

Data collection during time of crisis – experiences from the COPERS study

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Background:

The pandemic situation has been present for more than a year all over the world. In almost all countries actions were taken following WHO recommendations of social distance, smart work, online lectures, using of masks, etc. These procedures reduced physical distance but increased social isolation, encouraging virtual connection among people and eventually, increasing psychological repercussions. In many countries, equivalent measures were taken, but the cultural vulnerability to the virus could be dissimilar, influencing on social disruption and economic inequalities among countries. COPERS study aims to examine the association between the exposure and depression, perceived stress, anxiety, suicidal ideation, social capital in different cultural contexts.

Methods:

We carefully focused on measuring exposure. Exposure can be described and assessed by intensity and by duration. We assessed both intensity and duration of exposure to the pandemic itself and to the containment measures. IES-R was used to assess the impact of the pandemic Covid-19 among people, assessing among others, feelings, sleeping troubles, stressful life events and emotional reactions.

Results:

The assessments included specific issues on exposure range to Covid-19 in different countries. Specifically, could be mentioned the mandatory isolation policy in specific hours, freely vaccination willingness and high suicidal occurrences as the Albanian case. Despite the high mortality and suicidal cases in Albania, many people acted as if virus was not around. However, it was possible to obtain data in a cultural environment which was reluctant to participate.

Conclusions:

The measure to overcome skepticism to participate was mainly possible due to building trust to key persons. More measure how to conduct studies in populations which are reluctant to participate in research will be discussed. To obtain results in times of crises it is necessary to get data as well in difficult to reach populations.