

20 - 22 March 2026

Lisbon , Portugal

Healthy Lifestyles of Students in the Contemporary Educational Environment

Ivana ?oko , Doris Žuro , Sanja Stani?

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split

Abstract

In recent decades, healthy lifestyles have increasingly been framed within dominant public health and educational discourses as a matter of individual responsibility. Within these normative frameworks, health is promoted as an ideal to be achieved through self-regulation and informed choice, shaping how students understand their own responsibility for health. This paper examines how students perceive and evaluate their healthy lifestyles and how they interpret the conditions and constraints affecting their maintenance in the context of higher education. The study draws on survey data collected among students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Split, Croatia (N = 137). The questionnaire explored students' self-assessments of lifestyle and health status, perceived sources of everyday strain, and overall life satisfaction, providing insight into dominant patterns of self-perception and perceived constraints. The findings show that most students assess their lifestyle as partially healthy, reflecting the internalization of health norms alongside awareness of practical limitations. Academic obligations, financial concerns, and mental and emotional exhaustion emerge as key sources of strain, significantly affecting students' ability to maintain idealized healthy routines. Difficulties in sustaining healthy practices are predominantly interpreted at the level of individual self-assessment, while broader structural conditions are less frequently articulated. The paper argues that student health should be understood as a socially embedded phenomenon shaped by academic organization, workloads, evaluation practices, and everyday life pressures, rather than solely as a matter of individual responsibility. Drawing on a sociological perspective of student wellbeing, the study contributes to discussions on mental health, education, and the limitations of individualized approaches to health promotion in higher education.

Keywords: academic workload; higher education; individual responsibility; public health discourse; student wellbeing