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## **Impact of Practising Safety Measures for Covid-19 on the Education of Undergraduates of University of Ruhuna**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Covid-19 has caused a severe impact on different aspects of life including health, the economy as well as education. The universities are trying to gradually re-establish the education of their students in new normal. This study aimed to determine the impact of practising safety measures (wearing a face mask, hand washing, using hand sanitizers, social distancing) on the education of undergraduates of University of Ruhuna. An online questionnaire was administered to collect data for undergraduates of the University of Ruhuna who had resumed academic activities under the new normal. Of 267 participants 68.5% (183) were female and 31.5% (84) were male students. The median age was 23 years. 34.2% were affected due to Covid-19. 8.7% had not practised any safety measures. Not practising safety measures was higher among males (15.5%) than females (6.6%). 38.7% practised all four main safety measures. 93% had the perception that their education was affected to some degree by practising safety measures. 59.6% reported difficulties in communication with wearing a face mask. 11.5% mentioned that handwashing was a time-consuming act that caused a distraction for studies. The social distancing was associated with less input from peers during working in study groups (52.6%) and ineffective practical sessions (60.6%). Tiredness due to the monotonous routine (51.9%), lack of enthusiasm to study (33.8%) and the difficulty in coping with stress (22.6%) were reported with the social distancing. 44.1% reported that the cost of purchasing safety products was a burden. Feeling optimistic for not contacting the virus (70.1%), Reduced respiratory tract infections (45.9%), less disturbances (noise) while studying (16.4%), more individual attention (13.2%), reduced asthma exacerbations (6.9%) were mentioned as the advantages that experienced from following the safety measures. The practising of safety measures for Covid-19 has both negative and positive impacts on the education of undergraduates of the University of Ruhuna.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19, Education, Safety Measures, Undergraduate*