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## **THE DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT AS INEVITABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL BIAS AMONG STUDENTS**

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**Relevance.** The Dunning-Kruger effect is a flaw in cognitive thinking which can be found in every human being. This phenomenon can be described as being sure of high expertise in a particular subject/field, while showing no deep knowledge or proper skills in it. In other words, that's when one fails to assess his/her abilities adequately. Thus, this person tends to highly overestimate his/her performance. The Dunning-Kruger effect is an absolutely exciting psychological bias to look at as it can be easily observed in everyday life without our realization. What is more, being acquainted with this bias is essential for future and already practicing doctors so as to evaluate their theoretical and practical skills and cope with its consequences better.

**Aim:** the main purpose of the research is, firstly, to determine whether the Dunning-Kruger effect is present among the students of Belarusian State Medical University and prove that this flaw is an inevitable, albeit not always adverse, feature of human cognitive phenomenon. Secondly, this work will provide further explanation of the Dunning-Kruger psychological bias as well as more examples of it.

**Materials and methods.** Online platform Google Forms was used in order to conduct the survey on the voluntary basis among the Belarusian State Medical University first-year students. The respondents were the students of the Dental and General Medicine faculties. The questionnaire was sent to them via 'Vk' social network. Questions were suggested in Russian for better understanding. In the survey the students were asked to share their centralized test results (in Belarusian/Russian language and Biology), then they had to evaluate their knowledge in those subjects. Moreover, the questioned were to rate their first semester academic results and their knowledge on COVID-19. Concerning COVID-19, the respondents were interviewed on the virus common information and then on their being informed.

**Results and discussion.** In total, 108 students participated in the survey: 57 dental students (group A), 51 general practitioner students (group B). Both groups showed general overestimation of academic results, in particular those students with lower GPA and centralized test results. In addition to this, some of the interviewed depicted themselves to be the COVID-19 experts, however they were often unable to provide the correct information. In order to get proper results, all the data were processed and placed into the graphs and diagrams and compared to the original study of the Dunning-Kruger effect.

**Conclusions.** Providing that all the respondents were completely honest while taking the survey, the research showed that the students fall into the Dunning-Kruger effect. It means that those with lower academic results, including the virus uninformed, slightly overestimate their abilities. This proves the psychological bias existence and reminds that people mostly cannot evaluate themselves adequately. The underlying reasons are in our cognitive thinking and it is hard to avoid psychological biases as they usually happen unconsciously.