

Students' Perspectives on E-learning Environment and Perceived Stress during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study of Allied Health Science Students of University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

R.M.A. Chamika*, M.L. Pathirathna and M.A.J.C. Marasinghe

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya 20400, Sri Lanka

**anjalirathnayaka@ahs.pdn.ac.lk*

COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges that the current education systems have ever faced. It emphasized the importance of using online models and applications to achieve learning outcomes. Although E-learning has its own advantages, sometimes switching to E-learning may cause an increase in the level of stress among students. The present study aimed to explore the perspectives and perceived stress of the E-learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic among allied health sciences students of University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional descriptive survey was conducted by enrolling 547 students of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya. Data was collected using an online survey which consisted of four components: Socio-demographic characteristics, COVID-19 related factors, Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and students' perspective scale on E-learning during COVID-19 pandemic. T-test and ANOVA test were performed to examine the mean differences between groups, and correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between perceived stress and students' perspectives on E-learning. The average score for the PSS and students' perspective scale were 19.81 ± 4.925 (2-40) and 28.49 ± 6.36 (10-50) respectively. A majority of students (92.9%) were concerned about academic delays due to COVID-19 and 95.1% of students were actively engaged in E-learning activities conducted by the faculty. Further, a majority of students (77.9%) accessed E-learning via smartphone. Students who had the experience of living in a lockdown area ($P < 0.05$) and students who were concerned about academic delays ($P < 0.05$) had higher PSS scores than their counterparts. Results of correlation analysis indicated a negative significant correlation between perceived stress and students' perspectives on E-learning ($P < 0.01$). COVID-19 may have an immense influence on perceived stress among health sciences students and stress is making a significant negative impact on students' perspective on E-learning.

Keywords: COVID-19, E-learning, Perceived stress, Students' perspectives