

Changing Health Lifestyles After the Pandemic

Gökhan Doğukan Akarsu*

Yozgat Bozok University, Vocational School of Health Services, Turkey

***Corresponding author:** Gökhan Doğukan Akarsu, Yozgat Bozok University, Vocational School of Health Services, Turkey



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ABSTRACT

Aim: Identifying lifestyles that have been changed to prevent disease during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted in the Central Anatolian region of Turkey. With the data collection form prepared by the researcher, open-ended questions were directed to the participants. The received answers were put into the form.

Results: Of the participants, 56.02% were women, 84.87% lived in the city, 94.11% were single, and 2.24% had a chronic disease. BMI of 91.59% is in the range of 18-25. 33.05% still use masks, 35.57% now sleep early, 50.14% take a walk every day, 70.31% pay attention to regular water consumption.

Conclusion: With the information obtained from the results of the study, the necessity of ventilation of the living environment and the power of mask and hand hygiene in preventing contamination became more understandable by people. Learning about the measures taken during pandemics in a region or community taken will cause us to be less affected by similar situations that may occur in the future, even if it is undesirable.

Keywords: Prevent; Disease; Oubreak; Lifestyle

Introduction

Pandemic refers to the COVID 19 process, which started in December 2019, affected the whole world, shaped our lives with mandatory changes, and changed our habits with its long duration of impact. Balanced and adequate nutrition is the basic need for a healthy life. However, the world economy, which was shaken by the pandemic, led to significant decreases in the individual incomes of people in all countries. However, the value of a healthy body created with a balanced diet showed how important it is at this stage [1-3]. It is very difficult to be healthy in today's conditions. Because shrinking economies, decreasing demand and economic recession make it difficult to meet basic needs. However, the same is not true for taking supplements instead of events that can be postponed or cancelled. Because health is precious.

It was announced that especially young adults survived the COVID 19 more mildly, except for those who did not have some

malignancies and immune system problems during the pandemic process. However, both being the last in the vaccination rankings and the fact that blue-collar workers survived this process in their workplaces forced them to find other methods and support [4-8].

The easiest and relatively inexpensive products were vitamin and mineral supplements. Sometimes they resisted getting sick by using various herbal cures. Vitamins A, D, C and B complex are the most studied and claimed to be the most effective in resistance to disease. However, detailed studies are still ongoing [9-23].

The importance of vitamin and mineral supplements was emphasized with advertisements, warnings and information made through communication tools such as tv, radio and internet notifications. The fact that people turn to such products, especially in places that sell drugs during the pandemic, has led to a decrease in stocks. However, overdosing while using the products, ignoring the

side effects that will develop due to use, strengthening the immune system that can be developed naturally, and consuming vitamins that can be obtained from foods such as fruits, vegetables and meat as tablets also have some health problems. The aim of our study is to determine whether there is a change in lifestyles after the pandemic.

Material and Method

Method and Place of the Research: This study, which was designed in a descriptive and cross-sectional manner, aimed to determine the changes in the lifestyles of university students studying in the Central Anatolia Region of Turkey after the pandemic.

Sample of the Research: 714 students who continue their university education in the fall semester of 2022-2023, who do not have a chronic disease or psychological disorder, who can under-

stand and speak Turkish, and who agreed to participate in the research verbally and in writing after explaining the purpose of the study, were included in the study.

Ethical Aspect of the Study: Approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Yozgat Bozok University for the study.

Statistical Analysis: Analysis of the data was done using IBM 25.0. Standard deviation, percentage and frequency were used in the evaluation of the data.

Results

The mean age of the participants was 25 ± 3.17 , 56.02% were female, 36.41% were first year students, 84.87% were residing in the city Center, 94.1% were single, 54% were ,4 of them have an income equal to their expenses, 2.72% have a chronic illness, 88.7% do not work in an additional job (Table 1&2).

Table 1: Distribution of some demographic data of the participants

| Characteristics | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------|
| | | n | % |
| Age average | | 25± 3,17 | |
| Gender | Woman | 400 | 56,02 |
| | Man | 314 | 43,97 |
| Place of residence | Village-district | 108 | 15,12 |
| | City | 606 | 84,87 |
| Family form | Nuclear family | 683 | 95,65 |
| | Extended family | 31 | 4,34 |
| Class | 1st. Class | 260 | 36,41 |
| | 2nd Class | 187 | 26,19 |
| | 3rd Class | 154 | 21,56 |
| | 4th Class | 113 | 15,82 |
| Marital Status | Single | 672 | 94,11 |
| | Married | 42 | 5,88 |
| Working status | Employed | 46 | 8,75 |
| | Inoperative | 480 | 91,25 |
| Income status | Income lower than expenses | 199 | 27,87 |
| | Income equal to expenses | 389 | 54,48 |
| | Income more than expenses | 126 | 17,64 |
| Chronic Disease Status | Yes | 16 | 2,24 |
| | No | 698 | 97,75 |
| BMI Status | <18 | 2 | 0,28 |
| | 18-25 | 654 | 91,59 |
| | >25 | 58 | 8,12 |

Table 2: Data on the changing lifestyles of the participants after the pandemic.

| | | | | |
|--|---|-----|-----|-------|
| The word «pandemic» Knowing the Meaning Status | | Yes | 654 | 91,59 |
| | | No | 60 | 8,40 |
| | I Ventilate My House Every Season | Yes | 428 | 59,94 |
| | Getting Away from Crowded Environments | Yes | 254 | 35,57 |
| | I Wear the Mask Every Time I Leave My House | Yes | 236 | 33,05 |
| | I Pay Attention to Daily Water Consumption. | Yes | 502 | 70,31 |
| | I Sleep Earlier Now | Yes | 254 | 35,57 |
| Lifestyle Change Status of the Pandemic | I Walk Outside For 1 Hour Every Day | Yes | 358 | 50,14 |
| | I wash my hands with water before meals and in case of contamination. | Yes | 516 | 72,27 |
| | I Avoid Close and Skin Contact with People | Yes | 422 | 59,10 |
| | I Take Care of Sunbathing | Yes | 124 | 17,37 |
| | I Drink Herbal Teas | Yes | 421 | 58,96 |
| | I get milk from farms. | Yes | 289 | 40,48 |
| | I make my own yogurt. | Yes | 244 | 34,17 |
| | I Brush My Teeth At Least Twice A Day for Oral Hygiene | Yes | 426 | 59,66 |
| | I use mouthwash | Yes | 45 | 6,30 |
| | I Make My Own Bread | Yes | 48 | 6,72 |
| | I Stay Away from High Sugar Content Products | Yes | 532 | 74,51 |
| | I Reduced My TV Watching Time | Yes | 254 | 35,57 |
| | I Follow Health-Related News Sites | Yes | 147 | 20,59 |
| | I Consume Fruits and Vegetables Every Day | Yes | 608 | 85,15 |
| | I Pay Attention to My Weight | Yes | 662 | 92,72 |

Discussion

The pandemic has changed people’s lifestyles in Turkey as well as in all countries. It has been revealed that especially a sedentary lifestyle delays the healing process from diseases, prevents the development of the immune system, and reaches a level that can threaten life in further dimensions. For this reason, curfews have caused people to develop different quality time activities. It can be stated that these activities sometimes have more effects than desired dimensions. In our study, the mean age was found to be 25±3.17 years. This age range is considered the ideal age for determining the lifestyles of young adults during the pandemic process. Since the sample selection was not made among those who accepted to participate in the study at the time of the study, 56.02% of the participants in our study were women. In addition, 84.87% of them live in the city center. The presence of a large number of participants from the places with the highest density of population and disease may allow the data to be attributed to the general population.

59.94% of the respondents stated that they constantly ventilate their homes.

Ventilation of the room is a useful method, especially in order to prevent contamination and reduce the viral load. In addition, since

the amount of oxygen in the air will decrease over time, it is necessary for the respiratory system to enter fresh air with a higher oxygen density into the lungs. However, this ventilation rate has also revealed that 4 out of 10 people do not comply with the principle of ventilation of the room. Public authorities should bring the necessity of ventilation of the room to the agenda more and it should be aimed to increase social awareness on this issue. 35.57% of them stated that they stay away from the crowd and pay attention to social distance. Since crowded places such as banks, hospitals, shopping centers and public transportation take up space in life, it becomes a necessity to be included in the crowds. The aim here is to get away from the crowd as much as possible or to be included in the crowd for a short time by using other protective equipment and to understand the necessity of leaving these places. The rate of those using masks is 33.05%. Bravo-Cucci et al. (2022) stated in their study that 90.4% of the masks were used during the 1st spreading wave of COVID 19. No research has been found in the literature on the use of masks investigating recent history. The fact that almost 1 out of every 3 people continues to use a mask, even after getting over the biggest and devastating effect of the pandemic, is another indicator of how strong the awareness of the pandemic [24].

In our research, it was determined that 70.31% of the participants pay attention to their daily water consumption. Anderson et

al. (2022), Putri and Ilori (2022), and Hakim et al. (2022) stated the importance of daily water intake in the protection and maintenance of both kidney and cardiovascular health along with other stages [25-27]. 35.57% of the participants in the study stated that they slept earlier. Although this value seems to be low, it can be stated that almost 1 out of every 3 people changed their sleeping habits during this period, since no question was asked about sleeping early. It is a known fact that sleeping early increases the amount of hormones released at night. Thanoon et al. (2022), Van Ergo et al. (2022) and Hermann's et al. (2022) stated in their study that early and regular sleep habits protect against neurocognitive diseases such as Alzheimer's and depression [28-30]. In today's conditions, sedentary life dominates our lives and continuous increases are observed in individual BMI indices. Increasing weight and resulting obesity restrict movement, prevent circulation and force organs. It also suppresses the immune system. 92.72% of the participants in our study stated that they pay attention to their weight [31-33].

The fact that more than half of the participants take regular daily walks can be considered as one of the important habits that the pandemic has brought to humanity. In addition, almost 1 out of every 3 participants reported that they reduced the time they spent in front of the TV. During the pandemic, people have developed new methods to meet their needs, especially during the 1st wave of spread, since bread producing businesses such as markets were closed. They learned how to prepare foods that we used to do but now stop making, such as making bread with flour and making yogurt with milk. Foods with high sugar content cause the pancreas to be overstimulated, to secrete more insulin than its capacity, and to experience a loss of capacity after a while. Increased blood glucose level invites many diseases, especially diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. 74.51% of the participants in the study reported that they stay away from beverages containing high sugar [34-36].

Conclusion

All epidemic periods caused people to lose their lives and forced the remaining people to change their lifestyles. According to the information obtained from the results of the study, what a great danger sedentary life actually is, the necessity of ventilating the environment, the power of mask and hand hygiene in preventing transmission. Learning about the measures taken during pandemics in a region or community taken will cause us to be less affected by similar situations that may occur in the future, even if it is undesirable.

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