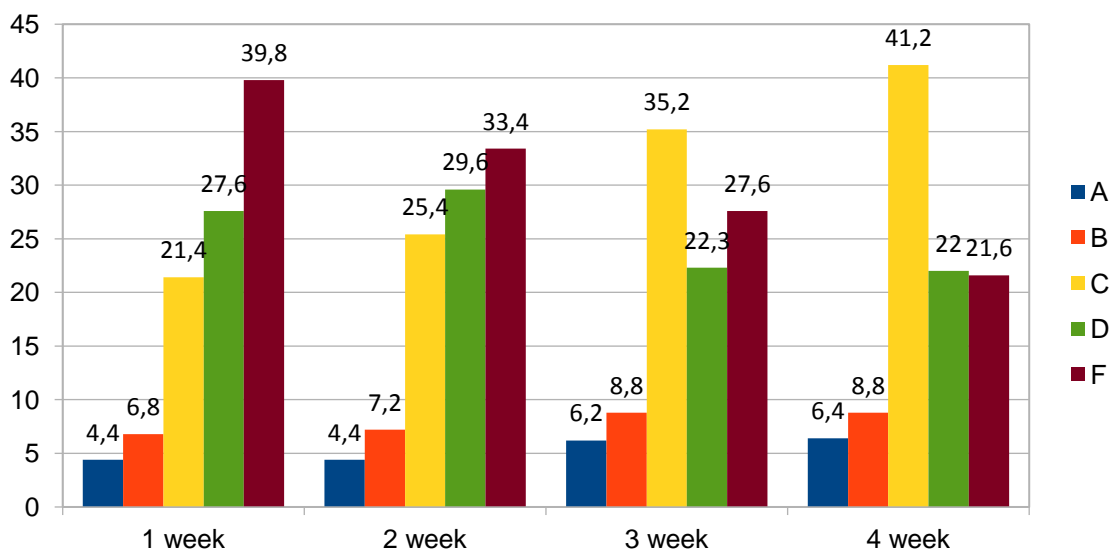
It can be said that immediately after the introduction of quarantine, the level of concern of students was very high. Our country, and all countries of the world as a whole, have not encountered such viruses in the last century. Neither the state nor doctors knew how to prevent the spread of infection, how to treat such a disease, how to continue the most effective and safe life. The media and the Ministry of Health informed citizens about the ways in which the infection was transmitted, how they interacted with other people, and where they could turn to for information and help, and this worked as anxiety and anxiety began to decline. And already for 4 weeks of quarantine the percentage of worried and calm students practically did not differ.

To the question "What emotional state are you experiencing at the moment?", The vast majority of students throughout the study emphasized the predominance of their sense of hope. Students understand that

quarantine restrictions are temporary and believe that medicine is a great science that can overcome COVID-19.

The next emotional states studied were courage (as a subjective sense of confidence), or cowardice, as self-doubt and anticipation of bad events. Courage was shown in students to a greater extent throughout the survey. Only in the second week of the survey (March 23) did the level of courage suddenly decline and the level of uncertainty increase. It was during this period that the first deaths from COVID-19 were recorded in Ukraine, and, in our opinion, this is what caused this phenomenon.

Interesting results were obtained by studying the feelings of comfort and discomfort of students. The results are presented in Figure 4.



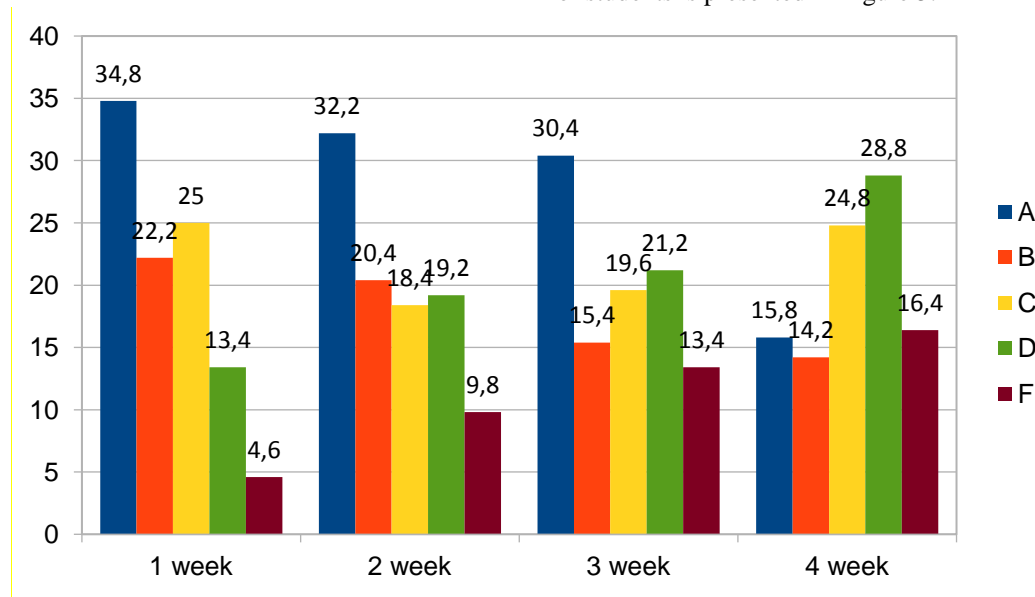
where A - is comfort, B - is sufficient comfort, C - is average comfort, D is some discomfort, F - is absolute discomfort

Fig.4. Percentage of being in a state of comfort-discomfort of student youth

In the first week of the survey, most students reported the feeling of comfort they received from being at home, from the introduction of distance learning, when they had the opportunity to sleep, eat well and take their time. The situation began to change dramati-

cally, and already in the fourth week of being in isolation, students felt discomfort from the constant stay at home, the inability to go outside and the restriction of social contacts.

The ratio of states of orientation and disorientation of students is presented in Figure 5.



where A - complete disorientation, B - disorientation, C - relative orientation, D - orientation, F - complete orientation

Fig.5. Percentage reflection of being in a state of orientation-orientation of student youth

Within four weeks, there is a transition of students' disorientation in the situation in which they find themselves, to a state of certainty. At the beginning of the spread of coronavirus infection, there were many myths about the routes of transmission and the high number of deaths in humans in the presence of such a disease. The pandemic has been compared to a zombie apocalypse that threatens the very existence of humanity. The Ministry of Health has taken maximum measures to inform citizens about the implementation of security measures and informed people about ways to prevent

coronavirus infection, which has formed people's awareness of the situation.

Next, the surveyed students had to rate on a 5-point scale the level of influence on their emotional state of various threats on a five-point scale, where 1- no threat, 5-very high threat. The results are presented as the arithmetic mean of the sample.

To present the results of the assessment of the threat to their own health, we compared the results of students with existing and absent chronic diseases. The results are presented in Fig.6.

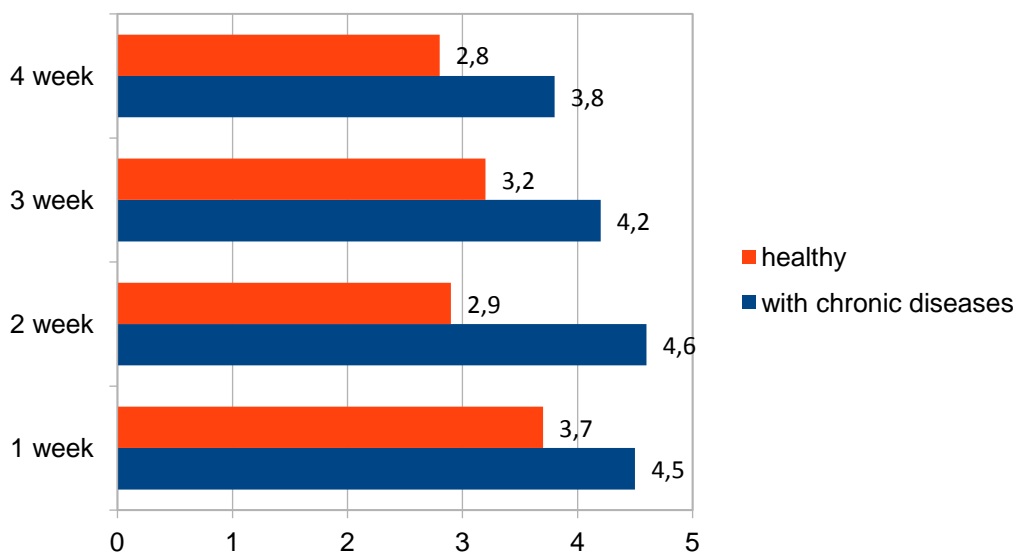


Fig.6. Comparison of the results of self-concern in connection with the global pandemic of "relatively healthy" students with students with chronic diseases (average values)

Students with chronic diseases have a much higher level of concern than a sample of relatively healthy students. And there is still a dynamic to the growth of this concern. In relatively healthy students, the level of anxiety about their own health is slightly higher than average, but it does not change for four weeks. Adolescence

is a period when most students have not yet encountered serious illnesses, they perceive themselves as strong and invulnerable to most illnesses.

The results of students' self-assessment of other threats are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Dynamics of self-assessment of current threats by students in connection with the spread of coronavirus infection (average values)

Current threats	The first week	The second week	The third week	The fourth week
Threat to one's own financial well-being	2,1	2,4	2,7	2,9
Threat to the financial well-being of relatives	2,2	2,4	2,5	2,8
The threat of meeting the need for communication	3,9	4,1	4,3	4,7

The threat to financial well-being that arose as a result of the introduction of quarantine measures in the country, students did not assess as great. They evaluate it in indicators below the average, both when worried about their own funds, and for caring about the funds of relatives and friends. In our opinion, this is due to the age characteristics of adolescence. Most medical students spend most of their time studying and are unable to work. This, in turn, forms a more "easy" attitude to money. Students do not worry about money, because their funding falls on the shoulders of parents, and these threats do not affect them personally.

The introduction of quarantine in Ukraine has become a threat to students in meeting the need to communicate with family and friends. Throughout the study, the level of this threat remained quite high. The leading activities of adolescence are communication with peers and intimate personal communication with friends. Students are accustomed to an active student life, and were not ready for the restrictions imposed on social contacts, which were introduced during quarantine.

Conclusions. Medical university students were more aware and responsible in the implementation of quarantine measures in Ukraine - they followed the rules of self-isolation and worried about the health of relatives and friends.

Most acutely, they experienced a lack of live communication during quarantine activities.

The leading emotional states of students in the implementation of quarantine measures were: the transition from anxiety to calm and the transition from disorientation of students to a state of orientation and determination. The state of comfort that arose at the beginning of the introduction of quarantine associated with the ability to stay at home has changed into discomfort from the inability to communicate with peers.

A sense of hope accompanied the students throughout the study period, as a hope for responsible work of health workers, the creation of a vaccine against coronavirus infection and as an age feature - the hope for a bright future.

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