



“I am Trying to be Protected and People Act like it’s Not Even Happening”: Emerging Adults with and without Chronic Medical Conditions Experiences with COVID-19



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Background

- Emerging adults face many life changes and stressors
- Chronic medical conditions (CMCs) bring about additional changes and stressors
- Aim: explore impact of COVID-19 on emerging adults with and without CMCs

Methods

- Longitudinal study of health and well-being in undergraduate students
 - Baseline 2017-2018
 - Current analyses of follow-up data in July 2020 and January 2021
 - July age $M=21.73$, $SD=1.41$; January 2021 age $M=22.44$, $SD=1.41$
- Measures
 - Demographics of participants; Perceived Stress Scale; Covid Exposure and Family Impact Scale-Adolescent and Young Adult (CEFIS-AYA)
 - Qualitative analysis of responses to “Please tell us about other effects of COVID-19 on you and your family, both negative and/or positive”

Results

- In the full sample, general stress significantly decreased in January 2021 ($t(98)=2.193$, $p=0.031$, $d=0.22$) **BUT** COVID-19 related distress did not significantly change

Measure (Range of Measure)	July 2020 (N = 135)	January 2021 (N = 130)
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
CEFIS Exposure (0-28)	8.89 (3.76)	9.91(3.96)
CEFIS Impact (1-4)	2.85 (0.56)	2.95 (0.61)
CEFIS Distress (1-10)	5.76 (1.94)	5.98 (1.81)
PSS (0-40)	21.45 (6.71)	20.22 (7.24)

- In January 2021, compared to peers without CMCs, participants with CMCs reported higher:
 - COVID-19 exposure (No CMC $M=0.34$, $SD=0.137$; CMC $M=0.396$, $SD=0.147$; $t(131)=-2.106$, $p=0.037$, $d=-0.36$)
 - COVID-19 distress (No CMC $M=5.80$, $SD=1.67$; CMC $M=6.48$, $SD=2.14$; $t(127)=-1.999$, $p=0.048$, $d=-0.35$)

Conclusions

- Impacts of COVID-19 are widespread, and had significant physical and mental health consequences beyond COVID-19 infection
- There are unique considerations for emerging adults with CMCs, and COVID exposure and distress increased as the pandemic continued

More questions? Contact Keely Bieniak at kbieniak@depaul.edu

Almost half of emerging adults (46%) reported COVID-19 had an impact on their health or of those around them.

Collectively COVID-19 has caused a burden on all our lives in all aspects

The stress triggered an autoimmune disorder I have and I’m losing hair...

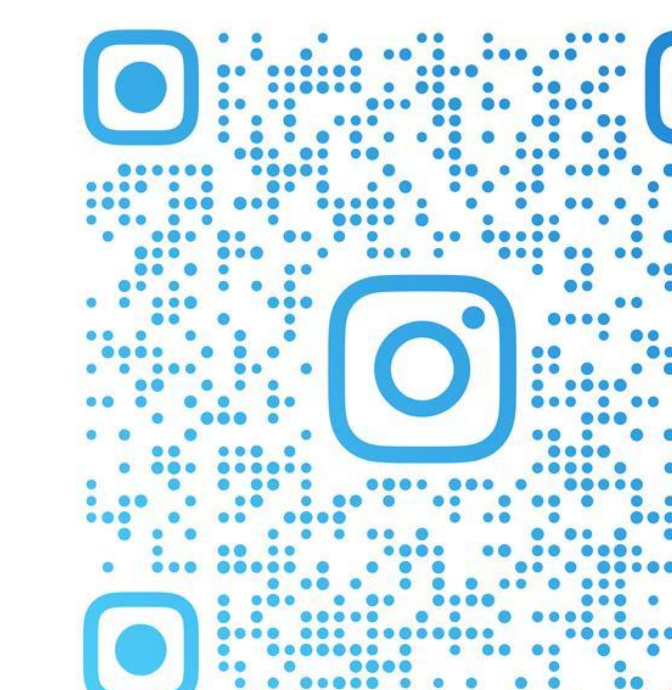
I experienced a reduction in stress as a result of being forced to step back from my exceedingly busy lifestyle.

I haven't been able to take one of my medications for almost a year because it weakens my immune system.

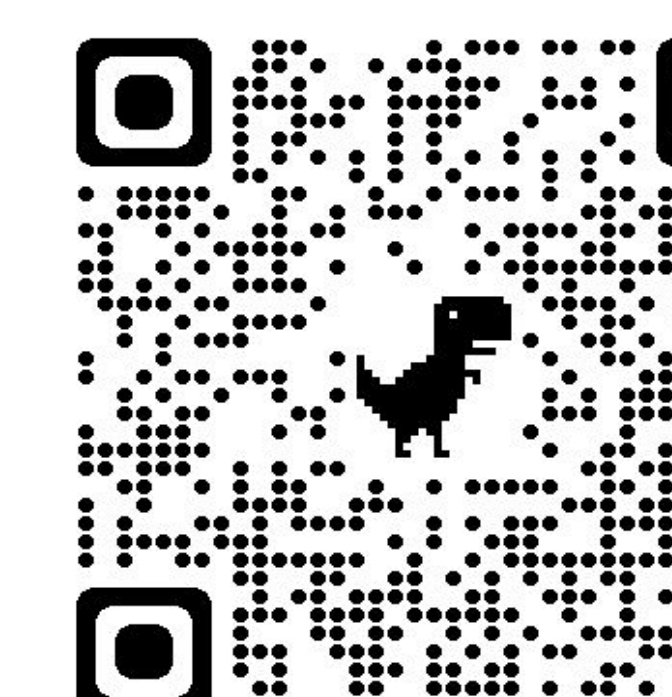
It caused my paranoia, eating disorder, depression and anxiety to reach an all time high

Sedentary, over eating, poor self esteem, paranoia, loneliness

Characteristic	July 2020 (N = 135)	January 2021 (N = 130)
	n (%)	n (%)
Gender		
Male	38 (28.1)	34 (26.2)
Female	94 (69.6)	94 (72.3)
Gender non-conforming	2 (1.5)	1 (0.8)
Gender queer	1 (0.7)	1 (0.8)
Race		
White	76 (56.3)	76 (58.5)
Black or African American	10 (7.4)	7 (5.4)
American Indian/Alaska Native	1 (0.7)	1 (0.8)
Asian or Asian American	29 (21.5)	28 (21.5)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1 (0.7)	1 (0.8)
Other	18 (13.3)	17 (13.1)
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	29 (21.5)	22 (16.8)
Non-Hispanic	106 (78.5)	108 (83.1)



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