

Relationship between Perceived Stress and Coping Mechanisms among Medical Technology Students in a University in Manila, Philippines: A Cross-sectional Descriptive Study

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a sudden shift from traditional learning to an e-learning setting. Medical technology students may have different coping strategies according to their perceived stress levels.

Objective: This study aimed to assess the relationship between perceived stress and coping mechanisms among Medical Technology students at a university in Manila.

Methods: A cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted using an online survey involving 365 undergraduate Medical Technology students in May 2022. The perceived stress scale (PSS-10) and Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE) inventory were used to assess perceived stress and coping strategies, respectively. Pearson's correlation was used to examine the relationship between the two.

Results: The majority of the students had moderate perceived stress (n=291, 79.7%), 66 (18.1%) had high perceived stress, and 8 (2.2%) had low perceived stress levels. Among the categories of coping styles, the most dominant was problem-focused coping (M=3.55), whereas avoidant coping was the least utilized and had the lowest mean (M=2.36). Perceived stress was weakly associated with problem-focused coping, (r=0.107; p=0.020), and emotion-focused coping, (r = 0.387; p<0.001), while a moderate relationship was observed between perceived stress and avoidant coping, (r=0.411; p<0.001).

Conclusion: There is a relationship between perceived stress and all categories of coping strategies. Results of the study imply that the COVID-19 pandemic affects university students' mental health and well-being to some degree. The authors recommend including other variables affecting perceived stress and coping mechanisms.

Keywords: *Brief COPE, Coping Mechanisms, Medical Technology Students, Perceived Stress, PSS*