

**Warning from the expert: Do not forget to video chat with the elderly**

Reminding that the elderly have not been able to leave the house for about a month due to the coronavirus, Lecturer Mehmet Başçillar drew attention to the fact that the psychosocial effects of living alone are extremely severe. Underlining that seniors should be interviewed with their loved ones in this period, Başçillar said: "There is a need for social workers to be employed in psychosocial services to be offered to the elderly."

Expressing that extraordinary measures are taken to protect the health of the elderly population at the global and national level, Mehmet Başçillar, the Lecturer from Istanbul Gelisim University Social Service Department, stated that 1.3 million elderly individuals live alone at home according to current data. Stating that the psychosocial effects of not leaving the house and living alone for about a month have been extremely severe, Başçillar said: "According to the research conducted with 44 thousand people diagnosed with coronavirus in China, 88% of those who lost their lives due to the virus are 60 years and older. This spooky rate explains the importance of the measures taken better."

Reminding that the elderly population of Turkey continue to stay at home since a month, Mehmet Başçillar said: "Undoubtedly, this arrangement aims to protect the health of the elderly. However, the physical and psychological effects of the current situation as well as the physical effects need to be carefully examined. According to the report Turkey Statistical Institute in Turkey 65 years and older has about 7.5 million members. This number accounts for 9.1 percent of Turkey's population. According to the current report of the ministry, 1.3 million elderly people live alone at home. The fact that the young population may be a carrier of the virus and isolation measures have long been causing family members to visit their loved ones."

**"DON'T FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES"**

Başçillar emphasized that loneliness related to long isolation increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and dementia and decreases the life span, said: "In a study conducted with 480 thousand participants in Finland, it was found that the risk of death due to heart attack increased by 25 percent in individuals who felt lonely and isolated. Alzheimer's disease symptoms were observed in 32 percent of the participants who stated that they felt lonely in a study conducted in the USA. According to another study conducted in America, long term isolation and loneliness is as dangerous as 15 cigarettes a day. The importance of psychosocial services will be much better understood for the elderly living alone in Turkey, given that they have not been able to go out of the house for a long time, such as about a month, and that they live alone and cannot physically come together with their family members."

**WHAT POLICIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR THE ELDERLY?**

Noting that the spiritual and social dimension of the measures taken on older individuals should not be ignored, Başçillar said: "Although the basic needs of the elderly are met by law enforcement officers such as police and gendarmerie personnel, the structure responsible for the services to be provided to elderly individuals is the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. In this challenging period, there is a need for hiring social workers and recruiting for psychosocial services to be provided to older individuals. The elderly people who are left alone at home need to have a video call with their loved ones frequently. In addition, it is necessary to establish the infrastructure that will provide the services offered in the psychosocial field online, and to ensure coordination between public institutions and voluntary organizations. The presence of social workers in the Social Sciences

Board is extremely valuable for effective social policies to be developed for elderly individuals during the epidemic period."

### **Anxiety for coronavirus causes repetition of behavior**

Saying that the coronavirus pandemic caused anxiety and obsession in many people, Specialist Psychologist Selin Kalabaş stated that the pandemic is more affected by obsessive people. Kalabaş spoke: "They would wash their hands for hours and take various precautions for both protecting themselves from the virus and the fear of infecting someone else. Anxiety and fear cause repetition of behavior in people."

The coronavirus outbreak that affects the world threatens physical as well as mental health. Stating that people constantly wash hands and use disinfectants because the hygiene is the main actor in protection against viruses, Specialist Psychologist Lect. Selin Kalabaş from Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) said: "One of the negative effects of coronavirus is that it increases the occurrence of some psychiatric diseases."

### **"LEADS TO THE DISEASE"**

Specialist Psychologist Kalabaş stated that the most common condition is 'Obsessive Compulsive Disorder', that is, a kind of anxiety disorder, and said: "It is the situation that the person continues to keep a compelling behavior to get rid of unwanted and repeated thoughts or images. One knows that this is unreasonable, but repeats these behaviors in order to get rid of the uncomfortable bad feeling in them. Although their anxiety decreases in the short term after they perform the behavior, they drag themselves towards the disease in the long term."

### **"THEY CAN TAKE UNFUNCTIONAL MEASURES"**

Saying that those who think they are dirty and carry viruses repeat various cleaning behaviors, Kalabaş said: "They would wash their hands for hours and take various precautions for both protecting themselves from the virus and the fear of infecting someone else. Regardless of the behavior, obsessions on only thoughts can be seen, as well. To suppress these thoughts, a person can sit in front of the TV for hours or sleep too much. So, one can take dysfunctional measures to get rid of the thoughts that come to their mind."

### **"THEY SHOULD TAKE SUPPORT"**

Kalabaş continued her speech as follows:

"There can be the obsession with getting news about the disease and also being trapped before TV or/and on the Internet and trying to access all information including untrue information. Therefore, ones try to excessively control themselves and those around them to protect from the virus. Moreover, there are cases of suicide and aggression too. People suffering from this condition should definitely get support from a specialist."

### **In quarantine, parents are also beginning to be exhausted**

Under the influence of the outbreak millions of people worldwide, as well as in Turkey, were closed at their homes. In this process, while there are occasional crises in family communication, Psychiatrist Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevcan Karakoç stated that families should evaluate this to spend more time and bond with their children.

Stating that coronavirus quarantine is an opportunity to correct the relationship, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karakoç said, “instead of collaborative steps voices such as ‘Don’t do it, stop, shut up’ from many houses started to rise.”

#### “PARENTS ALSO STARTED TO BE EXHAUSTED”

Psychiatrist from Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevcan Karakoç stating that in the early days of coronavirus outbreak many people tried to make staying in quarantine enjoyable, said: “For the first time, fun activities and enjoyable time were at the forefront for children. These were quality quarantine days, the shock effect of acute trauma and the honeymoon period of being at home. However, as the process was prolonged, the epidemic caught the heads of the streets, the restrictions increased and the family's material and spiritual resources decreased, so did the parents. While spending more time with the child is an opportunity for bonding and correcting the relationship, some families have started to have the opposite effects. Instead of collaborative steps from many houses, the sounds of "Do not stop, stop, be quiet" started to rise.”

#### “THE CHILD HAS NO EXPECTATION”

Speaking about the behavior of families whose parenting attitude is over-controlling, Psychiatrist from Istanbul Gelisim University Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevcan Karakoç said: “In this process, it may be possible for you to control your children's daily school and housework program and even participate in live lessons and intervene. In this case, there may even be emotional abuse to criticize your child frequently and behave the way you want. If you are a perfectionist parent, you may need to act successfully and effectively according to this plan, such as planning every moment, watching educational films, organizing useful activities to spend the quality quarantine days with your child. The problem is, this need is for the parents, the child actually has no such expectation.”

#### THE OPTIMAL APPROACH: DEMOCRATIC FAMILY ATTITUDE

Stating that mothers and fathers with authoritarian attitudes ignore their children's wishes and sometimes give their children excessive responsibility, Karakoç said, “Parents with an overly protective attitude may find it difficult to settle their children and set limits on their children by thinking that they may be severely affected by quarantine and epidemic. They may be worried about their children and do not want them to take the slightest responsibility. In the democratic family attitude, which is one of the most appropriate approaches, especially positive behaviors of children are prioritized. Little achievements are praised for what they cannot do, freedoms are recognized based on the child's level of development, but limits and rules are clear.”

#### “SMALL PROBLEMS GREW”

Stating that spending more time together at home also increases the minor problems, Karakoç continued: “When we are in a tense and negative emotion state, we start to see everything more negative. For this reason, we shape our relationship with the child with negativities such as “shortcomings, inadequacies, dissatisfaction”. A word that we say unintentionally can be hurt and emotionally disturbing for our child. For this reason, instead of reacting suddenly, it is necessary to act by stopping and thinking, prioritizing compassion in difficult processes and focusing on the use of 'self language'. Instead of "I'm tired of you", "I'm tired of constantly reminding your homework" can be used. We can use patterns that point to the child's behavior, not the personality of the child, that does not attribute bad character to the child, and that more clearly expresses what we want to explain at that time. If we have an overprotective attitude, we can get rid of it and give our children

responsibilities in domestic tasks and small household chores. When children see that they can do this, their sense of competence can be strengthened.”

#### “NO BAD MEMORIES”

Emphasizing that a parenting approach in the form of constantly distracting or happy children is not correct, Karakoç said: “However, it is a process in which we remould our children at least and communicate enough, so that these days do not leave bad memories.”

#### “ISOLATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY”

Stating that if several generations are under the same roof in social isolation, this is an opportunity to share old customs and traditions, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Istanbul Gelisim University Abdülkadir Gayretli said: “Grandmothers can tell their grandchildren fairy tales. It can be played if there are old traditional games. Adding educational use, old games can be taught to prevent too much interaction with technology such as tablet and computer use. For example, ‘I sell oil, I sell honey’ (yağ satarım bal satarım), is a game based on movement that will be played even in the living room at home. Also, stepping game like “I took – I gave” (Aldım – verdim) in the corridor helps balance and motor coordination. Children, adults and adults can increase their cognitive skills by using their memory with names, plants, city games played with paper, pencil.

### **IGU is ranked 1st in Turkey and among the world's top 100 universities with high-quality education**

The international prestigious higher education ranking agency Times Higher Education (THE), known as the 'Oscar of Higher Education', announced the 'University Impact Ranking 2020', in which universities aim to measure their contribution to the sustainable development of societies. Being ranked 96th among the World's top 100 universities providing high-quality education Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) became 1st from Turkish universities. In the general ranking, IGU is ranked among 600 universities in the world and left 19 Turkish universities behind.

#### THE 1st AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS FROM TURKEY

Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) has succeeded to be among the first hundred universities in the world under the title of "High Quality Education" by being ranking many universities in the ranking that was realized in accordance with the 17 sustainable development goals set by the United Nations (UN) and evaluating the contributions of the universities to the society with their studies and innovative projects in the field of education. Under the title "Quality Education", Istanbul Gelisim University took part in the 1st ranking in 34 universities Turkish participant universities.

#### BEING RANKED HIGH

Istanbul Gelisim University became one of the world's top 200 universities and the 6th in Turkey with its studies in the field under the title 'Healthy Living and Clean Energy' in the impact ranking evaluated by the data of 2018. Even though IGU does not have the Faculty of Medicine, it is ranked high in these categories together with the world's leading universities.

#### “WE ARE PROUD OF BEING ACCREDITED”

Speaking of the ranking success, Istanbul Gelisim University Chairman of the Board of the Trustees Abdülkadir Gayretli said: “Since the day IGU was founded, we care about the studies on sustainability at local, regional, national and international levels. Our 58 programs have international accreditation. We have now faculty members who have trained or worked in the world’s top 100 universities. We

became the university that has the most patents in Turkey. We have made efforts to realize innovations that are unique in the world and we have realized projects such as Pharmaceutical Device Project, Flying Car. With Head of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) Prof. Dr. Yekta Saraç's innovative spirit and support to universities, we have gained acceleration. As a university, we are proud to be appreciated for our support for the sustainable development of society, by Times Higher Education (THE), one of the world's most prestigious higher education ranking agencies.”

### **Coronavirus diagnosis time can be reduced to 1 minute: They are waiting for support**

Microbiology Specialist Dr. Asiye Karakullukçu is preparing to develop the biosensor, which can detect the previously developed hospital infections in 1 minute, for the diagnosis of Covid-19. Karakullukçu said: “If we can get the support we need, we can detect the diagnosis of coronavirus in 1 minute with 1 drop of blood. We plan to develop the same sensor and make it ready for use in a very short time.”

Developing a biosensor that can detect the hospital infection that caused thousands of people to die every year in 2017, within minutes, Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) the School of Health Sciences Asst. Prof. Dr. Asiye Karakullukçu said that they could develop the same sensor for the use in the diagnosis of Covid-19. Karakullukçu stated: “The method used today for diagnosis is based on a swab sample. Our goal here is to develop a biosensor that anyone can easily use, which can measure a person's reaction to Covid-19 with a drop of blood, not a respiratory sample.”

### **TIME OF DIAGNOSIS WILL REDUCED TO 1 MINUTE**

Saying that they can develop a biosensor that can measure the reaction of a person to Covid-19 by using 1 drop of blood instead of a swab sample, Karakullukçu said: “As such, the time of diagnosis will be reduced to 1 minute. No matter how much the curve has decreased, we will still be testing these patients for a long time. We can speed up the process.”

### **THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS APPLYING TO THE HOSPITAL WILL BE ALSO DECREASED**

Noting that the units that could not perform this test could also make the test, Microbiology Specialist Dr. Asiye Karakullukçu said: “Family physicians and all other hospitals can use this. If we get the necessary permits, people can find out whether they are positive or negative without going to the hospital, using it at their own home. We can think of it like glucose meters. We can also reduce visits to the hospital. In testing infected people and the ones already pulled through the disease, we can make it easier for them to quickly identify those people and give blood to sick people.”

### **SAVING TIME, HUMAN AND COST**

Karakullukçu ended her speech as follows:

“It will shorten the time and there will be no need for laboratory infrastructure and specialists. We will be able to detect more people. Nor will it be a very costly test. We have a working prototype and an infrastructure that can quickly turn it into a commercial product within 3 months with support. We expect support from both investors and the government.”