

# Behavioral Changes in Students Due to the Pandemic

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## Resume

The COVID-19 pandemic has involved public health measures such as the closure of educational centers and the home confinement of the population. Bibliographic review of behavioral alterations due to the effect of the pandemic in the youth population as a result of confinement, its impact on development, associated risk factors and possible prevention strategies. Confinement has negative repercussions on their mental and physical health. The development of minors can be affected by the closure of schools, the limitation of relationships with peers, the impossibility of carrying out physical activity outside and the loss of healthy lifestyle habits. The COVID-19 pandemic is associated with an increase in psychosocial risk factors, such as isolation and intrafamily violence, poverty, overcrowding and the abuse of new technologies. Prevention measures are proposed in the family environment, such as positive communication, the promotion of healthy habits. It is essential to reinforce accessibility to the mental health network. Protection strategies for the youth population must be designed in the context of the current health crisis.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Alterations, Behavior, isolation, violence.

## 1. Introduction

Having little information about the Pandemic in the world can be more difficult than not knowing how to cope, since mental health conditions can arise in countries, families or entire societies, and within entire populations. The virus did not have a major impact on the youth population, however, these measures made it invisible, with devastating consequences, altering the behavior of young people (WHO, 2020). Since, their daily life and their social environment are undergoing important changes, which is an important part of building resilience against traumatic events. Conduct disorder can coexist with multiple problems, especially if the behavior is severe and prompt action is not taken.

After an assessment of the risks that occurred through COVID 19, recommendations were made and disseminated to prevent the spread of the virus in Peru. (UNICEF, 2021). Among these

recommendations is the concept of social distance, which implies maintaining a minimum of two meters of physical separation from others and indicating the restriction of contact with household members. (Galán et al., 2020). Additionally, they were asked to stay at home, to refrain from visiting congested public spaces such as schools, public transportation, and shopping malls. (Supreme Decree No. 184-PCM, 2020). Just be informed through the regional and national health authorities, to avoid massive infections.

The psychological impact of keeping students at home has received a lot of attention in the publications due to the government's protective measures against the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in the city of Wuhan. On the other hand, students are exposed to a lot of information about the pandemic through communication channels, social networks and, at the same time, they have to deal with anxiety and the impact of these reports on the quarantine situation. It has been revealed that people who are

socially isolated have limited mobility and less contact with others, are more likely to experience psychological problems ranging from withdrawal symptoms to the onset of mental disorders such as insomnia, anxiety, depression and psychosis, as well as as well as post traumatic stress disorder (Hernandez et al., 2020).

When people experience severe emotional distress during a prolonged period of isolation, emotions such as fear, anger, and sadness can have an impact on their health (Ramirez, 2022). Analytic frameworks for understanding emotional and bodily processes incorporate a biopsychosocial stance in which emotional expressions are the result of subjects' social interactions in specific cultural, institutional, and public health contexts (Bazan et al., 2021). Considering that a person and their environment are experiencing pleasant emotions, their anxiety levels decrease, their motivation levels increase, and their perception of failure decreases despite external factors that may be beneficial or harmful (Herskovic and Matamala, 2020). Communication, by facilitating social interactions, regulates the behavior of others, allows the expression of affective states, and promotes social behavior (Paricio and Pando, 2020). Recognized emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, joy, and surprise serve as behavioral cues. They stand out for being social and relational, maintaining clear connections between the individual and the collective (Paricio and Pando, 2020).

To minimize the mark produced by the COVID-19 virus, it is necessary to take into account the evidence of how the student population in Peru is affected by the virus, where the treatment plans of the young population must differ from those of the adult population because both groups have been affected differently by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, in terms of the severity of the infection, the possible complications and the mortality rates that affect these young people, giving alterations to their behaviors (Abellán et al., 2020). Similarly, the needs of students in the area of mental health are unique and require specific assessment and focus (Livia et al., 2021). It is vital to respond that the inadequacies of students are repaired to combat an epidemic and minimize the possible complications in their mental health that may derive from it (Arévalo et al., 2020). Given such circumstances, the conditions of academic stress with physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms as well as comparing the data between men and women from the different investigations carried out (Zapata et al., 2021).

In order to minimize the footprints of the COVID-19 virus, it is necessary to consider the evidence on how the Peruvian student population has been affected by the virus. Treatment plans for the population should be differentiated from those for the adult population, as both groups are affected differently by the SARS-CoV-2 virus in terms of severity of infection, potential complications, and mortality, which would affect these young people, altering their behavior. In addition, students' mental health needs

are unique and require specific assessment and attention. Addressing student shortcomings is critical to combating the pandemic and minimizing the mental health complications it may cause.

## 2. Method

Due to the unique circumstances of the pandemic situation, a bibliographic search was carried out directly in search engines such as Google Scholar through SCIELO and SCOPUS. In this way, information is obtained from specialized official organizations that work on issues of behavioral disorders in young people and global public health, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), the United Nations Children's Fund (United Nations UNICEF). The dates of the articles found were not limited, and only articles in English and Spanish were included. Bibliographies of the articles found were also reviewed to expand the sources of information.

For this, a bibliographic search was carried out to determine the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the change in student behavior. A total of 34 articles were found and those that explicitly mentioned the impact of the coronavirus epidemic on students were selected. Behavior change was among students (12 articles were accepted), while those that did not explicitly mention behavior change in this population were rejected. It is now widely accepted that academic stress can lead to mood swings, relationship difficulties, and general physical discomfort. Some of the ways it manifests are physical symptoms that are not caused by the disease, psychological symptoms such as difficulty processing thoughts or emotions, and behavioral symptoms such as inappropriate social interactions, 24 articles were found that talk about changes in student behavior as a result of the pandemic impact of confinement. The search for articles related to the confinement of young people was expanded and as this altered their behaviors, 61 articles were found, of which 27 articles were chosen to discuss the behavioral and emotional effects of this level on young people.

Subsequently, the search for articles related to the confinement of young people was expanded, because this changed their behavior, finding a total of 61 articles, of which 17 were selected to discuss the impact of behavioral changes in students due to the pandemic.

## 3. Development of the Topic

Due to the novelty of the topic at the time of searching, the need to cover a variety of resources was expected due to the low probability of previously published articles or systematic reviews. Any report with a descriptive, analytical, experimental or evaluative scope was included as inclusion criteria, proposing specific actions (clear tasks for the target audience) and possibly carried

out by members of the organization (detailed so that they can be used). A university community, whose objective is to promote mental health, prevent psychological symptoms of behavioral disorders, manage psychological symptoms as they occur, or adapt educational and curricular strategies to improve students' mental health.

### Studies of young people in epidemics and other health emergencies

Some authors, like Arevalo et al., (2020), mentions that the restriction of young people without physical activity and balanced eating strategies that lead to overweight and obesity, the specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of the world population, with a special focus on how young people are disadvantaged and how their behaviors are changing. Despite the fact that these effects, in the medium and long term, are still uncertain, we have studies that have evaluated the repercussions on the youth population of other recent global order pandemics, such as influenza A, of 2009, or the SARS epidemic. (Serious acute respiratory syndrome, produced by the SARS-CoV coronavirus), from 2002 and 2003.

### Effects on the development of young people

As required, Calvache et al., (2022), concerning youth is a period in which the environment has a strong influence on individual behavior, contributing to prevent, through the network of values and norms acquired from the group, and the vulnerabilities associated with hostile situations, poverty and exclusion Social. Although one of the most relevant issues in this health crisis has been loneliness, and to this we add the multiple loss of life of loved ones that have occurred due to the spread of COVID-19, the emotional affectation has been enormous. (Arévalo et al., 2020).

The youth population affected by the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic continues to be socially stimulated, but their diversity has been radically reduced due to fundamental changes in their lifestyles due to lockdown and social distancing orders, school closure restrictions and relationship limitations and psychomotor activity outside the home (Chavez, 2021).

### Studies of the youth population in confinements

In the same way, the pandemic affected the communication processes of young people who indicated that they could not adequately express what they felt, which is evidenced by what was mentioned by (Calvache et al., 2022), who mentioned that assertiveness is an attitude of stability and respect, that the pandemic has meant barriers in communication and relationships, creating difficulties and limitations in the way young people communicate. These forms of isolation differ in their purpose (to protect collective health) and in their

application of the confinement orders imposed to combat the spread of infectious diseases, since the isolation induced by epidemics has its own social character. (Livia et al., 2021).

Several authors have pointed out that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic there are associated stressors that can negatively impact the mental health of young people, such as frustration and boredom with planning, uncertainty about the duration of the measures of isolation, the spread of social anxiety, restrictions to enjoy leisure and lack of personal space at home (Palace, 2020). In addition, prolonged confinement and unemployment increase the risk of parents of greater consumption of alcohol and other substances, partner abuse, family discord and sexual abuse. (Palacio et al., 2020). In addition, Paricio and Pando, (2020), confinement at home can affect healthy lifestyle habits and negatively affect the physical and mental health of adolescents. In children, time away from school is linked to less physical activity, irregular sleep patterns, and a less healthy diet. Given the scientific evidence, when these measures cannot be avoided for public health reasons, strategies and protocols are necessary to guarantee the protection of the mental health of young people.

### Closure of universities

State universities and some private universities have been greatly affected by their closures, suddenly, when confinement was decreed for almost the entire year 2020 and 2021 (Hosto et al., 2021).

Research on the 2009 influenza A epidemic differentiated the effects of short-day and long-term university closures, the latter being a contributor to lower academic performance among affected students, as well as a general worsening of their physical and mental health. (Abellán et al., 2020). The need for special attention to students with a foreseeable psychosocial risk is described: those on exchange or away from their family, with COVID-19, from low socioeconomic strata, with a personal history of mental disorders, including alcohol and drug use, caregivers of people with illness or disability and residents in rural areas or with children (Alonso et al., 2022). It might be wrong to assume that students will create their social groups online, as some may find it difficult or may not have the same access or skills to apply to them. (Whale et al., 2021). The idea is that the university fosters spaces for interaction that also include leisure and mental health issues. (Balluerka et al., 2020).

This crisis has lessons not only for Peru, but also for the world: you have to be prepared and more familiar with technology, which is currently very helpful in various activities; In addition, universities with remote technology must be taken into account, because if not with a system like this, not only would 150,000 young people drop out of their studies, due to the pandemic, but that number would triple and university education would practically disappear (Guadalupe et al., 2021).

## Risk factors for behavioral changes during the COVID-19 pandemic

The SARS-CoV-2 virus causes an infectious disease called COVID-19 (acronym for "coronavirus disease 2019"). Creating a health emergency in the field of public health. While most cases are mild, others can be severe, leading to respiratory distress, pneumonia, kidney failure, neurological complications, and other physical and mental ailments. Occasionally it produces death or leaves sequelae of relative disability, this affects young students, altering their behavior.

As the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has had a negative impact on young people, in multiple aspects of human life, both physically, psychologically, economically, socially, and culturally. Quality of life conditions are associated with confinement and the freedom to go out, spend time with friends or family, or do activities; so they are deprived of most of their social interaction(Whale et al., 2021).

Home confinement is a situation without recent precedents in our country, and it is foreseeable that it will have a significant impact on physical and psychological well-being. The paralysis of economic activity, the closure of higher education centers and the confinement of the entire population for weeks has led to an extraordinary situation with multiple stress-generating stimuli for young people(Balluerka et al., 2020). In contrast to an adult, the young person does not manage to express his emotions, or because he is in the middle of his emotional development, he does not manage to express his emotions in a healthy way.(Catagua and Escobar, 2021).

Most young people express their anxiety through disgust, locking themselves in their room, or arguing with family members. Therefore, you must express understanding for them, show them that you have empathy for their feelings and accept the way they express their emotions.(Gatell-Carbó et al., 2021). It is normal to feel fear or anxiety in the face of this pandemic. Fear is a normal and even healthy function that alerts us to dangers and helps us make decisions to protect ourselves.(Paricio and Pando, 2020).

as mentionedCalvache et al., (2022)Although one of the most pertinent issues in this health crisis is loneliness, we also add the multiple loss of loved ones due to the spread of COVID-19, as patients die and remain isolated in hospitals, leaving their family and friends behind. in the impossibility of giving them symbolic farewell ceremonies such as vigils and funerals, making it very difficult to mourn, generating difficult mourning and pathological mourning with serious consequences for the mental health of young people.

Relationships with friends are very important for young people, and it is the purpose of parents to understand and not underestimate this need.(Hernandez and Martinez, 2022). Young people can feel very frustrated at not being able to

socialize and it is imperative to take action and find ways of remote communication to meet this need during isolation(Hosto et al., 2021). Likewise, they must facilitate distance communication with other family members (such as uncles, grandparents or cousins), especially those who are close relatives.(Bazan et al., 2021).

As a result of the pandemic, students have suddenly had to adapt to new educational conditions, accessing their classes and assessments through digital channels. In other words, in a context of economic uncertainty and fear of contagion, this population has continued to face the regulatory demands of academic performance, through unaccustomed channels.(Castillo et al., 2021; Chávez, 2021; De la Barra et al., 2022). In this new scenario, most higher education institutions have tried to mitigate the difficulties of their students in parallel, without necessarily managing enough information regarding their conditions and state of health.(Carvacho et al., 2021).

### What is a conduct disorder?

They are a group of symptoms that deviate from normal behavior and consist of repeated and persistent patterns of antisocial, aggressive, or defiant behavior. To be diagnosed, the behavior must have persisted for at least six months and reached an age level that markedly violates socially expected behavior. This behavior can also have negative consequences on a personal, social, academic and family level.(WHO, 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

The most common symptoms may be: excessive fighting and teasing, abuse of people and animals, serious property damage, arson, theft, repeated lying, truancy and running away from home, unusually frequent tantrums, disobedience and seriousness. When it comes to adolescents who may have conduct disorder, we first ask whether it has been around since puberty or "has always been this way." If they appear during puberty, it may just be a symptom of a pubertal crisis.(WHO, 2020). But if these difficulties arise at a young age, the prognosis may be worse without early intervention.(WHO, 2020; Palacio, 2020; Palacios et al., 2020).

COVID-19 has put the well-being of an entire generation at risk. Even before the pandemic, too many children and adolescents carried the burden of mental illness without support.(UNICEF, 2021).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is estimated that 15% of children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 (around 16 million) live with a diagnosed mental disorder. That's higher than the global average of about 13 percent. Reducing the stigma around mental health illnesses and guaranteeing access to quality health services should be a right of all children and adolescents(UNICEF, 2021). Like physical health, mental health is a right and should be viewed as something positive: it underlies the human capacity to think, feel, learn, work, build meaningful relationships, and contribute

to communities and the world.(UNICEF, 2021). We can say that normal behavior in young people can include: Spending more time with friends and less time with family. Spend more time alone in your room. Try different personal styles (clothes, hairstyle, makeup, etc.)(Tamayo et al., 2020).

In this sense, it is necessary to ensure that the youth population has access to quality education without compromising their social development, making it easier for them to enjoy leisure and sports abroad and maintaining the health of the community is perhaps one of the greatest challenges of the health authorities that must face this great challenge.

#### 4. Discussion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the mental health of students has been described in the literature as a need that higher education institutions must prioritize. This comprehensive report outlines recommended actions for students during this pandemic. Although no evaluation of the effectiveness of these actions was found and the included references are descriptive, it is reasonable to consider implementing several of these actions given the urgency of the pandemic. In this sense, we see it as a fertile field of research, taking advantage of the fact that these academic spaces carry out research on mental health conditions and the actions that have been carried out to disseminate them among the scientific community and encourage collaborative work.

The behavior described, which can be included in a mental health program, hypothetically sees the student in a complex system in which, in addition to the university, he interacts with his peers, family, and the community, and within which different situations and affect your health. Therefore, it may be useful to apply a conceptual framework of ecosystems to contextualize them and make visible the multiple interactions that occur within the environment in which students are immersed.

In the field of health, all the situations and actors related to health phenomena are seen from the nano scale (in this case students-teachers and peers), micro scale (university, family), meso scale (community) and macro scale. (regional and national). In the field of mental health, this separation aims to channel the forces of social, human and physical capital at these levels and their links to meet the needs of populations at risk of mental disorders.(Arévalo et al., 2020). At the nano scale, student-teacher interactions become opportunities for symptom detection, since direct and continuous contact during academic activities makes it possible to monitor student performance.(Whale et al., 2021). Although not specifically identified in the literature, this opportunity requires teacher training to advance knowledge and skills, as familiarity with mental health issues is necessary, which may not occur naturally. It should be noted that the mental health of teachers should also be of university interest because it can have a direct impact on

students(Bautista et al., 2022). Peer support is invaluable, which is why it is often found in reviewed sources. Even virtually, sharing experiences with peers appears to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, in part due to a sense of connection and belonging and learning from peer experiences.(Carvacho et al., 2021; Castillo et al., 2021; Chávez, 2021).

At the micro level, the university institution itself is the command center for the interventions described, giving the guidelines on which the study plans, academic requirements, institutional climate and resource management depend. Therefore, the will of those who govern it is a necessary condition for any action(Luque et al., 2022; Ñañez et al., 2021; Ramírez et al., 2020). With respect to families, it should be noted that stressful events in the nuclear family can have an impact on a student's mental health, and the basic and technological demands experienced at home will directly affect a student's quality of life, including their home stay. University(Jaramillo et al., 2022; Lillo-Navarro et al., 2022; Loaiza, 2021). That is why the involvement of society, the state and financial institutions is necessary, because university resources are not enough. At this level, it is essential to promptly detect and attend to intrafamily violence that continues to be observed during the pandemic in Peru.(Calvache et al., 2022; Carvacho et al., 2021; Castillo et al., 2021). Universities can be gateways and a hotline must be provided to continue with the intervention of other additional actors such as the judiciary and health services(Alonso et al., 2022).

In this sense, the meso and macro levels determine the continuation of the case and the resolution of many of the needs identified by the universities. For example, in the case of suicidal behavior, coordination with health services is essential to provide possible clinical care after early detection.(Serratosa Alonso, 2022; Tamayo et al., 2020; Vall-Roqué et al., 2021). We believe that SARS-CoV-2 should be considered as "a virus" that enters an ecosystem and can be sustained in the long term. In fact, mental health problems will persist, so actions must be designed to be long-lasting, rather than delegating all responsibility to universities(Robles & Lopez, 2022; Romero Jeldres & Tenorio Eitel, 2021; Sánchez & Ticona, 2021).

The strength of this synthesis is that exhaustive search allows for purposive sampling of information. However, it is important to note the limitation that the evidence was unqualified and could only include descriptive studies and expert advice.(Abellán et al., 2020; Alonso et al., 2022; Ballena et al., 2021).

From a critical science perspective, the evidence will be classified as low quality, which may lead to an overestimation of benefit in the recommendations, which is to be expected given the recent start of pandemic research, so You should consider this summary. Serve as a description of actions that university members can analyze when planning mental health interventions in young university students.

## 5. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed the way our society lives. Particularly vulnerable to these changes are young people, who are experiencing the effects of public health measures to contain the epidemic in their most drastic form. Infectious disease pandemics are associated with increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress among young people, representing a situation in which grieving the loss of a loved one is complicated by the inability to perform farewell rituals...

For young people, isolation and social distancing orders mean school and university closures, an inability to interact and play with peers, and a lack of physical activity and exercise outdoors, all of which can limit their physical abilities and mobility. appropriate, in their socio-emotional development. In addition, the social and economic consequences of the crisis, with many households losing employment and purchasing power, make their future even more vulnerable and uncertain.

A group of young people who are especially vulnerable to the psychological impact of the pandemic are those who have been previously diagnosed with a mental disorder and must ensure adequate follow-up by the professionals in charge. Likewise, young people who present symptoms related to this crisis (irritability, anxiety symptoms, excessive sadness, phobias or uncontrollable fears, difficulty grieving...) should also be evaluated by a mental health professional. Using telecare whenever possible.

It is necessary to develop preventive strategies, to provide parents with information on parenting in crisis situations and positive parenting, promote proper healthy habits and provide tools to help them manage their children's emotions. In addition, public health measures in the face of a possible outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 virus or a new pandemic must be reassessed based on the scientific evidence accumulated during this crisis, focusing on the specific needs of the youth population. Protecting the rights, mental health and comprehensive development of young people without endangering the health of the community is a social challenge that health authorities must address.

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