

Covid-19 pandemic: lifestyle differences in university students attending the course of Anatomy at the University of Milan

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The lockdown, along with other restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, has negatively impacted our daily lives, exposing people to adopt sedentary and unhealthy behaviors, and increasing the risk to develop diseases [1].

The present study aimed to investigate physical activity, nutrition, and sleep habits in two different population of university students.

533 university students attending the course of Human Anatomy at the University of Milan (Italy) were recruited. Students filled out a questionnaire to evaluate their anthropometric characteristics (weight, height), age and lifestyle habits. Specifically, physical activity was evaluated by the Godin- Shephard Leisure Time Physical Activity Questionnaire, nutrition was investigated by the Mediterranean Diet Quality Index for children and adolescents, and sleep was evaluated by the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index proposed for both weekday (WD) and weekend (WE). Moreover, we investigated the consumption of cigarettes, wine and alcohol. The students were divided into two groups according to the degree course: Nursing (N) (258 students, 50 males and 208 females) and Sport Sciences (S) (275 students, 148 males and 127 females).

The comparison between N and S students showed statistically significant differences in weight ($p<0.001$) and height ($p<0.001$), but not in age and Body Mass Index. N showed lower levels than S in physical activity ($p<0.001$) and for adherence to the Mediterranean diet ($p<0.001$). Moreover, N were classified as bad sleepers and slept worse compared to S during WD ($p<0.001$). During the WE both N and S were good sleepers, but S slept better compared to N students ($p<0.002$). The smokers were significantly higher in N (28%) compared to S (15%) ($p<0.001$), while no differences were found for the consumption of wine (N=35% and S= 31%) and alcohol (N= 25% and S= 26%).

Data showed that, even during the COVID-19 lockdown, Sport Sciences university students, usually more active compared to the other students, maintain healthy lifestyle habits. These findings suggest the importance to promote in young people an active lifestyle, particularly during in this lockdown situation.

References

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Key words

Covid-19 pandemic, lifestyle, quality of life, physical activity, nutrition, sleep, university students.