

The Influence COVID-Related Anxiety and Neuroticism Predisposition Has on Academic Performance

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The COVID-19 global pandemic has not only taken over the world, but has also stolen the normalcy of daily life. In the recent increasing severity of COVID-19, quarantine has become a daily reality for millions across the world. During previous pandemics and including this past mandatory stay-at-home order, it is seen that there are increased cases of psychological instability experienced, including but not limited to illnesses such as anxiety to depression. The changes in behavior and personality with a long-term environmental stressor can have genetic linkages to neuroticism, a Big Five personality trait. This measure shows how emotionally stable an individual is as a trait rather than a state of being. COVID-19 presents a unique situation where people could be facing a negative change, the prevalence of this especially in college students who are adjusting to the new online class format. This study will analyze a students' academic performance through GPA and grade collection. After this collection, students will fill out administered surveys that address COVID-specific stressors, such as shared spaces on campus, and a series of psychological tests addressing PTSD, depression, anxiety and neuroticism. These questionnaires will be taken pre-, during- and post-COVID-19 pandemic. In order to understand why someone may have a change in academic performance in the given situation, two different genes will be analyzed. PCR analysis will be used to find a correlation between high neuroticism scores and a students' predisposition to a neurotic characteristic. It is hypothesized that a negative change in GPA will correspond with a genetic predisposition to neuroticism and feelings of worry or depression pre- and post-COVID 19 pandemic.