

# The Language of COVID-19: The Fatal, Frightening, Weapons: A Phenomenological Study

## COVID-19'un Dili: Ölümcül, Korkutucu, Silahlar: Fenomenolojik Bir Araştırma

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**ABSTRACT Objective:** This study aims to reveal nursing students' perceptions of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) through metaphors. **Material and Methods:** One of the qualitative research approaches, phenomenology is used in this research. This research was conducted with nursing students who are studying at the health sciences faculty of a university between the dates of February 26 to March 26 2021. A questionnaire was prepared to reveal the mental images of 161 nursing students who accepted to participate in the research about the concept of COVID-19. The students were asked to complete the statement of "COVID-19 is like ... because ...". In the process of analysis and interpretation of the data, coding and sorting out metaphors, creating a theme, ensuring validity and reliability, and quantitative data analysis were performed, respectively. **Results:** Nursing students produced 73 valid metaphors about COVID-19. Metaphors produced by nursing students are generally divided into 7 themes. These themes are; It is listed as "deadly, divisive, war tool, frightening, punishing, offensive, sticky and contagious". **Conclusion:** Nursing students perceive COVID-19 as a death machine. The fact that the participants compared COVID-19 to monsters in fairy tales, horror movies and an enemy lurking in ambush is an indication of how much they feared COVID-19. It is predicted that planning for the development of effective coping processes in the curriculum of nursing students, who are health professionals of the future, will increase the quality of the care provided.

**ÖZET Amaç:** Bu çalışma, hemşirelik öğrencilerinin koronavirüs hastalığı-2019'a [coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19)] ilişkin algılarını metaforlar aracılığıyla ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Bu çalışmada, nitel araştırma yaklaşımlarından biri olan fenomenoloji kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, 26 Şubat-26 Mart 2021 tarihleri arasında bir üniversitenin sağlık bilimleri fakültesinde öğrenim görmekte olan hemşirelik öğrencileri ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 161 hemşirelik öğrencisinin COVID-19 kavramı ile ilgili zihinsel algılarını ortaya çıkarmak için bir anket hazırlanmıştır. Öğrencilerden "COVID-19 gibi... çünkü..." ifadesini tamamlamaları istenmiştir. Verilerin analizi ve yorumlanması sürecinde sırasıyla metaforların kodlanması ve ayıklanması, tema oluşturulması, geçerlik ve güvenilirliğin sağlanması ve nicel veri analizi yapılmıştır. **Bulgular:** Hemşirelik öğrencileri COVID-19 konusunda 73 geçerli metafor üretmişlerdir. Hemşirelik öğrencileri tarafından üretilen metaforlar genel olarak 7 temaya ayrılmıştır. Bu temalar; "ölümcül, ayrıştırıcı, savaş aleti, korkutucu, cezalandırıcı, saldırgan, yapışkan ve bulaşıcı" şeklinde sıralanmaktadır. **Sonuç:** Hemşirelik öğrencileri COVID-19'u adeta bir ölüm makinesi gibi algılamaktadırlar. Katılımcıların COVID-19'u masallardaki canavarlara, korku filmlerine ve pusuya yatmış bir düşmana benzetmeleri, COVID-19'dan ne kadar çok korktuklarının göstergesidir. Geleceğin sağlık profesyonelleri olan hemşirelik öğrencilerinin müfredatlarında etkili baş etme süreçlerinin geliştirilmesine yönelik planlamaların yapılması sunulan bakımın kalitesini artıracakları öngörülmektedir.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; nursing students; coronavirus perception; metaphor

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** COVID-19; hemşirelik öğrencileri; koronavirüs algısı; metafor

Rapidly affecting many countries, coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) was declared as a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>1</sup> Rather than the biological characteristics of the COVID-19, how people perceive this pandemic, the nature of their behaviors, and reactions to the disease

are the main topics that need to be examined.<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 was stated to be a pandemic that may collapse health systems worldwide. In this regard, how people react to the real and perceived risks holds the key to the process of fighting against COVID-19.<sup>2,3</sup>

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The COVID-19 pandemic points to much more than a health crisis at this point. Shaking every country it touches, this pandemic is a global health problem with the potential to cause devastating and profound economic, political, and social crises for the present and in the future. As well as the loss of income due to this pandemic, the uncertainty about when people will return to their previous lives indicates the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to and will continue to leave on a global scale.<sup>4</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has different characteristics than other recent global emergencies. Millions of people around the world have lived confined to their homes, not having a clear idea of when they can return to their normal lives.<sup>3</sup> While this situation remains uncertain, on the other hand, the effects of measures on the psychology of individuals, which are taken by the states worldwide due to the pandemic and demanded by their citizens to take, are also a subject of discussion. A factor that affects the psychological states of individuals during the pandemic process is their perceptions. In other words, they are the meanings they ascribe to events and situations.<sup>5</sup>

Having a cognitive quality, perception is defined as reaching a new cognitive whole by internalizing an event or phenomenon that an individual is currently experiencing, together with the accumulation of past experiences.<sup>6</sup> In this respect, perceptions show us what we see, how we interpret, what we believe, and how we act.<sup>7</sup> One of the most emphasized and studied topics in semantics, metaphors mean a way of thinking that helps us make sense of the world in general. It is important to determine the perceptions of nursing students, who are health professionals of the future, about the COVID-19 pandemic. Nursing students are the most vulnerable groups that are at the center of the risk of infection. A serious working environment, limited freedom, heavy responsibility, risk of death at any time are among the most serious negative factors for healthcare workers in this situation. Therefore, nurses are faced with physical, mental, and environmental stimuli and as a result, their anxiety may increase and their perception of health may change.<sup>8</sup> Determining the perceptions of nursing students, the healthcare professionals of the future,

towards COVID-19 and offering solutions to enable them to deal effectively with the problems that may arise regarding these perceptions are vital for carrying out a safe process and patient care quality in a possible pandemic process that students will encounter in the future.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### AIM

With this research, it is aimed to determine the perceptions of nursing students about COVID-19 through metaphors. Within the framework of this general purpose, answers for the following questions were sought:

1. What are the metaphors that the nursing students have suggested regarding the concept of COVID-19?
2. Under which themes can the resulting metaphors be grouped?
3. Are these conceptual categories obtained positive?

### DESIGN

Phenomenology design was used in this study. Phenomenology studies phenomena that we have an idea about but do not fully understand.<sup>9</sup>

### SAMPLE/PARTICIPANTS

This research was conducted in a university's faculty of health sciences between February 26 and March 26, 2021. The population of the research consists of 530 nursing students. The sample of the study consisted of 161 nursing students who accepted to participate in the study and were studying in the nursing department.

### DATA COLLECTION

In the first part of the questionnaire, the students were asked about their gender, class, their status of surviving COVID-19, the relatives diagnosed with COVID-19, and their mortality. In the second part, the students were asked to complete the statement of "COVID-19 is like ... because ...". In metaphor studies, the term 'like' is generally requested to evoke the connection between the subject of the metaphor and

the source of the metaphor more clearly, while the term ‘because’ is requested to present a rationale (or logical basis) for the presented metaphors.<sup>9</sup> The data were collected through online survey software (Google Surveys, NASDAQ: GOOG ABD) and social media communication (WhatsApp, Meta, Inc. ABD). The web link of the data collection tools of the research was shared with the nursing students at the same time via social media (WhatsApp). Answering the questions took 15 minutes for each participant. The questionnaires filled out by the students make up the data source of the research as a document.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Before the research was conducted, the approval and the permission of “The Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University (date: February 5, 2021, no: E-33490967-044-17170)” had been obtained. The nursing students, who accepted to participate in the research, were informed about the purpose and process of the research, and their written and verbal informed consent was obtained. The research was conducted according to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

### DATA ANALYSIS

In the process of analysis and interpretation of the data, coding and sorting out metaphors, creating themes, ensuring reliability and validity, and quantitative data analysis were performed, respectively.<sup>10</sup> During the coding and extracting phase of the research, the comprehensibility of the metaphors associated with COVID-19 was investigated and the papers of 32 students (ineffective metaphor and lack of logical basis) were deemed invalid. Therefore, the analysis of the research data was conducted with 129 nursing students. As a result, 73 metaphors were determined. During the themes creation phase 7 different themes were revealed. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the data analysis process was explained in detail and 73 metaphors were used as the main data source and each theme was supported with metaphors. For the reliability of the study, expert opinion was taken to control the relationship between metaphors and themes. A list of metaphors and themes was prepared for two faculty

members who are experts in the same field, and each metaphor was given a number and they were asked to write the number of the metaphors which they think the metaphor belongs to next to the themes. These pairs were then compared. The reliability of the research was decided according to the number of agreements and disagreements obtained from the comparison. The reliability of the study was calculated according to the Miles and Huberman formula and was found to be 94%.<sup>10</sup> In qualitative studies, 90% or more of the agreement between the evaluations is the desired level.<sup>11</sup>

As a result, after completing 7 themes according to 73 metaphors and their contents, the metaphors and all the data were imported to the SPSS statistics (BM SPSS Statistics ABD) program. After this procedure, the number involving 73 metaphors and 7 themes (f) and their percentages (%) were calculated.

## RESULTS

It was determined that 81.4% of the participants were women, 28.7% were diagnosed with COVID-19, 41.9% had a close relative who had COVID-19, and 20.9% had a relative who died due to COVID-19 (Table 1).

The nursing students who participated in this research put forward 73 valid metaphors on COVID-19. The metaphors put forward by nursing students are mainly divided into 7 themes as follows:

1. Fatal
2. Divider
3. Weapons
4. Frightening

**TABLE 1:** Demographic and pandemic related process characteristics of the participants.

Characteristics		n	%
Gender	Female	105	81.4
	Male	24	18.6
The status of being diagnosed with COVID-19	Yes	37	28.7
	No	92	71.3
The relatives who had COVID-19	Yes	54	41.9
	No	75	58.1
The relatives who died due to COVID-19	Yes	27	20.9
	No	102	79.1

5. Punisher
6. Aggressive
7. Sticky and contagious (Table 2)

### FATAL

It is the theme with the highest frequency which consists of metaphors suggested by 32.6% of the participants. Largely, participants described COVID-19 as fatal. In this theme, a total of 21 various metaphors were produced by 42 students (Table 2). The strongest of the metaphors suggested in this theme are death (4), Grim Reaper (3), poison (3), drowning (3), and executioner (2). According to the students, COVID-19 is a concept that causes death. While some described COVID-19 as the Grim Reaper and executioner considered to take the lives of humans, the others described it as poison and drowning that cause human death. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like an executioner because it takes life” (Table 2).

### FRIGHTENING

It is the second theme with the highest frequency and it involves the metaphors suggested by 21.7% of the participants. In this theme, 17 different metaphors were suggested by 28 students (Table 2). The strongest metaphors suggested in this theme are enemy (5), equation with multiple unknown variables (4), monster (3), and terrorist (2). According to the participants, COVID-19 is a quite frightening concept. While some likened COVID-19 to monsters in fairy tales and horror movies, others described it as a lurking enemy and an equation with multiple unknown variables. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like apocalypse because it is the end of an era” (Table 2).

### WEAPONS

In this theme, the participants described COVID-19 as weapon. In this theme, 16 students suggested 7 different metaphors. Among the metaphors suggested in the theme ‘weapon’ the most prominent ones are weapon (7), terminator (3), atomic bomb (2), and cyanide (1). The participants think that COVID-19 is

a powerful weapon capable of destructing the masses. Also, in the “weapon” metaphor suggested by the participants, it was stated that COVID-19 is considered to be a biological weapon. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like a weapon because I think it is a biological warfare weapon” (Table 2).

### STICKY AND CONTAGIOUS

In this theme, the participants stated that COVID-19 is transmitted fast and remains on the person for a long time. In this theme, 14 students suggested 9 different metaphors. The most notable metaphors suggested in the ‘sticky and contagious’ theme are louse (3), slime (2), rumor (2), and ballpoint pen (2). According to the participants, COVID-19 is a phenomenon that quickly infects people and cannot be easily cleaned. Besides, COVID-19 is stated to never run out in the “slime” and “ballpoint pen” metaphors. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like flour because it scatters everywhere once you take it into your hands” (Table 2).

### DIVIDER

The participants described COVID-19 as a concept that breaks up families and organs and isolates them. 13 students suggested 7 different metaphors in this theme. Among the metaphors suggested in the theme ‘divider’, the most prominent ones are solitude (5), bookmark (2), phagocytosis (2), and degrading enzyme (1). For them, COVID-19 is a concept that separates people from each other and leaves them alone with the effect of quarantine. Besides, the metaphor “phagocytosis” suggested by the participants indicates that they think COVID-19 causes a lot of damage to organs. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like a bookmark because it separates families from each other” (Table 2).

### AGGRESSIVE

According to the participants, COVID-19 has an aggressive attribute. In this theme, 11 students suggested 7 different metaphors. The most notable metaphors suggested in the ‘aggressive’ theme are hunter (2), pit bull terrier (2), snake (2), and wild an-

TABLE 2: The themes, metaphors, and expression examples regarding the concept of "COVID-19".

The Theme	Metaphors	Exemplary COVID-19 Expressions	%
Fatal	Grim Reaper (3), Poison (3), Pit (2), Devil (2), Broken Glass (1), Death (4), Extremely Fast Car (2), Germ (5), Inevitable End (2), Aging (2), Disaster (1), Executioner (2), Radiation (1), Cancer (1), Flu (1), Cigarette (1), Drowning (3), Earthquake (2), Rope (1), Traffic Accident (2), Illness (1)	"COVID-19 is like the Grim Reaper because it takes life." "COVID-19 is like poison because it kills." "COVID-19 is like drowning because it chokes to death." "COVID-19 is like an executioner because it takes life." "COVID-19 is like a hellhound because it takes life by intimidating." "COVID-19 is like an enemy because it lurks and kills." "COVID-19 is like an opposite neighbor because it is very sneaky." "COVID-19 is like a horror movie because you are really afraid of being sick." "COVID-19 is like a monster because it attacks and kills." "COVID-19 is like an equation with multiple unknown variables because there are multiple unknowns about it." "COVID-19 is like apocalypse because it is the end of an era."	32.6
Frightening	Hellhound (1), Enemy (5), Opposite Neighbor (1), Woodworm (1), Torment in the Grave (1), Nausea (1), Chemotherapy (1), Horror Movie (1), Liar Friend (2), Monster (3), Apocalypse (1), Equation with Multiple Unknown Variables (4), Black Hole (1), Trap (1), Trick (1), Terrorist (2), Agent (1)	"COVID-19 is like a weapon because I think it is a biological warfare weapon." "COVID-19 is like a atomic bomb because it is a weapon that separates families." "COVID-19 is like cyanide because it is a biological weapon killing by infliction." "COVID-19 is like a terminator because it is a devastating war." "COVID-19 is like a slug because it immediately clings to humans." "COVID-19 is like pain because the pain never eases in a disease." "COVID-19 is like a louse because it spreads easily." "COVID-19 is like flour because it scatters everywhere once you take it into your hands." "COVID-19 is like slime because it never runs out." "COVID-19 is like a rumor because it spreads like wildfire." "COVID-19 is like a ballpoint pen because it never runs out." "COVID-19 is like glue because it sticks."	21.7
Weapons	Gun (7), Atomic Bomb (2), Cyanide (1), Knife (1), Terminator (3), Bomb (1), Bullet (1)	"COVID-19 is like a bookmark because it separates families from each other." "COVID-19 is like solitude because you self-quarantine." "COVID-19 is like a degrading enzyme because it degrades human organs." "COVID-19 is like phagocytosis because it breaks down human beings." "COVID-19 is like a hunter because it kills by attacking." "COVID-19 is like a pit bull terrier because it attacks and brutally kills everybody." "COVID-19 is like a wild animal because it attacks." "COVID-19 is like a snake because it attacks and kills with poison." "COVID-19 is like a fox because it attacks people sneakily."	12.4
Sticky and Contagious	Pain (1), Louse (3), Flour (1), Slime (2), Slug (1), Powder (1), Rumor (2), Ballpoint Pen (2), Glue (1)	"COVID-19 is like a book because it immediately clings to humans." "COVID-19 is like a louse because it spreads easily." "COVID-19 is like flour because it scatters everywhere once you take it into your hands." "COVID-19 is like slime because it never runs out." "COVID-19 is like a rumor because it spreads like wildfire." "COVID-19 is like a ballpoint pen because it never runs out." "COVID-19 is like glue because it sticks."	10.9
Divider	Bookmark (2), Solitude (5), Degrading Enzyme (1), Phagocytosis (2), Depression (1), Vacation (1), Reposing (1)	"COVID-19 is like a bookmark because it separates families from each other." "COVID-19 is like solitude because you self-quarantine." "COVID-19 is like a degrading enzyme because it degrades human organs." "COVID-19 is like phagocytosis because it breaks down human beings." "COVID-19 is like a hunter because it kills by attacking." "COVID-19 is like a pit bull terrier because it attacks and brutally kills everybody." "COVID-19 is like a wild animal because it attacks." "COVID-19 is like a snake because it attacks and kills with poison." "COVID-19 is like a fox because it attacks people sneakily."	10.1
Aggressive	Hunter (2), Pit Bull Terrier (2), Wild Animal (2), Fox (1), Broken Glass (1), Snake (2), Coyote (1)	"COVID-19 is like a book because it immediately clings to humans." "COVID-19 is like pain because the pain never eases in a disease." "COVID-19 is like a louse because it spreads easily." "COVID-19 is like flour because it scatters everywhere once you take it into your hands." "COVID-19 is like slime because it never runs out." "COVID-19 is like a rumor because it spreads like wildfire." "COVID-19 is like a ballpoint pen because it never runs out." "COVID-19 is like glue because it sticks."	8.5
Punisher	Leek (1), Bad Teacher (2), Prison (1), Ex (1)	"COVID-19 is like leek because it is disgusting. Eating leek is a punishment for me." "COVID-19 is like a bad teacher because it gives you life lessons by punishing." "COVID-19 is like an ex because it leads you a dog's life." "COVID-19 is like a prison because it punishes you by separating from loved ones."	3.9

The meaning of the numbers of parentheses: This refers to the number of times each metaphor was referred.

imal (2). According to participants, COVID-19 is an animal that suddenly attacks and kills afterward. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like a pit bull terrier because it attacks and brutally kills everybody” (Table 2).

### PUNISHER

In this theme, the participants described COVID-19 as a concept that punishes people. 5 students suggested 5 different metaphors in this theme. Among the metaphors suggested in ‘punisher’ theme, the most striking ones are bad teacher (2), ex (1), and prison (1). According to the participants, COVID-19 is a phenomenon that punishes people in several ways. We think that the most striking metaphorical statement in this theme is “COVID-19 is like an ex, because it leads you a dog’s life” (Table 2).

## DISCUSSION

Students who continue their education in the faculties related to health services of universities are faced with stressful situations that adversely affect their academic success and quality of life from the first moments of their education. One of these stressful situations is the current COVID-19 process. The most important factor that causes a person to experience stress is the way that the person perceives the events. This research aims to determine the perception of nursing students continuing their university education regarding COVID-19, declared to be a pandemic, through metaphors.

Those in the younger age group are at the lowest risk of deaths from COVID-19. However, our research shows that nursing students in the young age group first create a perception of death in their minds when it comes to COVID-19. Young people perceive COVID-19 as a killing machine, so much so that the most metaphor suggested about the theme was the theme of death, which is not surprising for us. Because the increasing number of deaths due to COVID-19 published by WHO (8-14 March 2020: 1914; 8-14 March 2021: 58698 deaths) made this result quite natural.<sup>12</sup> The metaphors that the participants suggested such as, “Grim Reaper, executioner, poison, and drowning” reveal how horrific the killing

way of COVID-19 in their minds is. Studies have shown that COVID-19 brings breathing difficulties by causing silent hypoxemia and severe dyspnea.<sup>13,14</sup> Therefore, we think that the biggest reason for these similes is because of the fact that COVID-19 directly affects the respiratory tract. It is because that life equals breathing, and anything obstructing breathing actually stops life.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, it has been stated that a new disease is born and is included in the literature as “coronaphobia,” and it is defined as an excessive triggered response of fear of contacting the virus that causes COVID-19.<sup>15,16</sup> The second theme emerging according to the results of our research is “frightening”. The fact that nursing students likened COVID-19 to monsters in fairy tales, horror movies, and a lurking enemy is a sign of how much they fear it. Besides, the statement “COVID-19 is like apocalypse because it is the end of an era,” reveals how much frightening it is. It is stated that one of the most common mental reactions experienced by individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic is “fear”.<sup>17,18</sup> The inability to control the virus from spreading, the increasing number of people who die due to it, the lack of treatment, its mutating, and the risk of infection at any time can be shown among the reasons for the fear that occurs among nursing students. Also, the fact that the participants compare COVID-19 with an equation with multiple unknown variables indicates their fear due to the pandemic and the uncertainty about the future. Fear of the unknown appears to be a fundamental fear and is the main component of anxiety.<sup>19,20</sup> The fear related to COVID-19 not only results from the obscurity but also triggers the anxiety which accompanies the unpredictable and uncontrollable conditions.

Besides being a pandemic, COVID-19 is a global war because it not only caused deaths but also affected the whole world socially, economically, commercially, and politically. In fact, many presidents referred to COVID-19 as “war” in their speeches to the public and referred to healthcare workers as “war heroes”.<sup>21,22</sup> The nursing students who participated in our research also described COVID-19 as weapon in parallel with all these statements. They stated that COVID-19 is a biological

warfare weapon that breaks up families like an atomic bomb and kills by inflicting pain like cyanide. When we review the literature, we often see the words “COVID-19” and “War” alongside in the titles of the studies on COVID-19.<sup>21,23,24</sup>

The themes of “punisher” and “divider” that appeared with the metaphors about COVID-19 suggested by the nursing students participating in our research have emerged as the perception that quarantine creates on people in general. Such statements of the participants as “COVID-19 is like a bookmark because it separates families from each other,” “COVID-19 is like solitude because you self-quarantine,” “COVID-19 is like a prison because it punishes you by separating from loved ones,” and “COVID-19 is like a bad teacher because it gives you life lessons by punishing,” show that the quarantine created a negative effect on individuals and that they found this situation as punisher and divider. Many studies have also revealed that quarantine has adverse effects on individuals.<sup>25,26</sup>

Emerging as a result of our research, the themes “aggressive” and “sticky and contagious” reveal the characteristics in the minds of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is the cause of COVID-19. The statements such as “COVID-19 is like a pit bull terrier because it attacks and brutally kills everybody,” “COVID-19 is like a wild animal because it attacks,” and “COVID-19 is like a hunter because it kills by attacking,” show that this virus has an “aggressive” impression on the minds of nursing students. Young students’ statements such as “COVID-19 is like a slug because it immediately clings to humans,” “COVID-19 is like a louse because it spreads easily,” “COVID-19 is like slime because it never runs out,” and “COVID-19 is like glue because it sticks” also show that this virus creates a “contagious” impression in their minds. According to the statements made by WHO and scientists, the virus is more contagious when compared to other viruses such as severe acute respiratory syndrome and Middle East respiratory syndrome and it spreads faster than other viruses.<sup>27-29</sup> The fact that the media publishes about the infectiousness of the virus every day, that each country takes serious measures to prevent the transmission of

the virus in line with their policies, and that people constantly talk about the virus transmission when they meet make the formation of such a mental image natural.

## LIMITATIONS

Our findings should be interpreted in the light of several limitations. The differences in the pandemic management styles, cultures and nursing education of the countries may affect the perception results. Therefore, it is recommended to repeat the study in different countries. Finally, the absence of a similar study in the literature made it difficult to further discuss and compare research results.

## CONCLUSION

In our study in which we aim to reveal the perceptions of the nursing students about COVID-19 through metaphors, they assess COVID-19 as a killing machine. So much so that it has been determined that the theme with the most suggested metaphor is “fatal”. In addition, the fact that the nursing students likened COVID-19 to monsters in fairy tales, horror movies, and a lurking enemy has been an indication of how much they fear it. At this point, health authorities and media need to disseminate accurate information about COVID-19 and provide meticulous interaction and information sharing. Besides, it is crucial to establish psychological counseling units by evaluating students’ perceptions and determining their fears and concerns as self-management behaviors towards several processes such as pandemics are shaped during the education period. Also, including the principles of effective coping skills for the pandemic process in curriculums that train healthcare professionals might ensure that the quality and efficiency of care continues without decreasing for both pandemic and the normal process.

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### Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest between the authors and / or family members of the scientific and medical committee members or members of the potential conflicts of interest, counseling, expertise, working conditions, share holding and similar situations in any firm.

### Authorship Contributions

**Idea/Concept:** Tuba Karabey, Yasemin Boy; **Design:** Tuba Karabey, Yasemin Boy; **Control/Supervision:** Tuba Karabey; **Data Collection and/or Processing:** Tuba Karabey; **Analysis and/or Interpretation:** Tuba Karabey, Yasemin Boy; **Literature Review:** Tuba Karabey; **Writing the Article:** Tuba Karabey, Yasemin Boy; **Critical Review:** Tuba Karabey.

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