

## Mental health's description of Jenderal Soedirman University students pasca covid-19 pandemic

**KG Swasti\***, HP Choiruna, W Ekowati, RF Amalia

Health Sciences Faculty, Jenderal Soedirman University

\*Email: keksi\_girindra@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

Mental health can affect a person's physical health and productivity, so mental health aspects are important to pay attention to. Ironically, the prevalence of mental health problems continues to increase with the COVID-19 pandemic, including among adolescents. This is indicated by the increasing number of anxiety disorders, depression, and suicide attempts. The purpose of this study was to find out the picture of mental health among college students after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted on 174 students in Banyumas Regency who were selected using a consecutive technique with 2 weeks of data collection. Mental health conditions are measured by the Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ) instrument. The data were analyzed univariately by displaying the frequency distribution values. The results of the study showed that 60.7% of the respondents had mental health problems, and only 29.3% were mentally healthy. The most common symptoms of mental health problems experienced by respondents were fatigue (77.6%), anxiety, tension, and worry (65.6%), and difficulty making decisions (58.6%). It was also found that 24 respondents had thoughts of ending their lives. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents have mental health problems, as indicated by physical, psychological, and cognitive symptoms. Mental health services are needed to reduce symptoms and restore students' mental health.

**Keyword:** Mental health, pandemic Covid-19, student

### **1. Introduction**

Indonesia is one of the five most populous countries in the world. The results of the census conducted by the Central Statistics Agency show that the population of Indonesia in 2020 will reach 270,203,917 people <sup>(1)</sup>. The majority of the population is in the age group of 10–25 years (born in 1997–2012), amounting to 27.93%. Individuals born during this period are known as "generation Z." Generation Z is also known as the "iGeneration," the "internet generation," or the "net generation." Since childhood, generation Z has been familiar with technology and is familiar with sophisticated gadgets. Smartphones are a very important medium for this generation. Generation Z is experiencing never-before-seen issues because they were raised in a time of peace with cutting-edge technology. A person's inability to deal

with new technologies or the effects of using them could result in poor psychological health in the digital era <sup>(2)</sup>.

Smartphone media is used for a wide variety of online activities. The COVID-19 which forces people to curtail social activities, worsens this condition. Online activities such as work and study are also done using internet-based tools. Smartphones, social media sites, and other web-based platforms are widely used in daily life. According to recent data, 155 minutes per day are anticipated to be spent browsing mobile Internet by 2021, up from 32 minutes per day in 2011. The daily time spent on social media platforms has increased at the same period, from 96 minutes in 2012 to over 135 minutes in 2018. Increased and even excessive use of social networking platforms has been linked to multipurpose smartphone apps and constant Internet access, which if not managed, can lead to compulsive behavior or other issues <sup>(3)</sup>.

Gadgets are a learning solution for students during the COVID-19 pandemic, but on the other hand, gadgets do provide not only benefits but also have negative impacts. Students become more dependent on devices. This condition raises the phenomenon of "toxic productivity," a condition where a person works when he is not yet responsible for working. Another phenomenon in generation Z is the *fear of missing out* (FoMO). FoMO has been defined as a person's extreme anxiety over missing out on important, enjoyable, or consequential experiences that their peers are having <sup>(4)</sup>. FoMO was determined to be a key influencing factor for mental health and to be extremely strongly related to and closely associated with mental health in a systematic literature review from 2002 to 2020 <sup>(5)</sup>.

FoMO has been cited as a key mediating component in numerous studies on stress or psychological problems during the COVID-19 <sup>(6)</sup>. US teenage psychosocial adjustment studies revealed that greater FoMO suggested more severe mental health issues. Another study revealed that FoMO played a significant role in the rise of mental health issues, such as psychological mood and mental disorders. The aforementioned phenomena have caused widespread acceptance of the idea that the generation Z is rapacious and susceptible to mental health issues <sup>(7)</sup>.

Mental health is a condition in which a person can develop physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually so that the individual is aware of their abilities, can handle pressure, can work productively, and can contribute to their community <sup>(8)</sup>. This shows that mental health plays an important role in supporting the productivity and quality of one's physical health. Mental health problems in adolescents have increased in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this trend. Extreme shifts in everyday routine are a major cause of stress. Contrarily, the adolescent population is adversely affected psychologically by a succession of significant changes in life and education, such as school closures and limitations on activity space during COVID-19, and this effect is particularly strong when compared to other populations <sup>(4)</sup>. Three areas of college students' lives—interpersonal connections and academic life, social isolation, and fear of contagion—were stressed as a result of the COVID-19 <sup>(9)</sup>. Following five weeks of COVID-19, university students' mental health drastically declined, and perceived stress was found to be negatively connected with their mental health state, according to a longitudinal study on university students in the UK <sup>(10)</sup>.

Studies have also shown that college students who are under more stress tend to have more psychological issues. Lockdown isolation and stress frequently cause a variety of psychological issues, including depression, insomnia, tension, irritability, and anxiety. College students' levels of mental health impairment can be predicted positively by stress. According to studies, stress is closely associated to mental health during COVID-19 <sup>(5)</sup>. Given this context, research is required to present an overview of mental health disorders following the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The research used a quantitative descriptive method carried out in a cross-sectional study. The population is health science students, selecting samples using consecutive techniques, a research time of 2 weeks, and a total of 174 respondents. The research instrument uses a self-reporting questionnaire (SRQ) distributed online using a Google form. Assessment of mental health status in students using the Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ) instrument developed by WHO to screen psychiatric disorders

such as neurosis disorders, psychotic disorders, alcohol and psychoactive substance abuse, and PTSD. Good internal consistency was suggested by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.784. Additionally, SRQ-20 showed strong face validity. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee Faculty of Health Sciences Universitas Jenderal Soedirman with ethical approval number 835/EC/KEPK/VII/2022. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Important information related to the purpose of the study, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study were explained to the respondents. The confidentiality of the respondents was also maintained throughout the study. The collected data were analyzed univariately and presented in a frequency distribution table.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Description of the respondent's mental health status

Table 1 explains that out of a total of 174 respondents, 105 students (67.0%) had mental health problems.

**Table 1.** Description of the respondent's mental health status (n=174)

Status of Mental Health	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mentally healthy	69	29,3
Have mental health problems	105	60,7
Total	174	100

#### 3.2 Description of respondents' mental health indicators

**Table 2.** Description of respondents' mental health indicators (n=174)

Mental Health Indicators	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Have frequent headaches	85	48,9	89	51,2
Loss of appetite	49	28,2	125	71,8
Sleep is not restful.	92	52,9	82	47,1
It's easy to get scared.	93	53,5	81	46,6
Feeling anxious, tense, and worried	114	65,6	60	34,5
Hands shaking	30	17,2	144	82,8
Experiencing indigestion	54	31,0	120	69,0
Difficult to think clearly	82	47,1	92	52,9
Feeling Unhappy	55	31,4	119	68,4
Cry more often.	71	40,8	103	59,2
Difficulty enjoying daily activities	71	40,8	103	59,2
It's hard to make a decision.	102	58,6	72	41,4
Interrupted or abandoned daily tasks	63	36,2	111	63,8
Feeling unable to play a role or be useful in life	66	37,9	108	62,1
Losing interest in many things	74	42,5	100	57,5
Feeling worthless	66	37,9	108	62,1
Having thoughts of ending life	24	13,8	150	86,2
Feeling tired all the time	94	54,0	80	46,0
Feeling uncomfortable in the stomach	69	39,7	105	60,3
Easily tired	135	77,6	39	22,4

Table 2 shows that the mental health indicators most experienced by respondents were feelings of anxiety, tension, and worry (65.6%), followed by difficulty making decisions (58.6%), and feeling tired

all the time (54%). This indicator also shows that there are 24 respondents who have the desire to end their life.

College students' mental health is affected by a number of variables, such as sociodemographic ones (age, gender, occupation), physiological ones (such as a history of prior mental disorders), lifestyle ones (such as physical activity, internet use, and dietary patterns), biological ones (such as past medical history and present health status), relational ones (such as friendships, family ties, and loneliness), and response predictors [8]. The condition of the Covid-19 pandemic also affects student mental health. The Covid-19 pandemic affects anxiety about health conditions and impacts students' psychosocial and academic life and increases tendency for depression in various age groups, with more severe complaints experienced by younger age groups <sup>(11)</sup>.

Symptoms of mental health problems often found in the respondents to this study were feelings of anxiety, tension, and worry. These findings are supported by Basic Health Research data from 2018, which show that the prevalence of emotional, and mental disorders, as indicated by symptoms of depression and anxiety in people aged 15 and up, reached around 6.1% of Indonesia's total population, or the equivalent of 11 million people <sup>(12)</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates this condition. Simegn et al.'s research (2021) concerning the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on 423 students showed the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression to be 46.3%, 52%, and 28.6%, respectively. As it is known, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a global problem in many countries around the world, including Indonesia.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Indonesians since 2020 and is still being investigated. According to Maslach and Leiter (2008), prolonged exposure to stress has a negative effect that can cause a person to experience burnout <sup>(12)</sup>. This opinion is reinforced by Pines and Aronso in Swasti (2017), who argue that long-term involvement in situations full of emotional demands causes a person to experience burnout, characterized by physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion <sup>(13)</sup>. Someone who experiences burnout will show symptoms of chronic fatigue <sup>(14)</sup>. Students have been subjected to changes in the educational system for more than two years. Learning initially carried out face-to-face on campus has switched to online learning. Students are required to adapt to these changes quickly. Even though students experience many obstacles with online learning, these include limited learning facilities, increasing costs to support learning activities, increasing the number of assignments with shorter processing times, time differences between regions, and unstable internet networks. These conditions increased the pressure on students while studying during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not to mention that lecture time becomes very flexible beyond the active time of face-to-face lectures. Not infrequently, the lecturer gives a deadline for collecting assignments until just before midnight. This affects students' sleep and rest time, so it is logical that in this study, the results found that more than 50% of respondents felt tired all the time, did not sleep well, and often had headaches. These findings are consistent with the findings of Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel (2014), who discovered that people who experience sustained high levels of burnout have physical and psychological problems <sup>(14)</sup>. Peterson et al. (2008) added that the problems experienced were anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, memory impairment, and neck pain <sup>(15)</sup>. Other problems include headaches and an increased risk of infection <sup>(16)</sup>.

Burnout experienced by students as a result of pandemic conditions is also possible due to a lack of social support. Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976) in Swasti, Ekowati, and Rahmawati (2017) explain that burnout occurs in conditions of social relations that are changing rapidly. The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic requires people to limit direct interaction. Restriction for more than two years leads to boredom, especially for students in their adolescent development. Individuals are experiencing very rapid social change during the adolescent development stage, where individuals prefer to establish social relationships with larger networks. Teenagers have a close relationship with their peers and use it as a social support system for themselves. The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the social structure of adolescents, thereby exacerbating the impact of the pandemic on adolescent mental health. There are even teenagers who experience anxiety and social phobia when they have to return to the face-to-face learning system <sup>(14)</sup>. Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema (2005) explained that feedback,

social support, and good working relationships are part of the job resources that can reduce burnout levels. The high job demand, which includes role stress, role conflict, role confusion, work overload, and a lack of job resources, causes burnout <sup>(15)</sup>.

Another symptom that should not be ignored are thoughts of ending one's life through suicide. These symptoms were experienced by 24 respondents. Suicidal ideation can be triggered by mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Rachmawati (2020) states that 80–90% of suicide cases are the result of depression and anxiety. Suicide rates in Indonesia can reach 10,000 per year, or one suicide every hour. According to a suicidologist, 4.2% of students in Indonesia have had thoughts of suicide. Among college students, 6.9% had the intention to commit suicide, while another 3% had attempted suicide <sup>(18)</sup>. A similar condition experienced by adolescents in America, research in Kentucky, United States, said that about 30% of preparatory level students and high school students had seriously thought about attempting suicide in the past year when studied, 19% had specific plans to commit suicide, and 11% had attempted suicide <sup>(18)</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that 60.7% of respondents had mental health problems and only 29.3% were in a mentally healthy condition. The most common symptoms of mental health problems experienced by respondents were fatigue (77.6%), anxiety, tension, and worry (65.6%), and difficulty making decisions (58.6%). There were 24 respondents who had thoughts of ending their lives. Based on the results of this study, it can be suggested to students that they be able to recognize their mental health conditions so that early treatment efforts can be made. Our findings highlight the need for psychological interventions to help reduce symptoms and restore students' mental health. This study provides an overview of mental health among students in one faculty, so the sample used cannot represent students as a whole. Therefore, in further research, it is necessary to conduct research with a wider scope.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Rector and LPPM Jenderal Soedirman University, as well as all parties who have helped in this research.

## References

- [1] Badan Pusat Statistik. Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2020. Berita Resmi Statistik. 07/01/XXIV. 2021.
- [2] Liu, H., Liu, W., Yoganathan, V., & Osburg, V. S. (2021). COVID-19 information overload and generation Z's social media discontinuance intention during the pandemic lockdown. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120600>
- [3] Tandon, A., Dhir, A., Talwar, S., Kaur, P., & Mäntymäki, M. (2021). Dark consequences of social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO): Social media stalking, comparisons, and fatigue. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120931>
- [4] Liu, H., Liu, W., Yoganathan, V., & Osburg, V. S. (2021). COVID-19 information overload and generation Z's social media discontinuance intention during the pandemic lockdown. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120600>
- [5] Adams, S. K., Murdock, K. K., Daly-Cano, M., & Rose, M. (2020). Sleep in the social world of college students: Bridging interpersonal stress and fear of missing out with mental health. *Behavioral Sciences*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs10020054>.
- [6] Luca, L., Burlea, S. L., Chiroasca, A.-C., Marin, I. M., Ciubara, A. B., & Ciubara, A. (2020). The FOMO Syndrome and the Perception of Personal Needs in Contemporary Society. *BRAIN. BROAD RESEARCH IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND NEUROSCIENCE*, 11(1Sup1),

- 38–46. <https://doi.org/10.18662/brain/11.1sup1/27>
- [7] Yang, H., Liu, B., & Fang, J. (2021). Stress and Problematic Smartphone Use Severity: Smartphone Use Frequency and Fear of Missing Out as Mediators. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.659288>
- [8] Furber, G., Leach, M., Guy, S., & Segal, L. (2017). Developing a broad categorisation scheme to describe risk factors for mental illness, for use in prevention policy and planning. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 51(3), 230–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004867416642844>
- [9] Zurlo, M. C., Cattaneo Della Volta, M. F., & Vallone, F. (2020). COVID-19 Student Stress Questionnaire: Development and Validation of a Questionnaire to Evaluate Students' Stressors Related to the Coronavirus Pandemic Lockdown. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.576758>.
- [10] Savage, M.J.; James, R.; Magistro, D.; Donaldson, J.; Healy, L.C.; Nevill, M.; Hennis, P.J. Mental health and movement behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic in UK university students: Prospective cohort study. *Mental. Health Phys. Act.* 2020, 19, 100357.
- [11] Huang, Y., & Zhao, N. (2020). Generalized anxiety disorder, depressive symptoms and sleep quality during COVID-19 outbreak in China: a web-based cross-sectional survey. *Psychiatry Research*, 288. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112954> [12] Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia. (2018). Riset Kesehatan Dasar 2018. Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kesehatan. Jakarta: Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia
- [12] Maslach, C. (1982). Understanding Burnout: Definitional Issues in Analyzing a Complex Phenomenon, In W. S. Paine (Ed), *Job Stress and Burnout*, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications
- [13] Swasti, K.G., Ekowati, W., dan Rahmawati, E. (2017). Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi burnout pada Wanita bekerja di Kabupaten Banyumas. *Jurnal Keperawatan Soedirman*. Vol 12. No. 3. 190-198
- [14] Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E. & SanzVergel. (2014). Burnout and worker engagement: The DJ-R approach. *Annual Review of Organization Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 389- 411
- [15] Peterson, U., Demerouti, E. Bergstrom, G., Samuelsson, M. Asberg, M. Nygren, A. (2008). Burnout and physician and mental health among Swedish health care worker. *Journal of Advance Nursing*.62. 84-95
- [16] Mohren, D.C.L. Swaen, G.M.H. Kant, I.J., Van Amelswoort, L.G.P.M. (Borm, P.J.A., & Galama, J. (2003). Common infections and the role of burnout in Dutch workong population. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*. 55. 207-208
- [17] Rachmawati, A.A. (2020). Darurat Kesehatan mental bagi remaja. Egsaug
- [18] Felling, J., Holzinger, D., Beitel, C., Laucht, C., Goldber, D.P. (2009). The Impact of Language Skills on Mental Health in Teenagers with Hearing Impairments. *Acta Psychiatr Scand*, 120: 153–159