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OBJECTIVES

- To assess the association between **loss of financial resources and students' depressive symptoms** during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To assess whether it **varied by countries having different levels of measures** taken to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19

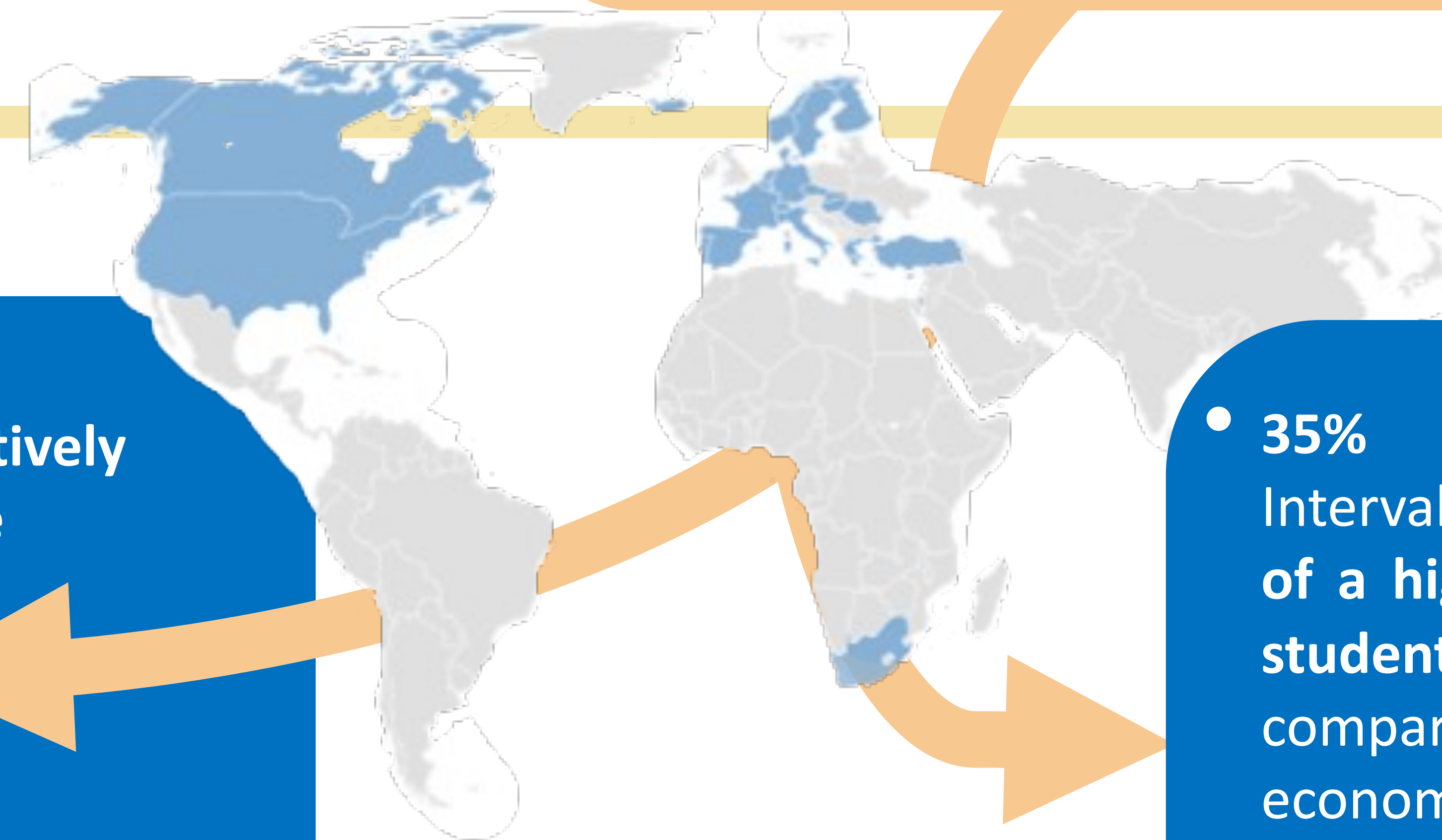
METHODS

- **91,871 respondents** from 106 universities in **23 countries**.
- **Eight items version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D 8)**
- **Self reported** measure of **financial loss**
- Information on measures taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 retrieved from **the Oxford COVID-19 government response tracker**

- **Prevalence ratios (PR)** estimated with multilevel Poisson regression models
- The role of country level mitigation policies was tested by replicating the same models stratified by country

RESULTS

- **52% of students reported a relatively high depressive symptoms score (CES-D8 score ≥10)**
- Large cross-country differences
- **13% reported decreased economic resources during the lockdown.**



- **35%** (PR=1.35, 95% Confidence Interval=1.29-1.42) **increased prevalence of a high depressive symptoms score in students who lost economic resources** compared to students with stable economic resources.
- Full adjustment resulted in a little attenuation of the strength of this association
- **No substantial differences in the association across countries.**

DISCUSSION

Strengths:

- Large sample size
- Cross-country comparison

Limitations:

- Convenience sample
- Risk of information bias (self-reported questionnaire)
- Cross-sectional data

CONCLUSIONS

Economically disadvantaged students should be considered in responses aiming to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on populations

