

# DOCTORAL STUDENTS MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

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## Background

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health has become a global concern, particularly for groups at high risk of developing mental health problems, such as doctoral students.

Hence, this study **explored the impact of stressful events on doctoral students' mental health** during the **Covid-19 pandemic**.

## Methods & Participants

155

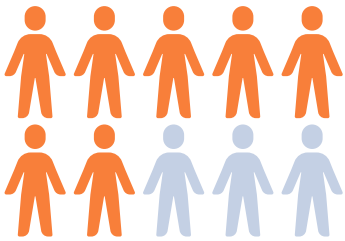
Doctoral students (81% female) aged 23 to 69 years, completed an online survey.

84%

Doctoral students reported that Covid-19 impacted their research.



Approximately, 1 out of 5 students was funded.



7 out of 10 students belonged to a research group.

65%

Doctoral students had to make adaptations to their research projects.

## Findings

Doctoral students experience **high levels of depression and anxiety**, which increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

28%

of doctoral students reported **mild-to-severe depressive symptoms**.

79%

of doctoral students reported **moderate-to-severe anxiety symptoms**.



Specific stressful educational experiences were unrelated to depression and anxiety, yet cumulative stressful educational experiences were related to depression symptoms.



Higher coping skills and attentional ability was related to fewer depression and anxiety symptoms.

## Future Directions

- Increasing doctoral student's coping capabilities (e.g., maintaining a work-life balance; time management) might lead to less anxiety and depression.



- Future research needs to **explore factors contributing to poor mental health** to understand how to prevent doctoral students from experiencing multiple stressful educational events.

