

Research Article

The Effect of Anxiety and Social Support on Adolescents in the Era of COVID-19

Bahare Amiri¹ , Banafshe Amiri^{2,*} , Hossein Mazarei¹ 

¹Yazd Branch, Shahid Sadoughi University of Yazd, Yazd, Iran

²Meybod Unit, Islamic Azad University, Meybod, Iran

Abstract

Introduction: At the end of 2019, an acute infectious disease appeared, which first started in Wuhan, China. The risk of increased contagion and anxiety caused by it decreased the quality of life among adolescents. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of social support on the mental health of adolescents in the era of COVID-19. **Methodology:** This review was conducted by searching websites such as Scholar, SID, Magiran from 2019 to 2023. **Results:** Corona virus is a public health emergency and pneumonia caused by corona is a highly contagious and infectious disease. The most common initial manifestations are fever, cough, fatigue and myalgia. The WHO has announced that due to the prevalence of this disease among teenagers, the increase in deaths and quarantine of people can cause anxiety, which can be reduced with social support. According to the definition of social support, it means feeling of belonging, acceptance, love and affection. And it creates a safe relationship for every teenager. **Conclusion:** The evidence has shown that social support is one of the components that can directly and indirectly improve the mental health of adolescents, and reduce the negative effects caused by virus anxiety.

Keywords

Coronavirus, Social Support, Mental, Teenagers, Anxiety

1. Introduction

At the end of 2019, an acute respiratory disease emerged, which first started in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province in China [1, 2]. Due to the high spread of this infection, it quickly spread to all continents and had negative effects on the mental health of young people and teenagers. Anxiety increased and quality of life decreased among teenagers [1, 3]. The outbreak of COVID-19 has affected many areas of life such as health, economy, societies and psychology. Studies show that the disease has caused many psychological prob-

lems, including feelings related to grief, loss, complications, illness and post-traumatic stress disorder [1, 4]. During the covid epidemic, in order to control the epidemic and its transmission, it is necessary to implement regulations such as curfew, social distance, and school closures, which have caused social isolation and negative effects on the psychological dimension of adolescents who actively participate in social life, considering that adolescence A very sensitive period of development for the onset of many mental health

*Corresponding author: banafsh.am1999@gmail.com (Banafshe Amiri)

Received: 24 February 2024; **Accepted:** 25 April 2024; **Published:** 10 May 2024



Copyright: © The Author(s), 2024. Published by Science Publishing Group. This is an **Open Access** article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

disorders such as anxiety, depression, for early diagnosis and prevention of mental health consequences requires further investigations [1, 5, 6] and how the pandemic may affect stress levels among specific subgroups (gender race, family structure, etc.) at this age. Such findings can be effective for early diagnosis. The important point is that since adolescence is a key stage in the development of social functioning and the creation of a lifestyle of physical and mental health, the impact of this epidemic on the lifestyle and social life of adolescents is likely to continue in the short term and may also last a lifetime [6, 7]. They continue. Therefore, it is important to examine the lifestyle and social life changes of adolescents during the pandemic and their relationship with perceived negative impact [8-10]. These positive changes in lifestyle, physical activity, and social support may help people cope with negative effects. Therefore, this review study was conducted with the aim of investigating the impact of depression, negative psychological dimension and social support on adolescents during COVID-19 [11-13].

2. Materials and Methods

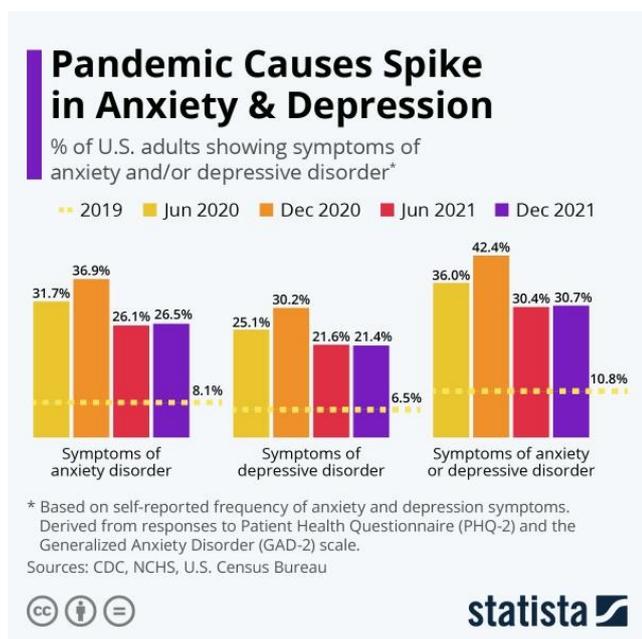


Figure 1. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health [14].

We searched electronic databases through PubMed, Science-direct and Google Scholar databases from 2019 to 2023. We searched with the following methods, such as MeSH or the terms COVID-19 and adolescents, depression and social or psychological support of COVID-19 on adolescents [5]. This strategy was searched and carried out. Among these, only twenty articles were related to "the effects of social support on depression and anxiety on adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic". Therefore, in order to make the review

more comprehensive and informative, we have included studies in this article that report on social support for anxiety and depression in adolescents in the COVID-19 pandemic [15].

3. Results

Based on the information of this article, this study investigated the level of social support and its relationship with mental health in adolescents during There are three main findings in this study [16-18]. First, we found that depression and mild risk are common in adolescents during this period, second, demographic changes, such as gender, living conditions were associated with increased complications and symptoms [19, 20]. Third, and most importantly, different social levels are specifically related to different evaluations of symptoms and complications [21, 22]. Adolescence is a period of significant social, cognitive and emotional changes during which symptoms of increased anxiety usually appear due to the sensitivity of this period and the limited number of adolescents faced with social disorders (depression and anxiety) during the epidemic [21, 23]. Many factors may affect the mental health of adolescents. The quality of life and psychosocial problems of adolescents in low-income families are more at risk due to insufficient digital devices and inappropriate access to the Internet. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, schools have been closed, adolescents have been forced to live and study at home, and communication with others has been affected, which can have a negative impact on mental health [23, 24]. In addition, recreational facilities are closed, so teenagers are forced to stay at home. It has been shown that staying at home for a long time and not having access to sports also increases the risk of depression in teenagers [25]. For this reason, they need social and family support to reduce the negative effects of anxiety in teenagers [25-27].

Social support:

Social support is an interactive process that often means receiving spiritual and material care and support from others [24]. It can reduce the anxiety level of adolescents in the epidemic, which makes people feel cared for, loved and has a positive effect on their mental health [28]. Generally, social support is divided into 2 categories in terms of nature: 1- Objective or real support, which includes social networks, the existence of group relationships and the amount of individual participation [24, 29]. The other is mental support which refers to the individual's experience and emotional satisfaction and is respected, supported and understood in the society. People differ in the use of social support [30-32]. The providers of social support in this article include family members and friends. The study showed that parental support is more important during adolescence and can effectively reduce adolescent anxiety [33-36].

Symptoms of coping with teenage anxiety:

Coping encompasses a wide range of self-regulatory pro-

cesses employed during periods of psychological stress, which include efforts to manage emotional responses, change the situation, and/or modify one's behavior [37]. It includes a range of strategies (such as denial, distraction, behavioral diversion) that are used to manage the response to stressors by shifting attention away from the stressor and associated thoughts and feelings [37, 38].

4. Discussion

This study shows that COVID-19 affects the mental health of teenagers. Adolescents who were isolated or quarantined during the pandemic were more at risk of acute depression and grief. The mental health potential of social distancing, school closures and quarantines and the impact of social support on the mental health of adolescents were investigated [39]. Many studies provide numerous observations and suggestions regarding preventive strategies to reduce the mental health consequences associated with COVID-19. Suggested ways to help improve mental health include economic support, social support [40].

5. Conclusions

The rate of COVID-19 among teenagers is low, but the stress caused by it damages their mental condition a lot [6, 41]. Many cross-sectional studies have been conducted to analyze the social impact on depression and anxiety on adolescents during the COVID-19 [42, 43]. The results of these studies show that the extent of this impact depends on several vulnerability factors, including age, educational status, pre-existing mental health status, low economic status, and being quarantined due to fear of infection [44, 45]. Therefore, adolescents are more psychologically vulnerable and need social support from parents and friends. Restrictive measures, such as closing schools and recreation centers for long periods together, expose adolescents to debilitating effects on academic, psychological, and developmental achievement because they feel isolated, anxious [46-48]. Adolescents' need for mental health services using face-to-face platforms and social support is necessary and essential. This is very important to prevent mental challenges during and after the pandemic in society [38, 49, 50].

6. Offers

The Covid-19 pandemic has had many effects on the lives of all people, especially teenagers around the world. In general, community health, such as social distancing and business closures, schools are critical to reducing these viruses, however this may create feelings of isolation, which in some cases may lead to risk and harm in young people. Coping with stress in this situation can help teenagers and their friends to be more resilient people. The corona epidemic and its consequences can lead to

stress and anxiety in people and changes in their thoughts and feelings, which may cause problems such as the following:

1. Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry,
2. Feeling hopeless
3. Changes in appetite, energy, interests
4. Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
5. Sleep disorders
6. Fear of being in public places and communicating with others

Strategies to deal with anxiety during the Covid-19 pandemic:

have daily and routine activities such as:

1. Learning and studying textbooks or novels
2. Listening to podcasts

Learning a new hobby such as a new language, cooking, etc.

Maintain communication with others through the following ways of communication such as:

1. Talking on the phone, chatting or video calls
2. Doing group sports online with relatives
3. Thinking positive
4. Avoiding negative news

Abbreviations

COVID-19: Corona Virus

WHO: World Health Organization

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Kurudirek F, Arıkan D, Ekici S. Relationship between adolescents' perceptions of social support and their psychological well-being during COVID-19 Pandemic: A case study from Turkey. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 2022; 137: 106491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106491>
- [2] Qi M, Zhou S-J, Guo Z-C, Zhang L-G, Min H-J, Li X-M, et al. The effect of social support on mental health in Chinese adolescents during the outbreak of COVID-19. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2020; 67(4): 514-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.07.001>
- [3] Bilge Y, Bilge Y. Investigation of the effects of corona virus pandemic and social isolation on psychological symptoms in terms of psychological resilience and coping styles (tur). *TURKISH JOURNAL CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY*. 2020; 23(Supp: 1): 38-51. <https://doi.org/10.5505/kpd.2020.66934>
- [4] Tüzün Z, Başar K, Akgül S. Social connectedness matters: Depression and anxiety in transgender youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The journal of sexual medicine*. 2022; 19(4): 650-60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsxm.2022.01.522>

- [5] Chen I-H, Chen C-Y, Liu C-H, Ahorsu DK, Griffiths MD, Chen Y-P, et al. Internet addiction and psychological distress among Chinese schoolchildren before and during the COVID-19 outbreak: A latent class analysis. *Journal of behavioral addictions*. 2021; 10(3): 731-46. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.2021.00052>
- [6] Zhu S, Zhuang Y, Ip P. Impacts on children and adolescents' lifestyle, social support and their association with negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2021; 18(9): 4780. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094780>
- [7] Chen C-Y, Chen I-H, Pakpour AH, Lin C-Y, Griffiths MD. Internet-related behaviors and psychological distress among schoolchildren during the COVID-19 school hiatus. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*. 2021; 24(10): 654-63. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0497>
- [8] Fegert JM, Vitiello B, Plener PL, Clemens V. Challenges and burden of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic for child and adolescent mental health: a narrative review to highlight clinical and research needs in the acute phase and the long return to normality. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*. 2020; 14: 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-020-00329-3>
- [9] Wang D, Zhao J, Ross B, Ma Z, Zhang J, Fan F, et al. Longitudinal trajectories of depression and anxiety among adolescents during COVID-19 lockdown in China. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2022; 299: 628-35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.12.086>
- [10] Mauer VA, Littleton H, Lim S, Sall KE, Siller L, Edwards KM. Fear of COVID-19, anxiety, and social support among college students. *Journal of American College Health*. 2022: 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2053689>
- [11] Grey I, Arora T, Thomas J, Saneh A, Tohme P, Abi-Habib R. The role of perceived social support on depression and sleep during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychiatry research*. 2020; 293: 113452. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113452>
- [12] Zhang X, Yang H, Zhang J, Yang M, Yuan N, Liu J. Prevalence of and risk factors for depressive and anxiety symptoms in a large sample of Chinese adolescents in the post-COVID-19 era. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*. 2021; 15(1): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-021-00429-8>
- [13] Wang C. Mental health and social support of caregivers of children and adolescents with ASD and other developmental disorders during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*. 2021; 6: 100242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadr.2021.100242>
- [14] Richter F. Pandemic Causes Spike in Anxiety & Depression Feb 15, 2022 [Available from: <https://www.statista.com/chart/21878/impact-of-coronavirus-pandemic-on-mental-health/>
- [15] Güner HR, Hasanoğlu İ, Aktaş F. COVID-19: Prevention and control measures in community. *Turkish Journal of medical sciences*. 2020; 50(9): 571-7. <https://doi.org/10.3906/sag-2004-146>
- [16] Kim Y-J, Lee S-Y, Cho J-H. A study on the job retention intention of nurses based on social support in the COVID-19 situation. *Sustainability*. 2020; 12(18): 7276. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187276>
- [17] Shoshani A, Kor A. The mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents: Risk and protective factors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*. 2022; 14(8): 1365. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0001188>
- [18] Gabarrell-Pascuet A, Garc á-Mieres H, Gin é V ázquez I, Moneta MV, Koyanagi A, Haro JM, et al. The Association of Social Support and Loneliness with symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic: a meta-analysis. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2023; 20(4): 2765. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20042765>
- [19] Singh S, Roy D, Sinha K, Parveen S, Sharma G, Joshi G. Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations. *Psychiatry research*. 2020; 293: 113429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113429>
- [20] Zhang X, Huang P-f, Li B-q, Xu W-j, Li W, Zhou B. The influence of interpersonal relationships on school adaptation among Chinese university students during COVID-19 control period: Multiple mediating roles of social support and resilience. *Journal of affective disorders*. 2021; 285: 97-104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.02.040>
- [21] Cortese S, Asherson P, Sonuga-Barke E, Banaschewski T, Brandeis D, Buitelaar J, et al. ADHD management during the COVID-19 pandemic: guidance from the European ADHD Guidelines Group. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. 2020; 4(6): 412-4. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30110-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30110-3)
- [22] Li F, Luo S, Mu W, Li Y, Ye L, Zheng X, et al. Effects of sources of social support and resilience on the mental health of different age groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC psychiatry*. 2021; 21: 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-03012-1>
- [23] Jiao WY, Wang LN, Liu J, Fang SF, Jiao FY, Pettoello-Mantovani M, et al. Behavioral and emotional disorders in children during the COVID-19 epidemic. *The Journal of pediatrics*. 2020; 221: 264-6. e1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.03.013>
- [24] Ao Y, Zhu H, Meng F, Wang Y, Ye G, Yang L, et al. The impact of social support on public anxiety amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(23): 9097. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17239097>
- [25] Lee J. Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. 2020; 4(6): 421. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30109-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30109-7)
- [26] Liu JJ, Bao Y, Huang X, Shi J, Lu L. Mental health considerations for children quarantined because of COVID-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. 2020; 4(5): 347-9. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30096-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30096-1)

- [27] Ren J, Li X, Chen S, Chen S, Nie Y. The influence of factors such as parenting stress and social support on the state anxiety in parents of special needs children during the COVID-19 epidemic. *Frontiers in psychology*. 2020; 11: 565393. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.565393>
- [28] Gunther K. Anxiety Outcomes through Adolescence in Relation to Social Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic: University of Oregon; 2023.
- [29] Cheng VC, Wong S-C, To KK, Ho P, Yuen K-Y. Preparedness and proactive infection control measures against the emerging novel coronavirus in China. *Journal of Hospital Infection*. 2020; 104(3): 254-5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2020.01.010>
- [30] Zhou T, Liu Q, Yang Z, Liao J, Yang K, Bai W, et al. Preliminary prediction of the basic reproduction number of the Wuhan novel coronavirus 2019 - nCoV. *Journal of Evidence - Based Medicine*. 2020; 13(1): 3-7. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jebm.12376>
- [31] Sun Z, Yang B, Zhang R, Cheng X. Influencing factors of understanding COVID-19 risks and coping behaviors among the elderly population. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2020; 17(16): 5889. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17165889>
- [32] Cao S, Zhu Y, Li P, Zhang W, Ding C, Yang D. Age difference in roles of perceived social support and psychological capital on mental health during COVID-19. *Frontiers in psychology*. 2022; 13: 801241. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.801241>
- [33] Zabini F, Albanese L, Becheri FR, Gavazzi G, Giganti F, Giovanelli F, et al. Comparative study of the restorative effects of forest and urban videos during COVID-19 lockdown: Intrinsic and benchmark values. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(21): 8011. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17218011>
- [34] Segrin C, Passalacqua SA. Functions of loneliness, social support, health behaviors, and stress in association with poor health. *Health communication*. 2010; 25(4): 312-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410231003773334>
- [35] Ratajska A, Glanz BI, Chitnis T, Weiner HL, Healy BC. Social support in multiple sclerosis: Associations with quality of life, depression, and anxiety. *Journal of psychosomatic research*. 2020; 138: 110252. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2020.110252>
- [36] Ferber SG, Weller A, Maor R, Feldman Y, Harel-Fisch Y, Mikulincer M. Perceived social support in the social distancing era: the association between circles of potential support and COVID-19 reactive psychopathology. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*. 2022; 35(1): 58-71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2021.1987418>
- [37] Myruski S, Pérez-Edgar K, Buss KA. Adolescent coping and social media use moderated anxiety change during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Adolescence*. 2024; 96(1): 177-95. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.12267>
- [38] Özmete E, Pak M. The relationship between anxiety levels and perceived social support during the pandemic of COVID-19 in Turkey. *Social Work in Public Health*. 2020; 35(7): 603-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2020.1808144>
- [39] Ishibashi R, Nouchi R, Honda A, Abe T, Sugiura M. A concise psychometric tool to measure personal characteristics for surviving natural disasters: Development of a 16-item power to live questionnaire. *Geosciences*. 2019; 9(9): 366. <https://doi.org/10.3390/geosciences9090366>
- [40] Bartoszek A, Walkowiak D, Bartoszek A, Kardas G. Mental well-being (depression, loneliness, insomnia, daily life fatigue) during COVID-19 related home-confinement—A study from Poland. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2020; 17(20): 7417. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17207417>
- [41] Shigemura J, Ursano RJ, Morganstein JC, Kurosawa M, Benedek DM. Public responses to the novel 2019 coronavirus (2019 - nCoV) in Japan: Mental health consequences and target populations. *Psychiatry and clinical neurosciences*. 2020; 74(4): 281. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pcn.12988>
- [42] Kasapoğlu F. Examination of the relationship between anxiety with spirituality, resilience and intolerance of uncertainty in the COVID-19 outbreak process. *Turkish Studies*. 2020; 15(4): 599-614. <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.44284>
- [43] Huang Y, Su X, Si M, Xiao W, Wang H, Wang W, et al. The impacts of coping style and perceived social support on the mental health of undergraduate students during the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic in China: a multicenter survey. *BMC Psychiatry*. 2021; 21: 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-021-03546-y>
- [44] Ögütlü H. Turkey's response to COVID-19 in terms of mental health. *Irish journal of psychological medicine*. 2020; 37(3): 222-5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ipm.2020.57>
- [45] Zhuo L, Wu Q, Le H, Li H, Zheng L, Ma G, et al. COVID-19-related intolerance of uncertainty and mental health among back-to-school students in Wuhan: the moderation effect of social support. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2021; 18(3): 981. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18030981>
- [46] Scardera S, Perret LC, Ouellet-Morin I, Gari épy G, Juster R-P, Boivin M, et al. Association of social support during adolescence with depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation in young adults. *JAMA network open*. 2020; 3(12): e2027491-e. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.27491>
- [47] Liu C, Huang N, Fu M, Zhang H, Feng XL, Guo J. Relationship between risk perception, social support, and mental health among general Chinese population during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Risk management and healthcare policy*. 2021; 1843-53. <https://doi.org/10.2147/RMHP.S302521>
- [48] Kuhlman KR, Antici E, Tan E, Tran M-L, Rodgers-Romero EL, Restrepo N. Predictors of Adolescent Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic in a Community Sample of Hispanic and Latinx Youth: Expressive Suppression and Social Support. *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*. 2023; 51(5): 639-51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-022-01019-8>

- [49] Mariani R, Renzi A, Di Trani M, Trabucchi G, Danskin K, Tambelli R. The impact of coping strategies and perceived family support on depressive and anxious symptomatology during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) lockdown. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. 2020; 11: 587724. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.587724>
- [50] Labrague LJ, JAAD S, Falguera C. Social and emotional loneliness among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic: the predictive role of coping behaviours, social support, and personal resilience. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ppc.12721>