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## **DISORDERS OF THE EMOTIONS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF COVID-19 AND THE CONFINEMENT IN UNIVERSITY OF THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF THE HERMILIO VALDIZAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. PERU**

**Trastornos de las emociones a consecuencia del covid-19 y el confinamiento en universitarios de las diferentes escuelas de la Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán. Perú**

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### **Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the way we live, and after mandatory confinement, the way we interact with people will also change drastically. Without going through the traumatic experience of hospitalization, society as a whole will suffer post-traumatic stress due to home isolation. In many cases, the disease has directly impacted close people, which will translate into a higher prevalence of mental health-related problems. In this sense, no one doubts about the psychological and social footprint that the pandemic will leave on the majority of the population. The work that has been carried out has the objective of identifying the disorders of the emotions as a result of the covid-19 and the confinement in university students of the National University Hermilio Valdizán. The type and level of research was descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, applicative, analytical, prospective and cross-sectional, with a sample of 100 university students from the different academic professional schools of the university. For data collection, the questionnaire was used and the virtual survey

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was used as a technique as well. The main results show that university students present emotional disorders such as: sleep problems (85%) and feelings of depression and hopelessness (83%). It is concluded that, as a result of confinement, university students present psychological problems of anxiety and depression (46%), 22% present depression and stress, while 17% of university students present post-traumatic stress as a result of COVID-19 and confinement.

**Keywords:** Emotion disorders, covid-19, confinement, university, public university.

### Resumen

La pandemia por el Covid-19 ha transformado la manera en la que vivimos, y tras el confinamiento obligatorio, la forma en la que nos relacionamos con las personas cambiará también de manera drástica. Y sin llegar a vivir la experiencia traumática de una hospitalización, la sociedad en su conjunto sufrirá estrés postraumático, debido al aislamiento domiciliario. En muchos casos, la enfermedad ha impactado de forma directa a personas cercanas, lo que se traducirá en una prevalencia mayor de los problemas relacionados con la salud mental. En este sentido, nadie duda de la huella psicológica y social que la pandemia dejará en la mayoría de la población. El trabajo realizado tiene el objetivo de identificar los trastornos de las emociones a consecuencia del covid-19 y el confinamiento en universitarios de la Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán. El tipo y nivel de investigación fue descriptivo, exploratorio, explicativo, aplicativo, analítico, prospectivo y transversal, con una muestra de 100 universitarios de las diferentes escuelas académico profesionales de la universidad. Para la recopilación de datos se utilizó el cuestionario y se hizo uso de la encuesta virtual como técnica. Los principales resultados demuestran que los universitarios, presentan trastornos emocionales como: problemas de sueño (85%) y sentimientos depresivos y de desesperanza (83%). Se concluye que a consecuencia del confinamiento los universitarios presentan problemas psicológicos de ansiedad y depresión (46%), el 22% presenta depresión y estrés, mientras que un 17% de universitarios presenta estrés post traumático a consecuencia del covid-19 y el confinamiento.

**Palabras clave:** Trastornos de las emociones, covid-19, confinamiento, universitarios, universidad.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The state of emergency decreed by the Peruvian government to address the health crisis in which we find ourselves in relation to the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), has forced us to carry out the confinement in our homes. This stage of confinement is usually an unpleasant experience for human beings, because it is a compulsory isolation and involves breaking with our daily lives, our routines, our leisure, our classes, our friends, family, our loss of freedom, the emergence of boredom and uncontrolled emotions.

The human being does not only live for himself as an individuality, but it is constitutively turned towards the members of his own species, being in the relationship with others where he discovers and models himself as a person (Huanca, 2017). This relationship is therefore an indispensable fact for the process of personalization because the human being exists to the extent that he coexists with others, taking into account that from the moment of birth it is the others who not only help him to grow and develop, but also teach him to discover himself, others and the world in which he lives.

Indeed, this situation has a powerful psychological burden on us, as a result of the quarantine little by little the days go by, and we have already exceeded more than 100 days of confinement, and we see that suddenly our life has been paralyzed and we have to adapt temporarily to a new situation, never experienced before. Of course the moment that happens generates stress, but it is not only the experienced situation but also all the consequences generated by this to date. Emotional and behavioral disorders in young people constitute a complicated group of emotional and behavioral problems. With the present work, we intend to contribute to the clinic of this vulnerable sector of the population, to the confinement as they are the adolescents who suffer these disorders and disorders, because tomorrow later they will have much difficulty in following the rules and in behaving in a socially acceptable way, in their environment. The objective of this research study was to identify emotional disorders as a consequence of covid-19 and confinement in university students, since it is known that social isolation is generating emotional disorders in people, given that this is the first time that this unusual and unpredictable situation such as home confinement occurs in Peru, and human beings by nature cannot be too long away from people, not being able to see them or hug them due to confinement. The truth is that it is a worldwide problem of mental health, which manifests itself in multiple forms: psychological, emotional, and physical, facing this problem we pose the following question: What are the disorders of the emotions as a result of covid-19 and confinement in universities? The working hypothesis is that emotional disorders have increased in university students as a consequence of covid-19 and confinement. The limitations that were presented during the development of the research took place at the moment of data collection due to the virtual situation; as well as the scarce antecedents of studies related to the topic.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

# Emotional disorders as a consequence of COVID-19 and confinement in university students from different schools of the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán. Peru

Given the importance of the psychological phenomenon that is currently occurring in various societies, the main objective of this research was to identify emotional disorders as a result of Covid-19 and confinement in university students of the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán.

## METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, it should be noted that the research design corresponded to the non-experimental design of transversal type, the methods used were: inductive-deductive, analysis and synthesis. The sample was non-probabilistic and consisted of 100 students from different professional schools of the UNHEVAL (Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán). The survey was used as a technique and a questionnaire was applied as an instrument for data collection; it should be noted that the instrument was validated taking into account the criteria of experts. The instrument was applied through the cisco webex virtual platform (owned by the university).

As the study includes individuals, it was necessary to take into account the ethical aspect of the research, thus complying with the stipulations of the research standards on individuals through anonymous questionnaires and thus complying with the aspects of confidentiality and respect for the people who were the subject of the study.

## 4. RESULTS

Of the total number of university students studied, we can point out that the results, with regard to the age and sex of the university students under study, show that the majority of university students (55%) are between 19 and 21 years of age and that the majority group belongs to the female sex (52%); it is worth noting the similarity of the results with the studies of J. Hernández in Mexico (2016) who refers that the majority of adolescents with emotional problems were female (57.3%). With respect to the area of residence of the university students, the majority (45%) live in marginal urban areas, followed by 24% who live in urban areas of the city of Huánuco.

Regarding the year of studies, the majority of university students were in their second (47%) and third academic year (29%) and belonged to the academic-professional schools of health sciences (31%), followed by engineering (25%), administrative sciences (17%), education (15%) and 12% of university students to the law school and political sciences of the UNHEVAL.

**Table 1.** *Frequent symptomatology due to confinement in university students of the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán.*

<b>SYMPTOMS AS A RESULT OF CONFINEMENT</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
Muscle/joint pain (physical symptom unrelated to a medical illness)	2	2
Headaches, back of neck (physical symptom unrelated to a medical illness)	74	74
Irritability, irritability, anger, irritability, irritability	10	10
Depressive, pessimistic and hopeless feelings	83	83

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Sleep problems (difficulty sleeping, light sleep, interrupted sleep)	85	85
Concentration difficulties	65	65
Constant concern	22	22
Apathy, lack of initiative	7	7
Feeling of insecurity	46	46
Crying, desire to cry	21	21
Aggressiveness	34	34
Memory problems	8	8
Increased or decreased appetite	31	31
Dry mouth	21	21
Dizziness, lightheadedness, loss of balance	4	4
Fainting/fainting spells	1	1
Gasping/difficulty breathing	6	6
Fear of losing a loved one	68	68
Suicidal thoughts	1	1
Anxiety and anxiety attacks	48	48
Physical illness (medically diagnosed) or aggravating physical illness	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** *own elaboration.*

In response to the question asked to the students of the different academic and professional schools of UNHEVAL, whether during the 100 days of confinement, due to Covid-19, and comparing with their life before this event, to what extent do they think they have frequently experienced some of these symptoms, having the option to answer several symptoms, the university students answered in majority: 85% reported having sleep problems (such as difficulty sleeping, light sleep, interrupted sleep, early awakening), followed by 83% who reported having depressive, pessimistic and hopeless feelings, while 74% of university students reported having headaches and neck pain (keeping in mind that this is a physical symptom, unrelated to a medical illness). On the other hand 68% of university students reported having fear of losing a loved one because of Covid-19 and 65% of university students reported having concentration problems. It should be noted that 48% of university students reported anxiety and anxiety attacks, and 46% reported feelings of insecurity, followed by 34% who reported feelings of aggressiveness. An alarming response from a university student who reported having suicidal ideas as a result of covid-19 and confinement is noteworthy.

**Table 2.** *Common reactions to the covid-19 pandemic in the country and the region among university students at the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán.*

<b>COMMON REACTIONS TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
Do not watch TV or read news about Covid-19.	12	12
Being too afraid of contagion	14	14
Feeling anxious about what has happened	16	16
Seeing an uncertain future	23	23
Being depressed all the time	15	15
Fear of going out in the street	5	5
Tendency not to think and not to talk about the situation.	8	8

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Ease of disconnecting from worries	2	2
I have had conflict with the people I live with (because they do not comply with prevention measures).	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Source:** *own elaboration.*

Regarding the usual reactions of university students to the Covid-19 pandemic and the confinement, 23% responded that they see an uncertain future, followed by 16% who feel anxious about what has happened, and 15% indicated that they are depressed all the time, while 14% said they are very afraid of contagion and 12% of university students indicated that they do not watch TV or read news about Covid-19. On the other hand, the minority of university students (8%) reacts with a tendency not to think or talk about the situation and 5% respectively are afraid to go out on the street, have also had conflicts with the people they live with because they do not comply with the prevention measures.

**Table 3.** *University students with psychological problems attributed to confinement. Hermilio Valdizán National University.*

<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM CONFINEMENT</b>	<b>N°</b>	<b>%</b>
Depression and stress	22	22
Depression	10	10
Post-traumatic stress	17	17
Anxiety and depression	46	46
Anxiety	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Source:** *own elaboration.*

In the present table, it can be seen that the university students in the study reported presenting psychological problems as a consequence of the confinement, and the majority (46%) indicated presenting anxiety and depression, while 22% reported presenting depression and stress, followed by 17% of university students who reported presenting post-traumatic stress due to the confinement of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In the study, it was possible to identify that 37% of university students live in homes with people belonging to groups at risk for Covid-19, of which 8% of university students belong to a group at risk for Covid-19 (overweight, asthma, diabetes). It has also been found that 68% of university students live with family members with symptoms compatible with Covid-19, being this aspect a high risk factor of contagion for the university student and his family.

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In this sense, it is also seen that 53% of university students have been responsible for leaving their homes during confinement; for reasons that are permitted such as work, shopping for basic necessities, pharmacy, assisting a needy person, etc. But on the other hand, it is striking that 37% of university students have left their homes during the confinement to distract themselves and we infer that this could be an emotional response to the psychological problems they present; while 10% of university students have not left their homes at all during the confinement. In the case of the pandemic generated by Covid-19, the evidence has shown that, regardless of the stage of exposure to the virus in which a person may be, whether in quarantine, having been exposed, in isolation, already infected, under a preventive situation of social distancing, or post-discharge from the virus, all of them have been exposed to the virus, (Urzúa, 2020), (Ozamis, 2020) points out in his study that a higher level of symptomatology has been detected after confinement, where people are forbidden to leave their homes. On the other hand, Espada (2020) points out that home confinement is an unprecedented measure in our country that can have a negative impact on the physical and psychological well-being of children and adolescents.

Regarding the feelings of the university students about Covid-19 and the confinement, it can be seen that the majority (52%) feel afraid and fearful about what happened, and 18% feel confused, while 11% feel angry about what happened. Regarding the extent to which university students feel informed about covid-19, the majority (51%) feel quite informed, followed by 46% who do not prefer to know about the subject. These results are similar to those of Esfahani (2020) who indicates that "feelings of anxiety, anger, helplessness and grief are increasing as people face an increasingly uncertain future and almost everyone has been affected by some loss".

The majority (85%) reported having sleep problems (such as difficulty sleeping, light sleep, interrupted sleep, early awakening), followed by 83% who reported having depressive, pessimistic and hopeless feelings, while 74% of university students reported having headaches and neck pain (it should be noted that this is a physical symptom, unrelated to a medical illness), while 74% of university students reported having headaches and neck pain (keeping in mind that this is a physical symptom, unrelated to a medical illness), and 68% of university students reported having fear of losing a loved one because of Covid-19, and 65% of university students reported having problems concentrating. It should be noted that 48% of university students reported anxiety and anxiety attacks, and 46% reported feelings of insecurity, followed by 34% who reported feelings of aggressiveness. An alarming response from a university student who reported presenting suicidal ideas as a result of covid-19 and confinement is noteworthy. Contrasting these results with the contributions of (Brooks et al., 2020) which states that this "scenario would cause a negative psychological impact on individuals and on the most vulnerable population, triggering stress, fear, confusion, anger, frustration, worry, boredom, loneliness, stigma, anxiety, hopelessness, guilt, depression and suicide". Research shows that youth with conduct disorders will have continuing problems if they and their families do not receive comprehensive treatment in a timely manner; and that without treatment, many of these boys with conduct disorders will fail to adapt to the demands of being an adult and will continue to have problems in their social

relationships and not maintaining employment, and may often break the law or engage in antisocial behavior (AACAP, 2004), (Gonzales et al., 2013). While the results of (Ozamis, 2020) show that, although symptomatology levels have been low in general at the beginning of the alarm, the younger and chronically ill population has reported higher symptomatology than the rest of the population. Similarly, the results of (Xin et al., 2020) concluded that quarantined university students were more likely than others to perceive discrimination and to show mental distress.

With respect to psychological problems, the university students in the study reported having psychological disorders as a result of the confinement, and the majority (46%) reported having anxiety and depression, while 22% reported having depression and stress, followed by 17% of university students who reported having post-traumatic stress due to the confinement of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is known that depression and anxiety occur with mood swings, and situations where university students have had family members who have died during these days and have not been able to say goodbye to them, psychological problems become chronic, and it should be noted that these are more critical situations that can lead to a greater increase in anxiety or depression, and even become acute stress syndromes; maximum anxiety caused by helplessness in the situation, and if these symptoms are prolonged over time, they can cause certain mental illnesses, related to anxiety and depression, which we have to monitor (Ruiz-Grosso et al., 2012). On the other hand, Hernandez (2016) concludes in his study that mental disorders in adolescents are considered a public health problem due to their high prevalence. In this regard, it is important the contribution of Fernández (2020) who recommends that in this situation the best initiative will be to know how to adapt ourselves, stay at home, assume that this will pass, cultivate patience, build routines, take care of our basic needs, share contrasted and constructive information, maintain virtual social contact, focus on small daily goals, do not despair, and above all internalize that altruism and the particular feeling of being able to help others; even if it costs us and is difficult, will reduce our stress and make this situation more bearable and bearable. The results of Esfahani (2020) indicate that 45% of Americans feel that the coronavirus has negatively affected their mental health. Likewise, the contribution of (Espada, 2020) is important, pointing out that quarantine at home or hospitalization due to illness of the adolescent or immediate family members are conditions that can generate high levels of stress and psychological problems. While the results of the study by (Marquina and Jaramillo, 2020) indicate that depression, post-traumatic stress and anger were higher.

Regarding the perception of an academic affectation of the university students, as a consequence of Covid-19 and the confinement, it can be seen that the majority (55%) of the university students refer to an economic affectation, due to the extra expenses they face, such as the purchase of modern cell phones, laptops, internet and electricity; followed by 24% of university students who indicate that they feel considerably affected by the virtual form of their classes, inferring in this respect that university students prefer the teaching-learning process to be face-to-face in the university classrooms, because of the warmth and interaction between their classmates and their teacher. In this regard, it is noteworthy that 9% of university students indicated feeling affected academically,



enough to lose the academic year. Meanwhile (Alonso, 2016) points out in his study that "currently, it is more frequent to find adolescents who present coexistence problems and behavioral disorders in the classroom, so this causes increasing concern for both teachers and families, as they show a complicated group of emotional and behavioral problems". It is worth it to mention that during the first semester of the academic year 2020, according to a local press release (Tudiario, 2020), an average of 3,000 university students did not enroll in the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán, which confirms that a good number of university students will lose the academic year as a result of Covid-19 and the confinement.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Emotional disorders in young people are mostly characterized by a lack of adjustment within their family, university and social context. Disorders that alter their emotional and social balance, as well as affect their academic environment. While it is true that in today's society there has been a change in values, with individualism, personal wellbeing, effort and work taking precedence, and as a result we find a low resistance to anxiety and stress. And if we add the psychological impact originated by the Covid-19 pandemic and its preventive measure through confinement, this has produced a wide, transcendental and probably lasting effect in time; affecting both the general population and university students.

In the present study, we do not intend to suggest that quarantine through confinement should not be used; however, depriving people of their freedom for a social good is often a controversial issue and it should be handled with great care, considering the implications it would have on the mental health of the population. Confinement is of utmost importance to avoid the spread of Covid-19 but the government must succeed and know how to communicate to the people what is happening and why, explaining how long it will take, providing meaningful activities during the confinement, providing clear communication and ensuring availability of basic supplies (such as food, water, medical supplies, education at all levels).

After analyzing the different theories and the results obtained, the hypothesis that there is an increase in psychological problems as a consequence of Covid-19 and confinement, in the university students of the Universidad Nacional Hermilio Valdizán de Huánuco – Peru is confirmed. It is seen that the majority (46%) of university students indicated presenting anxiety and depression, while 22% indicated presenting depression and stress, followed by 17% of university students who reported presenting post-traumatic stress; whose manifestations have caused effects on their mental health producing emotional disorders with long-term consequences. The group of university students is a sector of the population that is more susceptible to experiencing higher levels of anxiety, depression and stress in confinement than the rest of the population's age range.

To conclude, it seems appropriate to suggest the importance of establishing preventive policies focused on the mental health of people during epidemics, actions that are

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directed or developed by mental health personnel (psychologists, psychiatrists, psychologists therapists and those involved in mental health work). It is suggested that mainly vulnerable risk groups (university students) should be identified and that preventive measures should be adapted to the different phases of the pandemic, according to the context and social reality.

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