Human rights restrictions during COVID-19 pandemic – Healthcare students’ perceptions

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Background:
In order contain COVID19 spread, states adopted measures that confer transient disruptions in human rights. WHO acknowledged early on, that human rights should be embraced as an integral compound of the public health approach to

Long-term Public health strategies are required to combat mental health.

Identification of the main public perceptions that may lead to stigmatization and discrimination of patients and vulnerable groups is important in a focused approach to counter its awareness to reduce stigma.

Results:
Data collected show that the main reasons for stigma perception on stigmatization.

Perceptions were significantly higher among medical students (67.4%) and travel from high-risk regions (72.6%). These experience are the presence of cough or flu-like symptoms

Method:
A web-based questionnaire was distributed among 715 respondents and release from quarantine were also considered (59.1%, 67.6%).

Background:
The current COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge for the health sector all over the world. According to WHO, stigma related to COVID-19 can lead to underreporting, increased exposure and low adherence to standard safety precautions thus complicating adequate responses to the pandemic. The purpose of our research was to analyze students’ perceptions on issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic with a special focus on relevant ethical issues. Herein, we present results related to student’s experience.
COVID19. The aim of our research was to demonstrate healthcare students’ perceptions on restrictions imposed on human rights, as part of COVID19 response.

Methods:
Our cross-sectional survey employed a web-based questionnaire distributed among 715 students from Bulgarian and Greek health sciences faculties. All respondents participated anonymously and voluntarily. Data was collected between April and July 2020. Data analysis was conducted using established statistical methods.

Results:
Among respondents, nearly two thirds of Greek students (66%), would accept, either categorically or highly probably, the implementation of measures that may impact core human rights, as opposed to 53% of those of Bulgarian origin. Inability to assess and non-acceptance of compulsory restrictions, were significantly high among participants (33% to 45%), irrespective of nationality or field of studies.

Conclusions:
Remarkable disparities observed, require further evaluation as to the causes associated with non-acceptance of measures enforced during a public health emergency. This preliminary study, illustrates that stakeholders should provide priority assistance to health sciences students that may, inter alia, be used to promote risk communication, enhance public engagement and allow the allocation of frontline healthcare resources. Education, involvement in clinical activities, decision-making and policy may be used to overcome any apprehensions, given that healthcare students are the qualified workforce in future public health crises. Participation of academic institutions in shared governance ensures transparency and scientific evidence to justify emergency measures to tackle public health threats, thereby affecting positively students’ perceptions.

Key messages:
- Evidence-based resources and addressing transient human rights disruptions are important in maximizing healthcare students’ awareness and effective participation during the pandemic.
- All participating bodies should safeguard core principles of human rights and ensure that all measures taken are rational, proportional, non-discriminatory and grounded in applicable legal frameworks.