Titolo del progetto: Covid – Health Literacy

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Descrizione del progetto:
- Giustificazione teorica:
  Given the recent pandemic of the novel coronavirus and COVID-19, various health information is available on the Internet considering issues such as diagnosis, treatment, protective behaviour, preventive measures, dashboard statistics and recommendations. Reliable and trustworthy health information is key in this situation for citizens to act upon and slow down the spread of COVID-19. This increased both citizens need for information and the challenges they face in relation to find the information relevant to them, to critically reflect about them and to transfer them to their everyday life. This also applies for the group of university students, who make up a significant proportion of young adults worldwide. University students face a period of transition when entering university and academic life that are characterized by many new facets, challenging circumstances and new experiences they have to master to start their university education and studies. Following socialization processes demand them to develop autonomy and competencies. Health, health behaviour and (digital) health literacy in this period of life depend even more on students’ individual decisions and living circumstances rather than on parent or adult guidance and help. Moreover, graduates are often employed in management positions and in this role they are responsible not only for themselves but also for others. Health and (digital) health literacy are central resources in this context.

- Scopo:
  Not much is known about university student`s health literacy especially in relation to crisis situations that affect whole of societal life including social, economic and political impact on their everyday practices. Therefore, we want to shed light on how students face the challenges of this pandemic and how they cope with the fact that their lives are being turned upside down for the better or the worse. We are in particular interested in learning about their health literacy levels, their online information seeking profiles, the topics they search for and where, what attitudes they have towards their current situation living in this age of pandemic, their worries and future time perspectives as well as health and wellbeing status.

- Materiali e metodi:
  An online survey will be sent to students of Milano-Bicocca University. The participation is voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire has been defined by the Public Health Centre Fulda (PHZF) at Fulda University of Applied Sciences and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Health Literacy Research (IZGK) at Bielefeld University and it is translated and adapted by each partner (see Scale documentation attached). Ad hoc questions investigating the frequency and the satisfaction of physical activity, leisure time, social contacts, and study activities will be added. The main goals of the survey are to:
  - Assess digital health literacy of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Explore the different digital sources of information students consult when seeking for COVID-19 information and identify their preferred choices
• Capture students future time perspective/worries and their relations with student’s digital health literacy, information seeking behaviour and health situation
• Assess students Sense of Coherence and its association with student’s digital health literacy, information seeking behaviour and health situation

It takes about 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The study design is based on a convenience sample. As this is a kind of “ad-hoc study” with limited time for preparation, we have not defined a minimum amount of university students that need to be enrolled in this survey. However, we aim to achieve a large coverage and a high response of the sample. The survey administration will last 4-6 weeks. Other editions can be repeated in the next academic year. The procedure will be adapted according to opportunities. Firstly, we will ask support to the Athenaeum to send the questionnaire to all Milano-Bicocca students. If this solution is not possible, other procedures will be used: the survey will be sent through the Sona System, the link will be published in Facebook public students’ pages, trainee and thesis students will be involved in dissemination. Students from other universities could be involved through partnerships with other investigators.

Starting in Germany in March 2020 the COVID-HL -Survey is currently being conducted by all partners involved in COVID-HL-Survey. Each participating country has named Principal Investigators, who are responsible for their own survey. All partners are currently at different stages of the implementation.

- Risultati attesi:
The benefit of the project is to enable research, policy and practice to develop policies and programmes to foster healthy and protective behaviour, preventive measures and adherence with the COVID-19 policies.

Moreover, the participation to an international consortium is aimed to:
• establish a global network and community of research and practice on digital health literacy,
• advance the understanding of digital health literacy and highlight action how it can be a critical tool to navigate information, sources and services,
• translate knowledge into practical action and inform health policy making,
• increase global awareness among citizens and decision-makers towards (digital) health literacy in general as a tool to prevent from communicable diseases.

The project has been already approved by the ethical committee of the Bielefeld University. For more information: www.covid-hl.eu

Approvazione Comitato Etico:
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