1 Peer-review report

Reviewer #1: The title, abstract, and keywords are okay, with just minor revision I give for the abstract part. Background of the study is given. Suggestions for the methods, the exclusion/inclusion criteria can be added and there are several inconsistencies. The results should include the distribution of prevalence and severity of anxiety and depression for age groups. For example, age 15-25 no anxiety 55% mild anxiety 25% an so on (based on GAD-7 and PHQ-9 classifications). The discussion part comparing the findings with prevalence from other studies can be made more concise and summarized so the reader can get the important points that want to be stated. Some parts need more reference/citation and added explanation for the findings. The tables and figure is adequate and quite clear, however I have some questions that I already addressed in the file. Suggestions for further studies are not yet given. Some language corrections are necessary. In general, the writing does what it aimed for, it is good, beneficial for improvement of knowledge, practice, and policy for better mental health in Slovakia. Limitation of the study is already given. References already given are relevant and quite up to date.

Response to Reviewer #1: Thank you for the valuable comments. We have revised the abstract accordingly. We have added inclusion criteria into the Methods. In the Results we have added Figure 1 and 2 to address the comment on the prevalence and severity of anxiety and depression for age groups. We revised the discussion according the suggestions. We have had our manuscript proofread by English native speaker to correct language inconsistencies.

Reviewer #2: Many congratulations for this piece of work. However, I am sorry to say that results drawn are well expected and well known. The paper does not add much to the existing literature.

Response to Reviewer #2: We are sorry to hear your opinion that the results of our study do not add much to existing literature. We have implemented the first ever population study on prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms in the Slovak Republic using standardized international survey instruments. According to our opinion, our study brings valuable and unique information improtant for evidence-based policy setting.

Reviewer #3: The research is strongly grounded in the empirical literature and theory and the methods rely heavily upon established measures. This topic is really interesting and helpful during this pandemic period, and will be helpful even after the pandemic is finished. Still, some areas need clarification as noted below: - Indicate the study's design in the title. -

The literature addressed is not described accurately so far as I can see. Relevant literature should be presented more deeply in order to support the research problem. Further, there is no clear distinction between manuscript sections in terms of the content they report. First, I suggest dividing the section "Introduction" into three components, respectively introduction (explain the general argument of the paper, without going into specific details) background (situate the study concepts within the context of extant knowledge, discuss the international relevance of the concepts) and purpose, creating greater clarity in the analysis of the reader. What is the study's biggest contribution? The contribution should be clearly stated in the introduction. - This investigation needs an additional subheading about the theoretical framework used. It is not clear how the theoretical framework guided this study. - The authors claim to be the first study in Slovakia, but there are several studies available, even in student populations: Rutkowska, A.; Liska, D.; Cie´slik, B.; Wrzeciono, A.; Brod'áni, J.; Barcalová, M.; Gurín, D.; Rutkowski, S. Stress Levels and Mental Well-Being among Slovak Students during e-Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic. Healthcare 2021, 9, 1356. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9101356 Hajduk, M., Dancik, D., Januska, J., Strakova, A., Turcek, M., Heretik, A., & Pecenak, J. (2022). Depression and anxiety among College Students in Slovakia - Comparison of the Year 2018 and during COVID-19 pandemic. Bratislavske lekarske listy, 123(1), 44–49. https://doi.org/10.4149/BLL_2022_007 Gavurova, B., Ivankova, V., Rigelsky, M., Mudarri, T., & Miovsky, M. (2022). Somatic Symptoms, Anxiety, and Depression Among College Students in the Czech Republic and Slovakia: A Cross-Sectional Study. Frontiers in public health, 10, 859107. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.859107 Methods - Please report the use of Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) checklist. - The ethical aspects in collecting data are not specifically clarified, independently of the voluntary nature of the subjects´ participation, variables such as the approval by the local IRB, the offer of incentives to participate (how participants were recruited and whether they were compensated for participation), sharing and use of data and informed consent are not patent. - More precision is necessary regarding the sampling strategy and access to the target population. Response rate? How were participants recruited? Were inclusion/exclusion criteria used? - What were the expected effect sizes? There is no mention of the sample size that was targeted and obtained to meet the sample size requirements for data analysis. This information should be provided. - Have the applied instruments been validated for the Slovak population? Or were they applied in English? References to the authors of the instruments and respective validations should be placed. The presentation of certain metric properties in relation to reliability and validity is justified. - How can you prevent fraudulent activity in online survey platforms? - Did you analyze any potential non-response bias? And early vs late bias? - Did you check if data can suffer from common method bias? Results - A better visual structure of tables (boldface variables with statistical significance) would improve the readability. - In the discussion section, there is a complete absence of the empirical implications of the study, besides which the theoretical implications should have been approached in greater depth; Also implications for nursing practice and research need addressed in more deep. I suggest dividing this theoretical implications/ recommendations for action, in three ways: - individual actions; - employer responsibilities; and policy implications. - How for the findings of the present study are generalized across the Europe? CHECKLIST FOR STYLE - The manuscript will serve a broad audience of students, researchers, and practitioners, however the manuscript needs to be carefully and attentively proofread, because some sentences are awkwardly constructed,

punctuation is deficient, and therefore reading is occasionally difficult to follow. Would recommend a thorough technical edit of this paper.

Response to Reviewer #3: Thank you for the valuable comments. We have indicated the study's design in the title. We have elaborated the cited literature. We have revised the section Introduction according the recommendations. We did out best to stipulate the contribution of the study. We have added the findings of the three Slovak studies that were already published, thank you for pointing them out. We have added the use of STROBE checklist. In the Methods we have added all that was recommended – ethical aspects, informed consesnt, participant recruitment, sampling strategy, sample size, instrument validation, addressing the bias. We have improved the visual structure of the tables. In the Discussion we have added whole section on the implications of the study. We have had our manuscript proofread by English native speaker to correct language inconsistencies

2 Editorial Office's comments

1) Science Editor: The theme of the manuscript fall within the scope of the journal. However, relevant literature should be presented more deeply in order to support the research problem. Authors need to avoid overstatement. The writing could be more solid and logic. It is difficult to read due to poor language quality. In addition, authors need to strengthen or argue for the added values of this study to the literature.
Language Quality: Grade C (A great deal of language polishing)
Scientific Quality: Grade D (Fair)

Response to Science Editor: We elaborated the relevant literature more deeply to support our research objetive. We did our best to remove overstatement. We have revised the writing to improve the logic and message. We have had our manuscript proofread by English native speaker to correct language inconsistencies

2) Company Editor-in-Chief: I recommend the manuscript to be published in the World Journal of Clinical Cases.

Best regards,

Lian-Sheng Ma, Editorial Office Director, Company Editor-in-Chief, Editorial Office<