Covid stress syndrome in a large online sample from Serbia- Latent class analysis

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- COVID-related distress is multidimensional

  - worry about the dangerouseness of COVID-19
  - socio-economic worries
  - worries that foreigners are spreading SARS-CoV2
  - traumatic stress symptoms
  - COVID-19-related compulsive checking and reassurance seeking

- COVID stress syndrom (CS-Sy;Taylor et al., 2020)

- Covid stress scale (CSS;Taylor et al., 2020)

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- Greater severity of CS-Sy (Taylor et al., 2020)

    - in females, younger people, unemployed and lower education
    - with pre-existing mood and anxiety disorders
    - higher on vulnerability traits such as anxiety sensitivity and intolerance of uncertainty

- CS-Sy has a dimensional nature (Taylor et al., 2020)

- Replications in non-English languges and cultures other than North-American are needed

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GOALS

- To determine demographic correlates of COVID-related distress in a Serbian community sample

- Are there subgroups of individuals characterized by various levels of COVID-related distress?

- If so, whether these subgroups differ in terms of:

    - premorbid characteristics: previous mental health issues
    - personality vulnerability: intolerance of uncertainty
    - concurrent features: general distress
    - COVID-19 exposure (at work and being infected)

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METHOD

- A cross- sectional, online study; January 2021-beginning of 3rd wave and public vaccination

- N = 3594 adults; after exclusion of outliers N = 2815

- 66% females; M_{age} = 26.9, SD_{age} = 8.1 years

- Latent class analysis using the total CSS score to identify subgroups

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Instruments

- Socio-demographic information

- Health-related indicators: mental health issues before the pandemic (1 = "yes" and 0 = "no")

- Intolerance of Uncertainty-11 (IUS-11; Mihić et al., 2014) (α = .93)

- Covid Stress Scale (CSS; Taylor et al.,2020) (α = .94)

- Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4; Kroenke et al., 2009) (α = .89)
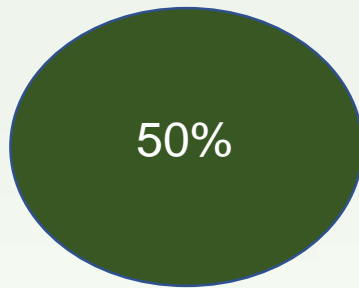
- COVID-19 exposure: single items

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RESULTS

- Mild level of COVID-19-related distress (M = 31.9, SD = 19.0)

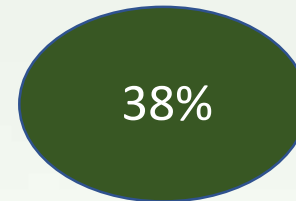- Female gender, older age, and higher educational level were associated with greater CSS scores

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Latent class analysis identified three latent classes:
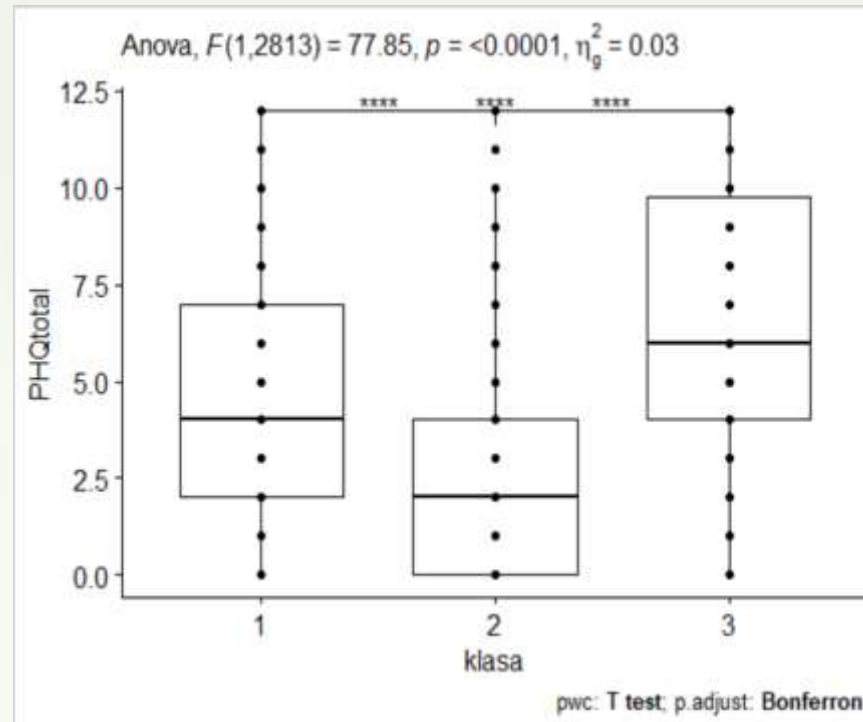
50%

18%

38%

CLASS I
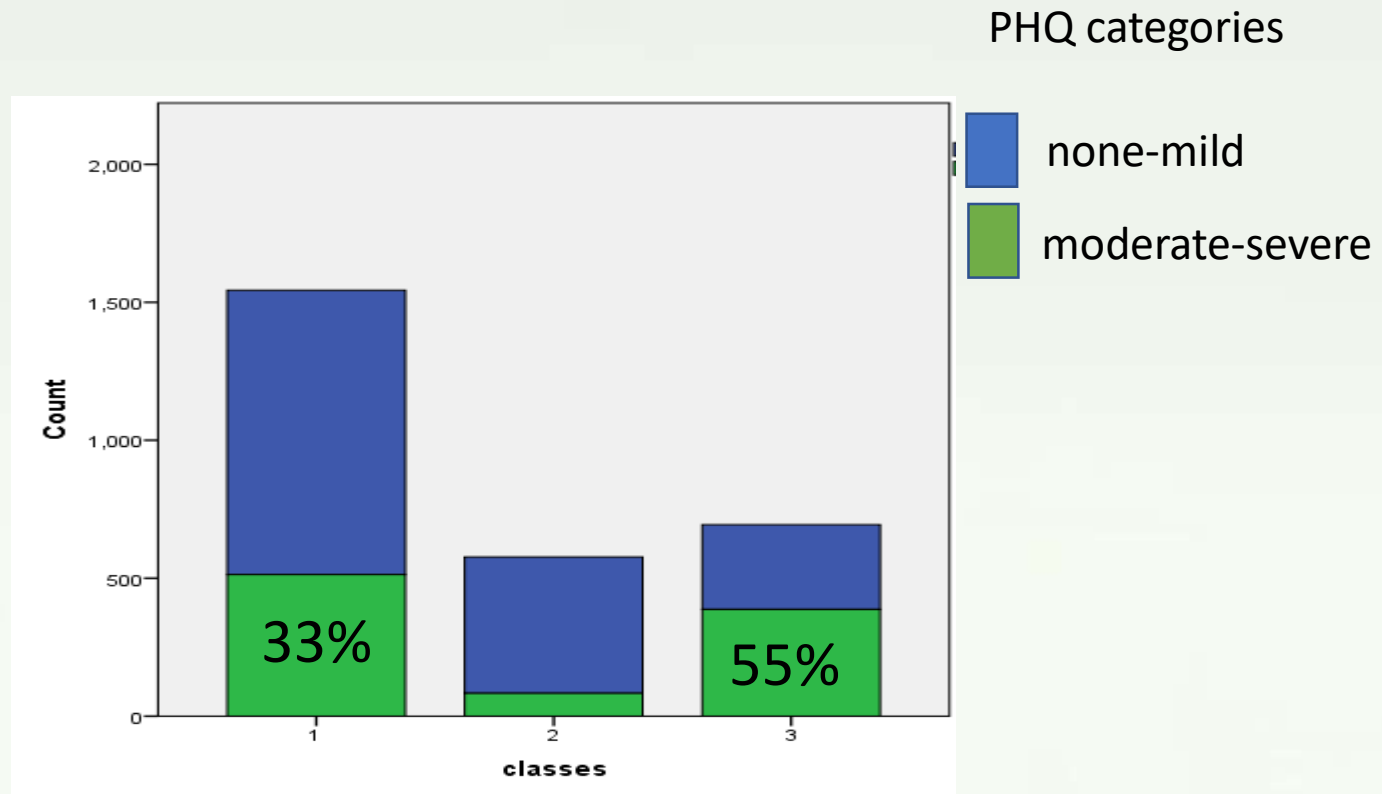
CLASS II

CLASS III

RESULTS

Characteristics of the classes: general distress

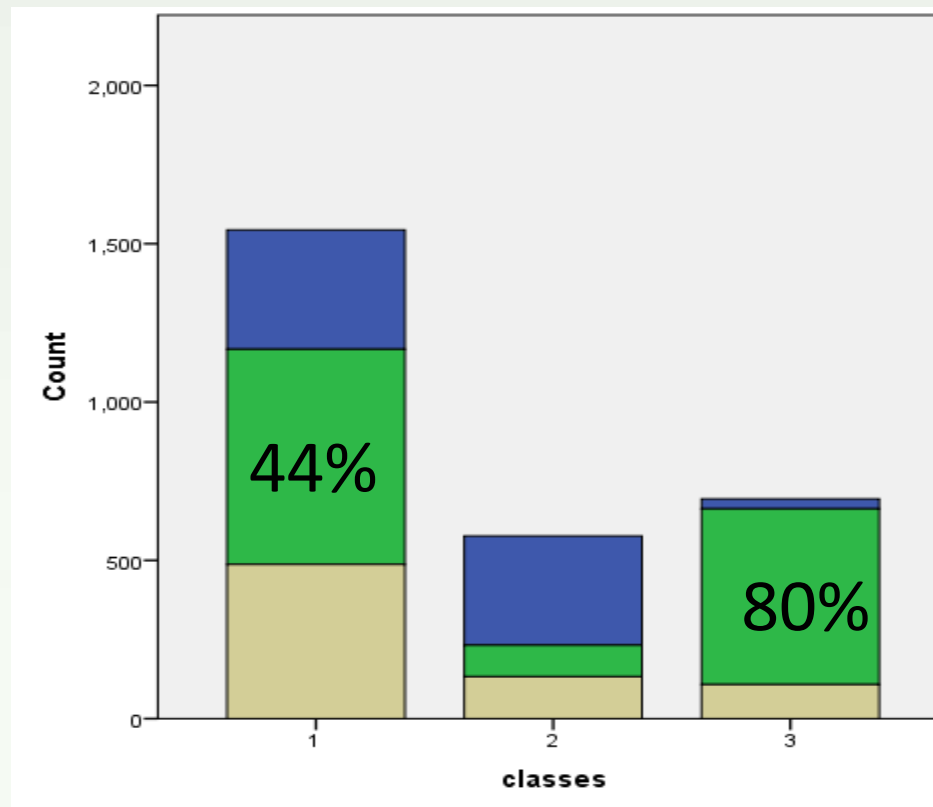PHQ-4 total
0-2 none-minimal
3-5 mild
6-8 moderate
9-12 severe

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Characteristics of the classes: general distress

PHQ categories

- none-mild
- moderate-severe

$\chi2$ (4) = 241.69, p < .000

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Characteristics of the classes: personality vulnerability
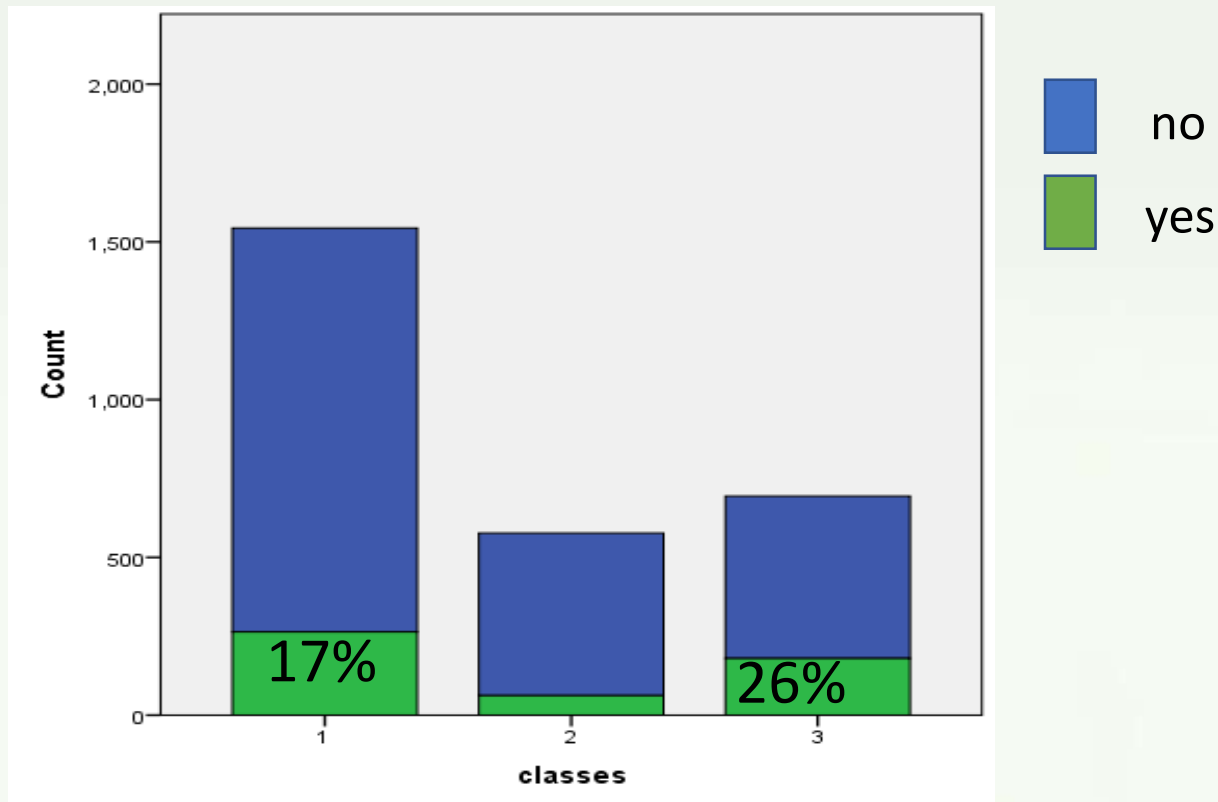

IUS categories

Not vulnerable

Vulnerable

Average

χ2 (4) = 687.35, p < .000

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RESULTS

Characteristics of the classes: mental health issues in the past

$\chi2$ (2) = 51.09, p < .000

RESULTS

Characteristics of the classes: COVID-19 exposure

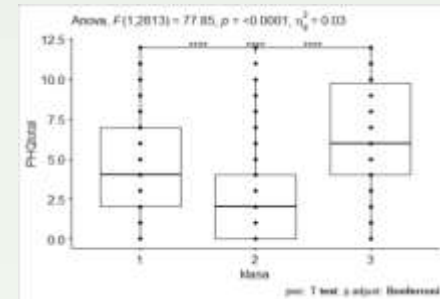There were no differences in COVID-19 exposure among the three classes

DISCUSSION

- Mild level of COVID-related distress was registered in our Serbian sample, between 2nd and 3rd wave of the pandemic, probably reflecting adaptation to the life changes.

- Female, older people, and more educated were more affected, which is partly different from North American countries

- Understanding a broader context

- Not all people were efficient in adapting to the demands of the pandemic (Class 3)

    -intolerant of uncertainty
    -with previous mental health difficulties

- In need of mental health services (keeping under control their previous MHD and amelioration of IU)

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•People without pre-existing mental health problems and personality vulnerability will develop mild distress while facing the pandemic

• Normal reactions to pandemic; let them rely on their resources

• Class 2-resilient people?

•Covid-19-related distress is distributed dimensionally (many people will be affected)

• Limitations: internet sample

• Perspectives: CSS, HEXACO model personality, societal variables

This study was the piloting part of a larger epidemiological study:

Thank you