COVID-19: impact on mental health

11th December 2020

**Title:** Linking insomnia and OCD symptoms during the coronavirus pandemic: Examination of prospective associations

Journal of Anxiety Disorders | 26th November 2020

There is considerable concern in the mental health community about the psychological consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and who may be most vulnerable. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) symptoms may be particularly sensitive to the context of the pandemic. Previous research suggests insomnia symptoms may contribute to increased OCD symptoms over time, particularly during times of stress, such as the pandemic.

The present study examined pre-coronavirus outbreak insomnia symptoms as a predictor of post-coronavirus outbreak OCD symptoms in a sample of community adults who completed a 2016 survey study and were re-contacted on April 1, 2020 (N = 369).

Results revealed a small significant increase in OCD symptoms following the coronavirus outbreak and a small significant decrease in insomnia symptoms. Pre-coronavirus outbreak insomnia symptoms significantly predicted increases in post-coronavirus outbreak OCD symptoms. Similar results were found for specific OCD symptom facets with the exception of washing and hoarding symptoms, which were unrelated to pre-coronavirus insomnia symptoms. There was no evidence for a reverse effect of prior OCD symptoms on insomnia symptoms during the pandemic.

These findings suggest those with insomnia symptoms prior to the coronavirus pandemic may be vulnerable to increases in some OCD symptoms during the pandemic. The implications for preventing adverse psychological responses during the coronavirus pandemic are discussed.

Full article: [Linking insomnia and OCD symptoms during the coronavirus pandemic: Examination of prospective associations](https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0887618520301559?token=484AA570D528E535E6D7826E5D4DEF0C7EA9B9F66F25EFAA82A14B73A24D88C9ABB8BC98C4EED29059132B39A2D750B3)

**TITLE:**  MENTAL HEALTH DEMAND COULD RISE BY 40PC WARNS NHSE RESEARCH

HSJ | 7th December 2020

Demand for adult mental health services could rise by 40 per cent according to research commissioned by NHS England and seen by *HSJ*. The peer-reviewed research was carried out by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys Foundation Trust, along with the Centre for Mental Health, Mersey Care FT and York University. It is among four studies NHSE recommended to forecast demand for mental health services nationally. The TEWV research also predicted that:

* Referrals to children and young people’s mental health services could rise by up to 60 per cent from pre-pandemic levels
* Demand for older people’s services by 20 per cent
* Learning disabilities teams could face a 10 per cent rise in referrals with increasing levels of complexity, and
* Demand for improving access to psychological therapies services could rise between 11 per cent and 33 per cent.

According to the modelling, the surge in demand will largely be driven by the experiences of lockdown. Those who were particularly isolated — such as single-person households and those asked to shield — are most likely to need mental health services.

The research also expects economic downturns will lead to more people needing support, with young adults possibly the most vulnerable, but it is not yet clear how many people this will affect.

Further detail: [Mental health demand could rise by 40pc warns NHSE research](https://www.hsj.co.uk/mental-health/mental-health-demand-could-rise-by-40pc-warns-nhse-research/7029085.article?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTjJGalpXTXdZekV4TWpVMyIsInQiOiJNb1F1eUdpV1lsamZTUFJ6em9QYTA4SWY2N3hvRE1JbUFOTENQNzgraVpmSCtWaFg4RnJHSFh5aThNZzdxUXNkelhzUGorbDV4ZFM4ZGNiXC9FV1BHVWw0b1V2SW56S3Vqa3BHRDJTY3ZXY0N0ZjZIZzBrc1kzNUEwNWZZNjVuZDEifQ%3D%3D)

**Title:** Trajectories of anxiety and depressive symptoms during enforced isolation due to COVID-19 in England: a longitudinal observational study

The Lancet Psychiatry | 9th December 2020

There is major concern about the impact of the global COVID-19 outbreak on mental health. Several studies suggest that mental health deteriorated in many countries before and during enforced isolation (ie, lockdown), but it remains unknown how mental health has changed week by week over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study aimed to explore the trajectories of anxiety and depression over the 20 weeks after lockdown was announced in England, and compare the growth trajectories by individual characteristics.

The findings of the study suggest that the highest levels of depression and anxiety occurred in the early stages of lockdown but declined fairly rapidly, possibly because individuals adapted to circumstances. These findings emphasise the importance of supporting individuals in the lead-up to future lockdowns to try to reduce distress, and highlight that groups already at risk for poor mental health before the pandemic have remained at risk throughout lockdown and its aftermath.

Full article: [Trajectories of anxiety and depressive symptoms during enforced isolation due to COVID-19 in England: a longitudinal observational study](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2820%2930482-X)

**TITLE:** THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT DEPRESSIVE, ANXIETY, OR OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDERS

The Lancet Psychiatry | 8th December 2020

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in people with pre-existing mental health disorders is unclear. In three psychiatry case-control cohorts, the authors compared the perceived mental health impact and coping and changes in depressive symptoms, anxiety, worry, and loneliness before and during the COVID-19 pandemic between people with and without lifetime depressive, anxiety, or obsessive-compulsive disorders.

The study found that people with depressive, anxiety, or obsessive-compulsive disorders are experiencing a detrimental impact on their mental health from the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires close monitoring in clinical practice. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic does not seem to have further increased symptom severity compared with their prepandemic levels.

Full article: [The mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with and without depressive, anxiety, or obsessive-compulsive disorders: a longitudinal study of three Dutch case-control cohorts](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2820%2930491-0)

**Title:** Mental health impacts of COVID-19 on NHS staff

UK Parliament | 1st December 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of challenges to the mental health and well-being of NHS staff. This group were more vulnerable to mental ill health than other occupational groups prior to the pandemic. However, supporting the mental health and well-being of NHS staff during this time could maximise current and future NHS workforce capacity and performance.

This POSTnote gives an overview of the scale and quality of current evidence on the mental health and well-being of NHS staff before and during the pandemic. It also discusses how staff are supported and the options for introducing other effective interventions as the pandemic continues.

* NHS staff have experienced changes in their work patterns and roles during the pandemic that may affect their mental health and well-being.
* There are reports of burn-out, anxiety and depression, but also of staff thriving on greater team cohesion. The quality of evidence and research findings on the mental health impact are mixed.
* Supporting staff mental health is vital to sustaining capacity of the NHS workforce.
* Greater understanding is needed of the longer-term impacts on staff mental health and the needs of particular groups.
* Proposed ways to support staff include ensuring healthy working conditions, effective leadership and peer support.
* Some staff may require priority access to more intensive support from mental health services, such as psychological therapies.

Full document: [Mental health impacts of COVID-19 on NHS staff](https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0634/POST-PN-0634.pdf)

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