

## The Impact of Virtual Schooling Due to COVID-19 Restrictions on Children's Mood and Behavior

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**Abstract :** Background: Due to measures such as school closure, social distancing, and virtual teaching during the pandemic, primary school children's psychological well-being is greatly affected. These measures have short and long-term consequences on the children's well-being and mental health. Identifying these consequences is important. Aim: This study aimed to evaluate mood and behavior changes in children who attended school virtually. Subjects and methods: This is a cross-sectional study conducted among children and their parents who visited the outpatient clinic. A self-administered questionnaire was given to the parents of children aged between 6 to 14 years. The questionnaire includes socio-demographic characteristics, Conner's modified scale to assess the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) of children, and the parental stress scale (PSS) to assess the stress symptoms of the parents. Results: Of the 66 surveyed children, 60.6% were aged between 10 to 14 years old, with the female being dominant (77.3%). The most common medical condition was asthma (7.6%), and nearly two-thirds (63.6%) indicated good health conditions during the pandemic. There was a significant inverse correlation observed between ADHD score and PSS score ( $r=-0.387$ ). No significant differences are in ADHD and PSS scores in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of the children, including age, gender, and having an associated medical condition ( $p>0.05$ ). Conclusion: During the pandemic, children who attended virtual classes did not seem to affect even with restrictions. Most children indicated good health conditions during the pandemic. However, it is surprising to know that in spite of children's high spirits during the pandemic, their parents were seen to have an increased level of stress. Strategies to address parents' psychological disorders during the pandemic are warranted.

**Keywords :** children's mood, COVID-19, ADHD, parental stress

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