

# Fully online college classes tied to greater psychological distress

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Fully remote college classes were associated with higher levels of

psychological distress during 2021 for students compared with those attending hybrid format classes, according to a study published online Nov. 30 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Abdelrahman ElTohamy, M.D., from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues examined the association between course delivery model and psychological distress among U.S. [college students](#). The analysis included 59,250 full-time undergraduate students surveyed during January to early June 2021.

The researchers found that students who attended classes fully online (61.2 percent) reported higher levels of [psychological distress](#) than those who attended a mix of online and in-person classes (35.3 percent).

When controlling for geographic region, year in school, gender, race and ethnicity, [food security](#), current anxiety and/or depressive disorders, COVID-19 concerns, and residence (living on campus, off campus with family, or other off-campus arrangements), the association remained significant. When further adjusting for time spent socializing with friends, the association was also still significant.

"The findings of this study suggest that [mental health professionals](#) may wish to consider the association of course delivery models with mental health outcomes when working with college students," the authors write. "Colleges should be aware of the mental health burden associated with attending fully online classes and consider possible in-person components and supports for students."

**More information:** Abdelrahman ElTohamy et al, Association Between College Course Delivery Model and Rates of Psychological Distress During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.44270](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.44270)

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