Perceived Stress related to COVID-19 among Tunisian adults during the lockdown period

Rania Bannour

R Bannour1, R Ghammem2,3, I Mlouki1, S Ben Fredj1,2,3, N Zammit1,2,3, C Ben Nasrallah1, N Horri4, J Maatoug2,3,4, H Ghannem2,3,4

1Department of Epidemiology, University Hospital Farhat Hached of Sousse, Sousse, Tunisia
2Faculty of Medicine of Sousse, University of Sousse, Sousse, Tunisia
3LR12SP03, University of Sousse, Sousse, Tunisia
4SPED, University of Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

Contact: raniaa.bannour@gmail.com

Background:
Public health emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic can affect the health, safety and well-being of individuals and communities. This pandemic may lead to emotional reactions such as stress, anxiety and depression in the general population.

Aim:
To evaluate the perceived stress among Tunisian adults during the period of lockdown.

Methods:
A cross-sectional study was conducted during the lockdown period targeting adults using online social networks. The data was collected through a "Google Form" questionnaire published on Face book. Perceived stress was measured using the 'Perceived Stress scale'.

Results:
A total of 164 adults participated in our study with a majority of women (77.4%) and a mean age of 34.57 ± 12.1 years. Almost half of our participants (48.1%) were from the Governorate of Sousse. Among the respondents, 58.5% felt in perpetual threat and only 15.4% knew how to manage their stress. Univariate analyses showed that perpetual threat was significantly associated with age (p = 0.015), being single (p = 0.03) jobless (p = 0.02), and spending more than one hour documenting on COVID-19 (p = 0.02). After adjusting to sex and age; the multivariate analysis showed a statistically significant association between stress level and anxiety p < 10⁻³; OR: 8.62; IC [3.1-23.8]); fear of catching the virus (p = 0.031; OR: 3.10; IC [1.1-6.7]) and insomnia (p = 0.001; OR: 7.46; IC [2.4-24.7]).

Conclusions:
Our results showed that there is a high prevalence of stress in the general population during confinement. A national program of population mental health management should be implemented along with the pandemic management.

Key messages:
- The COVID 19 may lead to emotional reactions such as stress, anxiety and depression in the general population.
- A national program of population mental health management should be implemented along with the pandemic management.