

## Chapter 8

# Healthy Life Style Behaviors and Quality of Life of Individuals During the COVID–19 Outbreak

**Kübra Arslan**

*Kırıkkale University, Turkey*

**Birgül Çiçek**

*Hacettepe University, Turkey*

**Hande Şahin**

*Kırıkkale University, Turkey*

**Sibel Erkal**

*Hacettepe University, Turkey*

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter aims to determine the effect of the Covid-19 epidemic period on individuals' healthy lifestyle behaviors and quality of life. This study was conducted with 370 individuals selected by simple random sampling using a survey technique. The data of the research was collected by questionnaire form. The 'Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors Scale II' validity and reliability studies of which were conducted by Bahar et al. (2008), and the 'Quality of Life Scale Short Form' adapted by Eser et al. (1999) were used to measure healthy lifestyle behaviors and quality of life of individuals. The Mann-Whitney U (MWU) and Kruskal-Wallis (KW) tests were used. According to the results, quality of life and healthy life behaviors of the individuals participating in the study were above average. To prevent the adverse situations that may arise in individuals' healthy lifestyles and quality of life, it can be ensured that leisure activities are rearranged according to the existing conditions and individuals' awareness of this is increased.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7772-1.ch008

## **INTRODUCTION**

Epidemics that spread to more than one country and continent worldwide are called pandemics. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), for a disease to become a pandemic, it must have a new virus or mutation effect, be easily transmitted to humans and be contagious. The WHO declares a pandemic when certain criteria are met and when especially the rapid human-to-human transmission of a new virus increases (The National Academy of Sciences of Turkey [NAST], 2020). Pandemics cause significant changes in societies in terms of health, sheltering, security, trade, and labor markets. According to Yavuz (2020), the outbreak considerably and permanently changes the social and economic structure of that period and forces states to make various arrangements to rebuild the social order. The outbreak and the whole of the ongoing events cause significant changes in the social, economic, and political balance of societies (Acemoğlu & Robinson, 2017).

A case reported from the city of Wuhan with a population of 11 million people in Hubei province of China on December 31, 2019, was determined to be infected with a new Coronavirus that had never been seen before. COVID-19 was first observed in people selling in the seafood market in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019. This virus, transmitted through the respiratory tract, spreads very rapidly, even in cases without the connection with the disease epicenter. The most significant factor in the increase in the severity and mortality of the disease is liver, kidney, and cardiovascular diseases accompanying COVID-19, and it has been reported that smoking is also effective (Caccialanza et al., 2019).

The increasing number of cases in more countries every day explains that this virus is contagious with community contact (Adalja, Toner and Inglesby, 2020). This disease has become the most important health problem of the 21st century due to the high contagiousness of its agent, unfavorable clinical prognosis, and its lethal effect in almost every age group, especially individuals aged 65 years and above (Üstün and Özçiftçi, 2020). Nowadays, the disease has been transmitted from person to person, spreading to Asia, Europe, and the American continent, apart from China. As of April 2020, the outbreak, observed in 212 countries, infected about 1.5 million people and caused the death of more than 85 thousand people (WHO, 2020).

COVID-19 threatens not only the lives of people but also the socioeconomic well-being and peace of societies, and individuals' quality of life and healthy lifestyle behaviors are shaped accordingly. This makes it important to examine the outbreak and the medical, social, psychological, and economic effects of the outbreak.

### **The Effects of COVID-19 on the Individual, Society, and Family**

Disasters such as pandemics can have significant effects on the sociological structure and administrative institutions of society (Alfani and Murphy, 2017). Epidemics and the resulting social, political, and economic reasons dramatically increase the number of people in need of social protection and assistance. Therefore, many major epidemics experienced throughout history have adversely affected the health of individuals and society throughout the country, region, and the world, caused economic destruction and had political consequences (Yavuz, 2020).

Due to the outbreak, the economy, working life, and education of countries have been significantly affected. It is expected that COVID-19 will cost countries more than 4 trillion USD with the restructuring of national economies, borrowing costs, treatment expense of diseased individuals, and social assistance (Nwogugu, 2020). United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) also

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