

## Perceived Stress related to COVID-19 among Tunisian adults during the lockdown period

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### Background:

Public health emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic can affect the health, safety and well-being of individuals and communities. This pandemic may lead to emotional reactions such as stress, anxiety and depression in the general population.

### Aim:

To evaluate the perceived stress among Tunisian adults during the period of lockdown.

### Methods:

A cross-sectional study was conducted during the lockdown period targeting adults using online social networks. The data was collected through a “Google Form” questionnaire published on Face book. Perceived stress was measured using the ‘Perceived Stress scale’.

### Results:

A total of 164 adults participated in our study with a majority of women (77.4%) and a mean age of  $34.57 \pm 12.1$  years. Almost half of our participants (48.1%) were from the Governorate of Sousse. Among the respondents, 58.5% felt in perpetual threat and only 15.4% knew how to manage their stress. Univariate analyses showed that perpetual threat was significantly associated with age ( $p=0.015$ ), being single ( $p=0.03$ ) jobless ( $p=0.02$ ), and spending more than one hour documenting on COVID-19 ( $p=0.02$ ). After adjusting to sex and age; the multivariate analysis showed a statistically significant association between stress level and anxiety  $p < 10^{-3}$ ; OR: 8.62; IC [3.1-23.8]; fear of catching the virus ( $p=0.031$ ; OR: 3.10; IC [1.1-6.7]) and insomnia ( $p=0.001$ ; OR: 7.46; IC [2.4-24.7]).

### Conclusions:

Our results showed that there is a high prevalence of stress in the general population during confinement. A national program of population mental health management should be implemented along with the pandemic management.

### Key messages:

- The COVID 19 may lead to emotional reactions such as stress, anxiety and depression in the general population.
- A national program of population mental health management should be implemented along with the pandemic management.