

Previous research on COVID-19 suggests that college students are experiencing increased symptoms of anxiety and depression (Saladino et al., 2020; Son et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Researchers have argued that there is an “urgent need to develop interventions and preventative strategies to address the mental health of college students” (Son et al., 2020, p. 2). Although there is a growing literature on the negative effects of the pandemic on the mental health of college students, there is little research on how students cope with these negative effects. In this study we will be investigating the effectiveness of certain coping mechanisms in response to the high stress caused by COVID-19. We intend to do this by developing a survey and administering it to the Kennesaw State University student body. The survey will initially consist of questions about students' symptoms of anxiety and depression before and during COVID. Next, students will be asked about the effectiveness of coping strategies before and during COVID (e.g., exercise, recreational entertainment, positive affirmations, hobbies). We hypothesize that students will experience more symptoms of anxiety and depression during COVID in comparison to before. We expect an increase in the severity of negative symptoms and a decrease in the effectiveness of most coping mechanisms post-COVID. We expect that even coping mechanisms that can still be utilized in a pandemic, like virtual human interaction, will not be effective post-COVID and may now be stressful for participants. Our study will help researchers better understand the effects of COVID-19 on mental health and can help propose solutions to high stress levels during a global pandemic.

Research into the effects of COVID-19 on college students has been researched in the other in investigations like “Investigating Mental health of US College Students during the COVID-19 pandemic: Cross-Sectional survey study (Xiaomei Wang et al.,2020), “Effects of COVID on College Students Mental Health in the United States: Interview Survey Study [(Son et al.,2020). Both investigated the mental effect of COVID-19 on college students. Both used statistical data from either online or interview survey collected from a large university student body. Both stated in their conclusions a need for follow up research, and I quote respectively “...Respondents reported academic-, health-, and lifestyle-related concerns caused by the pandemic. Given the unexpected length and severity of the outbreak, these concerns need to be further understood and addressed.” and “...the findings of our study highlight the urgent need to develop interventions and preventative strategies to address the mental health of college students.” Our investigation follows up on the path they started. In this study we will be investigating positive and negative coping mechanisms due to high stress of COVID-19. We intend to do this by developing a survey and administering it to the Kennesaw State University student body. The survey will consist first of questions about students' symptoms of anxiety and depression before and during COVID. Next, students will be asked about positive and negative coping strategies before and during COVID. We hypothesize that students will experience more symptoms of anxiety and depression during COVID compared to before. We expect an increase in the severity of negative symptoms and a decrease in the effectiveness of the coping mechanisms post-COVID. We expect that even coping mechanisms that can still be utilized in a pandemic, like virtual human interaction, will not be effective

post-COVID. We will take this data and analyze all findings in hopes of better understanding and proposing solutions to high stress levels during a global pandemic. Although we are still in the first wave of this Pandemic there is a healthy number of studies on COVID and its effects, we found none addressing the issue we are proposing.