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**Cross-Sectional analysis of Colombian University students' perceptions of mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Repercussions on academic achievement****Erika T Paredes***Technological Units Santander, Colombia*

**Background:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase in academic activities at home negatively impacted mental health, due to significant levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. We investigated the association of depression and anxiety with university students' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown in Bucaramanga, Colombia.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted through an online survey during the lockdown, through the use of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the grade-point average.

**Results:** 1090 females, out of 1957 students, with mean age  $22.2 \pm 5.3$  years participated in the study. The prevalence of low academic performance was higher in men (4.7%  $p=0.014$ ). As for mental health, 2.5% of the students were classified as "definite cases" of anxiety and 8.2% were diagnosed with depression. Women with a low academic performance had a greater percentage of being "definite cases" (3.8%) of anxiety as compared to men (1.1%). Regarding depression, in men, 12.2% of those with low academic performance were "definite cases" (6.9%  $p<0.05$ ); in females with low academic performance, 10.1% were "definite cases" of depression, according to the Poisson regression analysis. The probability of low performance was 100% higher for women identified as "doubtful cases" of depression (PR=2.0 95% CI:1.10-5.18,  $p=0.03$ ). Conclusions: A positive association between the severity of anxiety/depression and lower grades, especially in women, was found. Mental health should be a special concern when considering university students, in order to improve their academic performance.

**Biography**

Erika Tatiana Paredes Prada has her expertise in mental health and physical activity in improving the health and wellbeing. She is physical therapist with master's degree in research field. She has experience in research, evaluation, teaching and evaluation both in hospital and education institutions. She is working as a professor since 2016 until now.