

# Prežívanie krízy v rodinách počas pandémie Covid-19 na Slovensku

## Experience of a Family Crisis during Covid-19 Pandemic in Slovakia

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**Abstrakt** Nástup pandémie koronavírusu priniesol do života rodín množstvo zmien, ktoré mohli znamenať zvýšenú záťaž. Cieľom empirickej štúdie bolo zistiť mieru prežívania krízy v slovenských rodinách počas pandémie a skúmať jej dopady na život rodín. Zisťovaná bola tiež súvislosť medzi mierou prežívanej krízy a vybranými sociodemografickými premennými. Dáta boli získané pomocou online dotazníka v období od 14. 4. do 19. 5. 2020 na vzorke 458 slovenských rodičov, prevažne matiek. Prežívanie rodinnej krízy bolo zisťované pomocou Krátkej škály rodinného distresu (Weiss & Lunsky, 2012). Z výsledkov vyplýva, že väčšina slovenských rodín neprežívala v sledovanom období závažnejšiu krízu ( $M=2,71$ ;  $SD=1,32$ ) a prípadné problémy dokázali zvládať vlastným úsilím. Vyššia miera prežívanej krízy bola zistená v rodinách s deťmi so špeciálnymi výchovno-vzdelávacími potrebami ( $M=3,09$ ;  $SD=1,474$ ) a v jednorodičovských rodinách ( $M=3,06$ ;  $SD=1,854$ ) pomocou Mann-Whitney U test a analýzy rozptylu ANOVA.

**Kľúčové slová** Covid-19, kríza, rodinný distres, špeciálne výchovno-vzdelávacie potreby.

**Abstract** The onset of the coronavirus pandemic brought a number of changes into the lives of families, which could have meant an increased burden for them. Among the pandemic measures that most profoundly affected the families' lives were school closures and social distancing, adopted in Slovakia in March 2020. Especially parents of young children were challenged with having to balance work, childcare, education, and housework. Along with other pressures of the pandemic crisis, this might be a great source of stress for parents and their families. The aim of the empirical study was to explore the crisis experien-

ce in Slovak families during the pandemic and to examine its effects on family life. The relationships between the experienced family crisis and variables such as region, current working status, household type, number of children, presence of special educational needs in children, and personal experience with coronavirus were also examined. Data were obtained using an online questionnaire in the period from 14 April 2020 to 19 May 2020 on a sample of 458 Slovak parents, mostly mothers, aged 25–62. The Brief Family Distress Scale (Weiss & Lunskey, 2012) was used as a measure of family crisis. School closure and social distancing measures were in force in Slovakia during the whole period under review. The results show that most Slovak families did not experience a serious crisis and were able to manage any problems within their own efforts. This may be associated with the good epidemic situation in Slovakia in the observed time period. When asked about the specific effects of the pandemic on family life, some parents reported positive effects on family life (for example strengthening relationships with partner or children, more time for family or oneself, slowing down, etc.; approx. 19 % of answers), some did not experience any impact on their lives (approx. 13 % of answers). However, majority of the parents reported negative effects of the pandemic on their life, such as financial difficulties, stress, worries, loss of social contacts, lack of free time, etc... Parents whose relatives or acquaintances were infected with coronavirus reported higher levels of family distress than parents with no personal experience with coronavirus, but the difference was not statistically significant. In line with previous research findings, the regions of the country with the highest levels of perceived distress were not always the ones with the highest incidence of coronavirus cases. Neither the current working status, nor number of children were associated with perceived family distress. Higher levels of distress have been found in families with children with special educational needs and in single-parent families. These two groups have been identified to be at a higher risk of negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic by research conducted in other countries as well. To conclude, majority of Slovak families have experienced no or only limited levels of distress during the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and they were able to deal with problems if and when they arose. However, families with children with special educational needs and single-parent families should be provided with more support, as they experienced higher levels of family distress.

**Keywords** Covid-19, crisis, family distress, special educational needs.