Psychological and Behavioural Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Students: A Study on a Selected Public University in Bangladesh

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Abstract: While the COVID-19 pandemic has far-reaching consequences on public health, little focus has been paid so far in empirical research about the psychological and behavioural effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students. As such, the study was intended to examine the psychological and behavioural effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students. The study was purposively conducted in Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) of Bangladesh employing a survey research design. Primary data were collected from a total of 150 undergraduate students selected from 17 academic departments of the NSTU based on snowball sampling. The study shows that the COVID-19 pandemic accompanied by several protective measures to reduce the community transmission has various adverse psychological effects on the students. Because, the complexity of the pandemic is positively associated with the increase of their several psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression, tension, fear or panic, restlessness, boredom, and loneliness. The study reveals that the COVID-19 pandemic is also positively associated with the increase of several behavioural conditions of the students such as their spending time in social media, level of change in daily routine works, level of inattentiveness to study, and level of nonparticipation in daily study. The study indicates that the associations between the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes of several psychological and behavioural conditions of the students are statistically significant. Hence, the study opines that the COVID-19 pandemic adversely affects the mental health and well-being of the students. As such, the study suggests that the NSTU should set up an educational guidance and counselling centre in order to address the adverse psychological and behavioural conditions of the students during the pandemic or any other critical situation. Moreover, the families and teachers should play an important role to keep up the mental health and well-being of the students through motivations and individual counselling.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, protective measures, psychological and behavioural conditions, mental health and well-being, educational counselling