

# Early Detection of Mental Health of Doctoral Students UAD due to the Covid-19 Pandemic through the Questionnaire Method

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## Early Detection of Mental Health of Doctoral Students UAD due to the Covid-19 Pandemic through the Questionnaire Method

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

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Stress and a decrease in student learning achievement <sup>8</sup> be triggered by the mal-adaptive coping experienced, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which requires students to adjust physically and psychologically in the learning process on campus which is now done online and is more independent in learning. So, psychological support for students, <sup>12</sup> especially UAD doctoral students, needs to be done, one of which is mental health screening. The purpose of this study was to determine the mental health condition and social support of students. In the end, this will be the basis for providing psychological support and improving educational and learning activities for UAD Doctoral program students. The research method used was the adjustment and validation of the Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) 29, covering aspects of mental health, namely anxiety, depression, stress, use of psychostimulants/substances, symptoms of psychosis (reality rating disorder) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); Customize and validate social support questionnaires; Submission of ethical review; and Conducting an online survey of mental health, anxiety, depression and social support for Doctoral students. The results obtained from SRQ29 showed that as many as 30% of students experienced PTSD and 10% experienced depression. However, the results of the high religiosity test and quality of life were not compromised. The conclusion of this study is that the existence of religiosity and spirituality can <sup>14</sup> provide positive coping to reduce mental disorders and improve the quality of life for students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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### INTRODUCTION

Students are always required <sup>14</sup> to solve problems rationally, in order to complete the learning process well <sup>9</sup> students must have good mental health conditions as well. The mental health of students, especially students of the health faculty, needs special attention because the COVID-19 pandemic period with all the changes in learning policies that occur such as online lectures and

the demand for independent study at home can greatly affect the mental health of students (Fawaz and Samaha, 2021).

The online learning process that is currently being carried out by the campus can trigger anxiety and depression in students because the learning process is different from what was usually done before the COVID-19 pandemic. Anxiety or feeling nervous and restless is normal, but it will become unnatural and need to be watched out for if the intensity and duration are not appropriate. Depression or a state of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in something experienced by students are also things that need to be considered because it can get worse in the current era of the COVID-19 pandemic, where students have to adapt physically and psychologically to meet their learning needs physically independent (Salari *et al.*, 2020; Sifat, 2021).

COVID-19 has an impact on the mental health of students. Therefore, efforts to improve mental health are needed, including promotion, prevention, healing, and recovery. Educational institutions can provide psychological support for students to improve their mental health. The first step that needs to be done is to conduct a survey and screening using a self-report questionnaire (SRQ) 29 related to mental health among undergraduate, professional and postgraduate students as well as students of the UAD Faculty of Medicine (Wang *et al.*, 2020).

This study aims to determine the mental health condition and social support of students. In the end, this will be the basis for providing psychological support and improving educational and learning activities for UAD Doctoral program students.

## METHODS

This research was conducted with ethical approval No. 012208108 on 19 September 2022. This study aims to determine the relationship between education level (doctoral program) on mental health and the impact of social support. The approach used in this study is cross-sectional with mental health examinations for UAD doctoral students. Data collection in this study using a questionnaire method made through Google form. Sampling was done by non-probability sampling method using purposive sampling technique. Measurement of sample size was carried out using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 PQ}{d^2}$$

$Z_{\alpha} = 1.96$ ; P is the estimated prevalence; Q is obtained by the formula  $1 - P$ ; and d is the relative accuracy value.

The research process begins with the submission of an ethical review or ethical clearance (EC). After getting the EC from the ethics committee, the study continued with population sampling. The next step is to exclude samples that do not meet the inclusion criteria. In addition, data were

collected from samples relating to stress, anxiety, and depression. The results were analyzed by index calculation and then analyzed by Spearman rank correlation using SPSS application. Data analysis was carried out using index interpretation data obtained from the results of the questionnaire and then related to the education level of the Doctoral program students.

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of Respondents

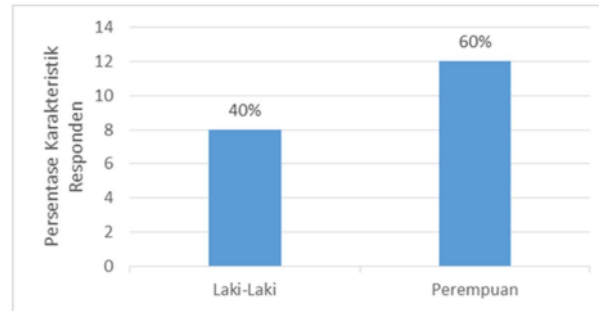


Figure 1. Percentage of Respondent Characteristics

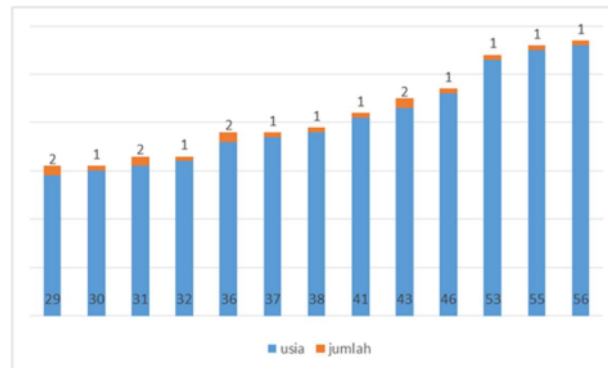


Figure 2. Respondent Age Range

The research which was conducted to determine mental health for doctoral students was attended by 20 respondents from the pharmacy doctoral program at Ahmad Dahlan University with 40% of male and 60% of female. The respondents were dominated by women because the majority of UAD doctoral students were female. The age range of the respondents of this research are from the age of 29 years to 56 years

### Mental Health Screening

The results of mental health screening using the SRQ-29 were obtained at most 50% of respondents who experienced complaints of fatigue, followed by 45% experiencing poor sleep, Early Detection of Mental Health of Doctoral Students UAD due to the Covid-19 Pandemic through the Questionnaire Method (Muhammad Agita Hutomo et.al)

35% experiencing neglected daily activities/tasks, and 30% experiencing complaints of pain. The results of the screening obtained showed that the majority of doctoral program students were not indicated by the disorder by 50%, but 30% experienced Post Traumatic Distress Syndrome (PTSD) (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1. Results of Early Detection of Psychosocial and Mental Health Problems with SRQ-29 (N=20).

| Number | Questions   | Yes |     |
|--------|---|-----|-----|
|        |   | F   | %   |
| 1      | Do you often have headaches?  | 6   | 30% |
| 2      | Have you lost your appetite?  | 1   | 5%  |
| 3      | Are you not sleeping well?  | 9   | 45% |
| 4      | Do you get scared easily?   | 1   | 5%  |
| 5      | Are you feeling anxious, tense, or worried?   | 4   | 20% |
| 6      | Do your hands shake easily?   | 1   | 5%  |
| 7      | Do you have indigestion?  | 4   | 20% |
| 8      | Do you find it difficult to think clearly?  | 4   | 20% |
| 9      | Are you feeling unhappy?  | 1   | 5%  |
| 10     | Do you cry more often?  | 2   | 10% |
| 11     | Do you find it difficult to enjoy daily activities?   | 2   | 10% |
| 12     | Are you having trouble making decisions?  | 3   | 15% |
| 13     | Are your daily activities/tasks neglected?  | 7   | 35% |
| 14     | Do you feel unable to play a role in this life?   | 0   | 0   |
| 15     | Have you lost interest in things?   | 2   | 10% |
| 16     | Do you feel worthless?  | 1   | 5%  |
| 17     | Do you have thoughts of ending your life?   | 0   | 0   |
| 18     | Do you feel tired all the time?   | 5   | 25% |
| 19     | Do you feel bad in the stomach?   | 3   | 15% |
| 20     | Do you tire easily?   | 10  | 50% |
| 21     | Are you drinking more alcohol than usual or are you on drugs?   | 0   | 0   |
| 22     | Are you sure that someone is trying to harm you in some way?  | 0   | 0   |
| 23     | Is there something bothering you unusual in your mind?  | 2   | 10% |
| 24     | Have you ever heard a sound without knowing the source or one that no one could hear?   | 2   | 10% |
| 25     | Do you have disturbing dreams about a disaster / disaster or are there times when you seem to be experiencing the disaster again? | 0   | 0   |
| 26     | Do you avoid activities, places, people or thoughts that remind you of the disaster?  | 3   | 15% |
| 27     | Has your interest in your friends and your usual activities diminished?   | 4   | 20% |
| 28     | Do you feel very disturbed if you are in a situation that reminds you of a disaster or if you think about it?                     | 3   | 15% |
| 29     | Are you having trouble understanding or expressing your feelings?   | 2   | 10% |

Table 2. Results of Early Detection of Psychosocial and Mental Health Problems with SRQ-29 (N=20).

| Number | Variable  | Yes |     |
|--------|---|-----|-----|
|        |   | F   | %   |
| 1      | Anxiety and Depression (Psychological Problems) | 2   | 10% |
| 2      | Use of Psychoactive Substances/Drugs            | 0   | 0   |
| 3      | Psychotic Disorder                              | 3   | 15% |
| 4      | Post Traumatic Distress Syndrome (PTSD)         | 6   | 30% |
| 5      | No indication of interference                   | 10  | 50% |

### Religiosity Screening

The religiosity screening (Table 3) showed that the UAD doctoral program students 100% believed in the pillars of faith and carried out actions related to faith in Allah SWT. The majority of students also carry out religious guidance or rituals (85%) and practice them (67%), but in terms of knowledge about religion, it is still low and needs to be improved.

Table 3. Religiosity Screening Results

| Aspect       | SS   | S     | TS   | STS  |
|--------------|------|-------|------|------|
| Ideological  | 100% | 0,0%  | 0,0% | 0,0% |
| Ritualistic  | 85%  | 13,1% | 0,5% | 0,0% |
| intellectual | 35%  | 42,5% | 2,5% | 0,0% |
| Practice     | 67%  | 16,5% | 0,0% | 0,0% |

### Quality of Life Screening

The results of the screening obtained with the EQ-5D questionnaire (Table 4), showed that the pandemic that occurred did not affect aspects of walking/moving and aspects of self-care. However, as many as 10% of respondents felt it was difficult to carry out daily activities. And as many as 15% experienced pain / discomfort and anxiety / depression / sadness.

Table 4. Quality of Life Screening Results with EQ5D

| Aspect                  | (not difficult/no) | (Difficult/Somewhat) | (Can't/ Really) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Walk/move               | 100%               | 0                    | 0               |
| Self care               | 100%               | 0                    | 0               |
| Daily activities        | 90%                | 10%                  | 0               |
| Pain/discomfort         | 85%                | 15%                  | 0               |
| Anxious/ Depressed/ Sad | 85%                | 15%                  | 0               |

### DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact that can be felt by everyone in all aspects of life. It does not only have a physical impact but also has an impact on the psyche, there are feelings of fear, worry, and helplessness because they cannot do much to change the external situation, the situation does not run normally as usual. For students, for example, the world of lectures will be

different because they have to be done online, for millennial students they may be able to adapt to the technology used for lectures, but for doctoral students who have an advanced age it will be difficult to adjust to the technology, which can lead to frustration and disruption. anxiety and depression, use of psychoactive substances, psychotic disorders, and PTSD. This can certainly affect the thoughts, feelings, and daily functions of individuals as well as interactions with other people) (Desvita *et al.*, 2022).

Long-term isolation or being at home for long periods of time has a negative effect on mental health, despite being socially connected to others using technology, some studies reveal that long hours of engaging in social media can lead to increased stress, anxiety, depression, and other health problems. other mental harm. It is believed that the situation occurs due to a lack of balance between time spent on campus and free time when students are confined to only one room with no outside movement. In addition, long hours of internet use can lead to addictive behaviors that lead to an unhealthy lifestyle and personality changes, especially in adults (Cheah *et al.*, 2021)..

From the results of the study, it was found that out of 20 students, 30% of students experienced PTSD, this could be triggered by fear and anxiety that occurred during the pandemic. Fear is an adaptive response that initiates defensive behavior to protect oneself from harm, which means that PTSD can occur when fear is inappropriately regulated (Rau, DeCola and Fanselow, 2005). A common PTSD problem has been found to be a decreased capacity to suppress fear even under safe conditions (Norrholm *et al.*, 2011). Research conducted by Sulistyorini and Pujianto (2020), explains that PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) is the most common disorder experienced by respondents, as many as 16 respondents (28.6%). PTSD has clinical manifestations that vary depending on various factors that influence it, including the type of trauma, age, gender, low socioeconomic status, education, previous separation trauma (conflict in the household); general childhood difficulties, personal and family psychiatric history, reporting of child abuse, poor social support and early reactions to trauma.

Internal aspects such as religiosity have a great influence on one's self-resistance to face various stressors from external factors (Desvita *et al.*, 2022). Religiosity can be an encouragement to persevere through adversity and not easily give up. One example is when performing worship rituals such as prayer, which is not only an obligation for Muslims but prayer can have a positive effect on life because in prayer there is relaxation and peace of mind. Other studies also explain that when faith increases, anxiety will decrease and make you feel relaxed because you believe that everything happens by the will of God Almighty so that the mind and heart are not burdened

by prejudices and anxiety about the future. Therefore, the practice of religious beliefs can make individuals more resilient (Khoiri Oktavia and Muhopilah, 2021).

The results of the quality-of-life questionnaire in this study indicate that mobility (walking/moving), self-care, and daily activities in most students are not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the impact that appears is more on mental aspects such as anxiety/depression/sad. Research conducted by Endarti *et al* (2020) revealed that the factors that affect the quality of life of the community is the ability to cope, namely the ability to deal with external or internal stress by setting limits on oneself. One of them is accepting or being grateful for everything that happens, of course this can be easily done if it has a religiosity side. So that the quality of life is better if you have good coping skills. Therefore, in overcoming mental disorders that occur among students, especially doctoral program students, it is hoped that university mental health professionals will pay more attention during this pandemic, especially for students who are indicated to have depression. As well as providing assistance in aspects of religiosity and spirituality.

## CONCLUSION

The state of the COVID-19 pandemic can have an influence on mental health, so that it can reduce the quality of life of UAD doctoral program students. However, the existence of religiosity and spirituality can provide positive coping to reduce mental disorders and improve the quality of life for students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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