

Analysis of the Causes and Countermeasures for the "Fragile College Students" Phenomenon

Yaqian Zhou*

Southwest Petroleum University, College of Geoscience and Engineering, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

*Corresponding Author: Yaqian Zhou

ABSTRACT

Recently, the term "fragile college students" has gained popularity online, becoming a new label that many students identify with. The term refers to a new generation of college students who, despite their youth, suffer from numerous physical ailments and seem fragile, almost as if they would break at the slightest touch, exhibiting the so-called "fragile phenomenon." This phenomenon reflects irregular lifestyles and declining physical fitness among contemporary college students, exacerbated by the rapid iteration of external environments, which intensifies the toll on their well-being. The rise of "fragile college students" serves as a reminder to society and educational institutions to seriously address students' irregular lifestyles, lack of exercise, unhealthy diets, and psychological issues. Suggestions include providing health education and psychological counseling, increasing sports facilities and venues, offering healthy dining options, and building a strong ideological foundation for youth to promote healthy growth.

KEYWORDS

Fragile College Students; Causes and Countermeasures; Self-mockery.

1. INTRODUCTION

During his visit to Beijing Yuying School, President Xi Jinping expressed his earnest expectations for educators, emphasizing that the fundamental task of education is to foster moral character. He stressed that cultivating students' ideals, moral qualities, knowledge, intelligence, physical and psychological well-being is essential. Recently, reports of incidents like "fracturing a bone while using the bathroom," "sneezing causing a herniated disc," "holding back laughter leading to nasal artery rupture," "getting an ear piercing that results in losing an ear," "straining the neck while stretching," "burning oneself while frying sausages," and "laughing too hard while watching short videos, causing a nasal artery rupture" have made the term "fragile college students" go viral. Many students have humorously embraced this new label.

Zhu Xiaomin, a lecturer at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, surveyed 1,800 college students. The data revealed gender differences in body types among students, with males more likely to be overweight or obese and females more likely to be underweight. Overall, females exhibited better physical fitness than males, although their development was generally unbalanced^[1]. Analysis of basic data reveals a trend of declining physical fitness and health among college students. This issue not only affects individual quality of life and future development but also concerns the progress and well-being of society. Improving the physical fitness of college students is an urgent matter.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF "FRAGILE COLLEGE STUDENTS"

The term "fragile" carries a mix of humor and exaggeration, but it also reflects real issues. "Fragile college students" are not just an eye-catching internet term but a phenomenon that requires attention. According to a hospital in Zhengzhou, over 1,700 patients aged 18 to 25 were admitted to the emergency department in September^[2], most of whom were college students. In today's fast-paced society, issues like "sleep disorders," "irregular diet and routines," and "lack of exercise" have become hot topics of concern. Health-related student withdrawals and the rising incidence of mental health issues highlight that the term "fragile college students" is not just a joke but a real concern that demands society's attention. Here is a closer look at the physical condition of contemporary college students:

Decrease in Voluntary Exercise: Fewer students are willing to engage in voluntary physical activity. According to a survey of 942 students in the School of Earth Sciences, only 24% of students reported engaging in physical activity, mostly limited to mandatory PE classes. Another 20% exercised because they were encouraged by friends or upperclassmen, while 40% only exercised occasionally and not regularly. Only 16% reported engaging in regular voluntary physical activity. Overall, the percentage of students who voluntarily exercise regularly is low.

High Rates of Myopia: Our survey shows that about two-thirds of students have impaired vision and need glasses, with only one-third meeting healthy vision standards. Improper eye habits and staying up late are likely major contributors. Besides affecting vision, staying up late also lowers immune response and concentration.

Low Physical Test Pass Rates: An analysis of physical test results of students across different years shows that female students perform better than males, with most scores ranging between 60 and 70, while few exceed 80. Most male students fail in pull-up tests, with many unable to complete a single pull-up. Additionally, overweight and obesity rates are rising, leading to conditions like hypertension and gout.

Increased Leave Rates in Extracurricular Courses: Comparing recent data with previous years, more students are taking leave from physically demanding extracurricular courses like military training. Students may avoid these activities due to fear, lack of confidence, or physical exhaustion. Given the physical demands of military training, more students are citing illness or injury as reasons for absence.

Body Image Anxiety: About 60% of students experience body image anxiety. Males are more concerned about being overweight, while females worry about being too thin or having "thick legs." The pandemic and reduced physical activity have contributed to weight gain for some, resulting in self-esteem issues. Consequently, some students resort to extreme weight-loss methods, such as the ketogenic diet or fasting, worsening their physical health.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF "FRAGILE COLLEGE STUDENTS"

According to the 2020 Chinese College Student Health Survey, nearly 80% of students have experienced health concerns, with skin problems being the most common, followed by sleep deprivation and emotional issues. More than 30% of college students have experienced emotional problems. Concerns vary by academic year, with underclassmen reporting more skin issues, while upperclassmen and graduate students struggle more with sleep deprivation and emotional distress due to career and academic pressures.

Lack of Scientific Guidance on Mental Health: Academic pressure is the primary source of psychological distress, with over 60% of students feeling burdened by their studies. Changes in their

environment and interpersonal relationships further exacerbate these challenges. High-level students also face mental health challenges related to career pressures. Female students report more emotional issues than males. When faced with problems, most students try to handle them on their own, and nearly half cope by avoiding or distracting themselves.

College Students' Living Conditions Need Improvement:

Sleep Disorders: Nearly 80% of students experience sleep problems, which significantly affect their academic performance. The widespread use of mobile phones before bedtime, excessive screen time, and lack of self-discipline contribute to sleep deprivation.

Unhealthy Diets: The most common dietary issues among students are imbalanced meals, a preference for high-calorie, low-nutrient foods like milk tea and fast food, and reliance on take-out. Female students are more likely to binge eat, while male students may overconsume alcohol, leading to gastrointestinal problems.

Irregular Lifestyles: Without parental supervision, students develop unhealthy habits, such as staying up late and missing breakfast, which negatively affects their concentration and overall health. Excessive screen time also leads to social isolation and increased psychological pressure.

Lack of Exercise: Students often cite a lack of time or motivation for their inactivity. Technological advancements have contributed to more sedentary lifestyles, with students spending more time on electronic devices and less time on physical activity.

Inadequate Campus Healthcare: Insufficient on-campus medical resources can increase stress levels among students. Inadequate healthcare facilities force students to seek external medical services, diverting time and attention away from their studies.

4. COUNTERMEASURES TO IMPROVE COLLEGE STUDENTS' PHYSICAL FITNESS

4.1. Enhancing Health Education:

Colleges should offer health education courses like "College Health Education" and "Nutrition" to teach students about balanced diets, proper exercise, mental health, and common disease prevention. Colleges can invite medical professionals to give health lectures and raise awareness through various channels, such as campus websites and social media, and organize health-related competitions to engage students^[3].

4.2. Promoting Physical Activity:

Colleges should diversify sports courses to cater to students' interests. In addition to traditional sports like basketball and soccer, they can introduce yoga, rock climbing, and skateboarding. Schools should invest in sports facilities like gyms, pools, and courts, and offer rewards to motivate students to exercise regularly.

4.3. Increasing PE Courses:

Schools should provide more elective sports courses, such as yoga, Tai Chi, and soccer, to allow students to choose activities that align with their interests. Schools should also integrate sports with cultural courses to foster a holistic understanding of physical education.

4.4. Addressing Mental Health Issues:

Schools should establish mental health centers that provide professional counseling services, crisis interventions, and stress management resources. Schools can also form peer support groups and strengthen the connection between students, parents, and counselors.

4.5. Improving On-Campus Medical Conditions:

Universities should create student health profiles, offer convenient medical services, and establish medical aid funds for students in financial need.

5. SUMMARY

The term "fragile college students" may serve as a humorous form of self-mockery, but addressing this phenomenon requires joint efforts. Schools must actively promote healthy lifestyles and improve health management models while paying close attention to students' mental health. Through coordinated efforts from individuals, families, schools, and society, it is possible to help students overcome these challenges and foster a healthier, more resilient generation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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