

Digital health literacy among Greek students during COVID-19 pandemic

Evanthia Sakellari

E Sakellari¹, A Lagiou¹

¹Department of Public and Community Health, Laboratory of Hygiene, University of West Attica, Athens, Greece
Contact: sakellari@uniwa.gr

Background:

Misinformation especially provided through internet is a serious public health threat, and during the COVID-19 pandemic this problem has even amplified, which became known as an information epidemic, a.k.a. infodemic. This is a common problem also in university students who access their information about health via Internet and social media. Digital health literacy (DHL) is an important skill to handle online information and make judgments about their quality and reliability. This study is part of the global COVID-HL survey, aiming at assessing DHL in university and their COVID-19 related health and information needs.

Methods:

After receiving ethical approval, data was collected through an online questionnaire among students from one of the largest Universities in Greece. Descriptive statistics as well as bi- and multivariate analyses were conducted using SPSS.

Results:

604 university students (mean age 24.3, 73.3% females) completed the survey. 28% indicated that they found it very difficult/ difficult to find the exact information they were looking for, 20.4% to make a choice across all information accessed, and 45.1% stated it is very difficult/ difficult to decide whether the information was reliable or not. According to the descriptive analysis, 25.6% of the students found it very difficult/ difficult to apply the information in their daily life, 23.7% to decide if the information they found is applicable to them and 16.3% to use the information they found to make decisions about their health. Greater satisfaction from information about COVID-19 was significantly associated with greater probability of having sufficient skills in “information search”, “evaluating reliability” and in “determining relevance”.

Conclusions:

The results of the study indicate that there is a need to strengthen DHL among university students and develop skills for seeking information on the Internet through health education interventions.