

College age students report trouble concentrating, other barriers in distant learning settings

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College students whose classes transitioned to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced difficulties concentrating and balancing responsibilities at home, as well as mental health issues, according to research presented during the American Academy of

Pediatrics 2021 National Conference & Exhibition.

A study abstract, "Barriers to Academic Performance in Distance Learning Settings Among College Students," is based on results of a survey emailed to academic student groups from 166 accredited colleges and universities across 44 states in June 2020. Students responding to the anonymous, voluntary survey reported barriers to [virtual learning](#), with nearly 80% of the 307 respondents reporting difficulties in concentrating.

A notable number of students reported having limited access to a computer or device to use for remote learning and difficulty accessing food, according to the survey. Hispanic students reported experiencing more responsibilities at home, including taking care of siblings and doing chores, than non-Hispanic students. Sample sizes for other racial or ethnic groups were inadequate for analysis.

"It is vital for educators to consider the varying barriers to virtual learning while making policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," said abstract author Nelson Chow, a Princeton University student and Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics Research intern at Cohen Children's Medical Center. "It is especially important to have a particular awareness of the cultural and socioeconomic factors that may impact students' outcomes."

Besides trouble concentrating, students surveyed reported barriers to distance learning that included: responsibilities at home (57.6%), and mental health issues (46.3%). Also, 8.5% of students reported having limited access to a computer or device to use for [remote learning](#) and 6.8% of students reported having difficulty accessing food. Only 14 students (4.6%) reported experiencing no barriers to [academic performance](#) in a distance learning environment.

The research suggests that the prevalence of students reporting that [mental health issues](#), limited access to technology, and food insecurity as a barrier to distance learning is concerning.

Nelson Chow will present the study abstract at 3:34 pm CT Saturday, October 9.

More information: Abstract Title: Barriers to Academic Performance in Distance Learning Settings Among College Students

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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