

## **NEW RESEARCH STUDY 2022**

### **Investigating Generation Z College Students' Health Beliefs and Preventive Behavioral Patterns associated with COVID-19**

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#### **QUALITATIVE FINDINGS**

With the assistance of the Center for Survey Research (CSR), our Qualtrics online quantitative and qualitative survey was distributed to 500 ECU generation Z college students ranging from first year freshman to graduate school level from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, with a response rate of 10 percent (51 fully completed surveys). The major findings indicated that *67% of our sampled students were worried about the spread of Covid-19 on campus*. The major qualitative themes from the comments analyzed through NVivo 12 and Atlas ti 8 were: *(1) Felt physically fatigued; (2) Mentally and emotionally difficult; (3) Loss of taste and smell; (4) Scared due to online and news media reports; and (5) Family and Friends experienced worst symptoms*. Here are a few of their comments:

*“Extreme mental fog and fatigue. Easy tasks become complex. The first 1 to 3 days after onset resembled a head cold (stuffy nose, headache, earache, low fever, general malaise, and fatigue). From day 4 on resembled a chest cold (chest tightness, difficulty breathing, cough wheezing). Loss of taste and smell on day 4 for approximately 48 hours. Regained full taste and smell senses after approximately a week. Symptoms persisted for 14 days.”*

*“I was afraid at first because of everything you see online and in the news media. However, I thankfully had a very mild case of Covid-19 despite being unvaccinated and overweight. I took walks daily while sick to stimulate my lungs but didn't push myself beyond my limits. I was annoyed towards the end that my symptoms were gone, yet I still had to remain isolated.”*

*“Extreme for all members. I lost my sister due to covid that turned into pneumonia. It's difficult on all of us since we survived it but heartbreaking how one didn't make it.”*

*“My mom, brother, and sister got it. My mom was hit the worst even though she was vaccinated and had the most awful chronic headaches. One of my sisters basically stopped eating and was constantly burning up.”*

This research study's qualitative findings are significant because it provides a more in-depth and personable account on how COVID-19 affected our ECU student population during this worldwide pandemic situation.