

## **General Psychosocial Screening of Filipino Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic Using the Pediatric Symptom Checklist-35 (PSC-35)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has posed risks to the health and socio-economic conditions of the global community, including the psychosocial well-being of children. The Pediatric Symptom Checklist-35 is a validated screening tool to detect children at risk for emotional, cognitive, and behavioral problems. It also includes subscales to identify risk for attention, internalizing, and externalizing symptoms.

**Objective:** To determine the psychosocial status of Filipino children during the COVID-19 pandemic using the PSC-35.

**Design:** Cross-sectional, descriptive study

**Subjects:** 284 Filipino pediatric patients being seen at the St. Luke's Medical Center–Quezon City Outpatient Clinics.

**Methodology:** Primary caregivers of the subjects were asked to answer the PSC-35 regarding their child using an online platform. Total and subscale scores were calculated and interpreted based on set cut-off values. Demographic data were collected and described.

**Statistical Analysis:** Data were presented using frequencies and proportions

**Results:** 33 of 284 (11.6%) children were at risk for psychosocial impairment, with a slight male predominance. 14 children (4.9%) were positive for attention symptoms, 30 children (10.6%) for internalizing symptoms, and 17 children (6%) for externalizing symptoms. Majority were currently enrolled in online schooling at private institutions and were from the middle socio-economic class.

**Conclusion:** This study found that 11.6% of Filipino children were screened to be at risk for psychosocial impairment during the COVID-19 pandemic. This highlighted the value of timely psychosocial screening especially during significant circumstances, which will consequently lead to early identification of psychosocial issues and better outcomes for affected children.

**Keywords:** *psychosocial screening, COVID-19 pandemic, pediatric symptom checklist*