

respectively). The topics that were most searched were spread of the coronavirus (90,1%), its symptoms (88,0%) and restrictions (87,7%). 86,3% of students considered the verified information very important.

**Conclusions:**

Finnish students were rather confident in their DHL skills. However, almost every fourth had difficulties in assessing the reliability of the information, a key competence of DHL in the context of overabundance of information. This suggests that DHL, especially the competence of critically evaluate health related information, need to be strengthened among university students in Finland across different study subjects.

## Digital health literacy and information behaviour in university students in Finland

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**Background:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Internet and social media became important and fast sources of health information, leading to overabundance of both valid and invalid information. Digital health literacy (DHL) is a core competency for navigating web- and social media based COVID-19 information. This study is part of the global COVID-HL survey assessing DHL among university students.

**Methods:**

Six universities from Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western Finland participated in an online survey in May 2020. Five subscales from the DHL Instrument (DHLI), adapted to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, were used. The data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analyses.

**Results:**

Mean age of the students (N = 3771) was 28 y. (females n = 2720). Students had searched information from the Internet for themselves and others (85,2%). Females had searched more than male, and the probability of searches increased with age. Majority of students (90,4%) considered information easy to find and 83,2% of students found it easy to use the information in decisions related to their health, males easier than female or diverse gender. The greatest difficulty was in assessing the reliability of information (24,0%). The sources for information seeking often were news sites, search engines, and websites of public bodies (64,8%, 50,5% and 44,1%,