

Study on the Mental Health Status of University Students in Lhasa and the Current Situation of Students' Self-Coping in the Context of Epidemic of COVID-19

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Abstract

Objective: To explore the mental health status of college students in Lhasa City and the current situation of students' Self-response in the emergency situation of the new crown pneumonia epidemic, so as to provide reference for the psychological assistance of college students in the emergency situation of the epidemic. **Methods:** A total of 637 college students in Lhasa were selected as the research objects, and the mental health status of college students and students' Self-response situation in the emergency situation of the new crown pneumonia epidemic were analyzed through a questionnaire survey. **Results:** Among the 637 Lhasa college students, 507 (79.59%) had a new understanding of life due to the epidemic, and 352 (55.26%) were overwhelmed with a sense of powerlessness due to the epidemic. There were 394 people (61.85%) in severe areas, and 394 people (61.85%) who did not go to crowded places due to fear of the epidemic. College students of different genders have certain differences in their new understanding of life and whether they will be flooded with powerlessness ($P < 0.05$). There is a certain difference in whether college students of different majors will be flooded with powerlessness ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** The sudden epidemic can affect the mental health of college students in Lhasa. Colleges and universities need to provide targeted psychological interventions for different students, and guide students to take active coping methods to improve their ability to cope with psychological problems.

Keywords

Epidemic Emergency Environment; Lhasa City; College Students; Mental Health Conditions; Self-response to the Current Situation.

1. Introduction

At the end of 2019, there was a sudden outbreak of novel coronavirus pneumonia (referred to as neo-coronavirus pneumonia) in China, and this outbreak not only seriously affected the physical and mental health of infected patients, but also caused certain psychological effects on other people in society, including university students[1]. In order to understand the psychological health of students in western universities affected by this outbreak, this study conducted a combination of online and offline surveys with students in Lhasa universities as the research subjects, in order to analyze the psychological problems and coping methods of students in western universities when facing the outbreak, so as to provide some reference opinions for universities to deal with similar outbreaks.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted through a combination of online surveys such as Questionnaire Star and paper questionnaires, 685 questionnaires were pushed/distributed to students in universities within Lhasa, 685 were returned, with a return rate of 100%; 637 valid questionnaires were returned, with an effective rate of 0.93%.

Before conducting the survey, students were informed that each item would only be used for this research project and no personal information would be disclosed.

2.2. Content of the Survey

The main indicators of the survey include basic information on students' gender, grade, major and other psychological changes after the outbreak.

2.3. Statistical Methods

The data were statistically analysed using SPSS 26.0 software. Count data such as age were described by means plus or minus marked differences, and data such as gender were statistically described using indicators such as composition ratio and percentage. t-test, chi-square test and ANOVA were used for single factor analysis, and multiple linear regression was used for multi-factor analysis with a test level of $\alpha=0.05$.

3. Results

3.1. Basic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Table 1. Basic characteristics of the surveyed Lhasa university students

Projects	Group	Number of people	Percentage
Gender	Male	290	45.53%
	Female	347	54.47%
Grade	Freshman	235	36.89%
	Sophomore	178	27.94%
	Junior year	106	16.64%
	Senior year	62	9.73%
	Fifth-year	7	1.10%
	Postgraduate	49	7.69%
Ethnic	Han nationality	200	31.40%
	Hui nationality	32	5.02%
	Tibetan	382	59.97%
	Other ethnic groups	23	3.61%
Major	Medicine	250	39.25%
	Non-medical	387	60.75%

Among the 637 university students in Lhasa, 290 (45.53%) were male and 347 (54.47%) were female; 250 (39.25%) were medical students and 387 (60.75%) were non-medical students; The oldest age was 30 years old, the youngest was 17 years old, and the average age was 25.55 ± 1.33 years old; The highest proportion of students was freshmen (36.89%), followed by sophomores The highest proportion of freshmen students (36.89%), followed by sophomores,

juniors, seniors and postgraduates, and the lowest proportion of fifth-year students (1.10%);The highest proportion of students surveyed was Tibetan students (59.97%), followed by Han nationality (31.04%), Hui nationality (5.02%) and other ethnic groups (3.61%). See Table 1 for details.

3.2. Overall Psychological Status of the Surveyed Students in the Epidemic

Of the 637 students surveyed, nearly 30% expressed their desire to start school, nearly 6% said they didn't want to be at home in particular, 18.68% said they "didn't want to be at home all the time and didn't want to go back to school", although 24.49% said they "wanted to be at home all the time However, 24.49% of students said they "wanted to be at home all the time". In addition, 507 students (79.59%) had a new appreciation for life because of the epidemic, 352 students (55.26%)

were filled with a sense of powerlessness because of the epidemic, 394 students (61.85%) were afraid of coming into contact with people in areas where the epidemic was more severe after the start of the school year, and 394 students (61.85%) did not go to crowded places because of fear of the epidemic. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2. Overall psychological status of the surveyed Lhasa university students during the epidemic

Survey item	Options	Number of persons	Percentage
What was the most emotional part of not being able to start school normally due to the epidemic?	Want to be at home all the time	156	24.49%
	Want to start school	188	29.51%
	Don't want to be at home all the time and don't want to go back to school	119	18.68%
	Doesn't matter	136	21.35%
	Don't want to be home at all	38	5.97%
What was your psychological state when you were suddenly informed that school would start when the epidemic was so severe that you could not start school normally?	Don't want to start school	135	21.19%
	Doesn't matter	213	33.44%
	School has finally started	189	29.67%
Did you have a new appreciation for life after the outbreak?	Yes	507	79.59%
	No	69	10.83%
	Not sure	61	9.58%
Did you feel powerless when you thought about the situation?	Yes	352	55.26%
	No	198	31.08%
	unclear	87	13.66%
Were you afraid to come into contact with people in the more affected areas after school started?	Yes	394	61.85%
	No	179	28.10%
	unclear	64	10.05%
Did fear prevent you from going to places where people were gathered?	Yes	394	61.85%
	No	182	28.57%
	unclear	61	9.58%

3.3. Single Factor Analysis of Psychological Problems Reported by Students Facing an Outbreak

3.3.1. Psychological Reactions of University Students of Different Genders and Majors in the Face of Sudden Outbreaks

As seen in Table 3, there are some differences ($P < 0.05$) in the perception of newness of life and whether or not they would be filled with a sense of powerlessness among university students of different genders. There were some differences between university students of different majors in whether they would be filled with a sense of powerlessness ($P < 0.05$).

Table 3. Psychological responses to public health emergencies among university students by gender

Psychological problems	Gender	n	$\bar{x} \pm s$	F	P
Students experience inability to return to school after the outbreak	Male	290	2.56±1.264	0.07	0.791
	Female	347	2.54±1.212		
Psychology of receiving notice to start school	Male	290	2.23±0.767	0.101	0.751
	Female	347	2.25±0.809		
New awareness of life	Male	290	1.39±0.718	10.845	0.001
	Female	347	1.22±0.544		
Whether they are filled with feelings of powerlessness	Male	290	1.52±0.707	4.147	0.042
	Female	347	1.64±0.726		
Is there a fear of coming into contact with people in serious areas after the start of school	Male	290	1.48±0.682	0.001	0.978
	Female	347	1.48±0.664		
Do you not go to places where people gather because of fear?	Male	290	1.51±0.697	1.06	0.304
	Female	347	1.45±0.636		

Table 4. Psychological responses to public health emergencies among university students of different majors

Psychology	Specialities	n	$\bar{x} \pm s$	F	P
The emotion of not being able to start school	Medical	250	2.6±1.216	0.624	0.43
	Non-Medical	387	2.52±1.247		
The psychology of receiving the notice to start school	Medicine	250	2.28±0.777	0.99	0.32
	Non-medical	387	2.22±0.782		
A new understanding of life	Medicine	250	1.27±0.632	0.793	0.373
	Non-medical	387	1.32±0.636		
Feelings of powerlessness	Medicine	250	1.64±0.704	2.876	0.09
	Non-medical	387	1.55±0.727		
Is there a fear of coming into contact with people in serious areas after the start of the school year?	Medicine	250	1.52±0.678	1.321	0.251
	Non-medical	387	1.46±0.668		
Do you not go to places where people gather because of fear?	Medicine	250	1.47±0.615	0.079	0.778
	Non-medical	387	1.48±0.695		

4. Discussion

This survey was conducted among university students from Tibet, which is not a serious area of the epidemic and is a remote area, so it can reflect the psychological condition and self-coping of students in non-serious and remote areas under the environment of the New Coronary Pneumonia epidemic outbreak.

4.1. Impact of the Epidemic on Students' Psychological Status

Of the 637 students surveyed, nearly 30% expressed a desire to start school, nearly 6% said they did not want to be home in particular, 18.68% said they "did not want to be home all the time and did not want to go back to school", although 24.49% also said they "wanted to be home all the time". However, 24.49% of students said they "wanted to be at home all the time". In addition, 507 students (79.59%) had a new understanding of life due to the epidemic, 352 students (55.26%) were overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness due to the epidemic, 394 students (61.85%) were afraid of coming into contact with people in areas where the epidemic was more severe after the start of the school year, and 394 students (61.85%) did not go to crowded places due to fear of the epidemic. This method of teaching requires a certain degree of self-discipline on the part of the students compared to classroom teaching, so there is a sense of urgency to start school and a sense of "wanting to stay home". In addition, although the epidemic is not happening around them, due to the rapid spread of the Internet, students receive information from the epidemic area every day and have a new understanding of life and the future to a certain extent.

4.2. Students' Self-coping Styles in the Context of an Epidemic

Coping styles are conscious and purposeful behaviours that individuals use to regulate their physical and emotional reactions to stressful events in response to changes in their environment. In the case of university students faced with a new pneumonia epidemic as an unexpected stressor, their coping styles are determined by both environmental events and individual needs. As seen in the research study, there were some differences between male and female university students in terms of new perceptions of life and whether they would be overwhelmed by feelings of powerlessness ($p < 0.05$). There was a difference between medical students and non-medical students in whether they would be overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness ($p < 0.05$). It is evident that women are more sensitive and more willing to talk to help and adjust their perceptions in the face of a new coronary pneumonia outbreak than men. Medical students are more affected by the epidemic than non-medical students, which is related to their lack of medical knowledge. As different students have different psychological conditions and coping styles in the face of an epidemic, universities need to intervene in a timely manner to provide different levels of psychological support, avoid panic and increase family support and school support. Secondly, as social support, the government and mainstream media should enhance information transparency in order to reduce the panic of university students and increase their confidence in facing the epidemic[2]. If necessary, one-to-one psychological counselling can be provided to reduce the negative impact of students' negative emotions.

In conclusion, the sudden outbreak of the epidemic can have an impact on the mental health of university students in Lhasa and requires appropriate intervention by the relevant authorities.

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