COVID-19: impact on mental health

 28th May 2021

**Title:** Time use and mental health in UK adults during an 11-week COVID-19 lockdown: a panel analysis

The British Journal of Psychiatry | 12th May 2021

There is currently major concern about the impact of the global COVID-19 outbreak on mental health. But it remains unclear how individual behaviours could exacerbate or protect against adverse changes in mental health.

The aim of this paper was to examine the associations between specific activities (or time use) and mental health and well-being among people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data were from the UCL COVID-19 Social Study, a panel study collecting data weekly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analytical sample consisted of 55 204 adults living in the UK who were followed up for the 11-week strict lockdown period from 21 March to 31 May 2020.

Changes in time spent on a range of activities were associated with changes in mental health and well-being. Behaviours involving outdoor activities such as gardening and exercising predicted subsequent improvements in mental health and well-being, whereas increased time spent following news about COVID-19 predicted declines in mental health and well-being.

These results are relevant to the formulation of guidance for people obliged to spend extended periods in isolation during health emergencies and may help the public to maintain well-being during future lockdowns and pandemics.

Full paper: [Time use and mental health in UK adults during an 11-week COVID-19 lockdown: a panel analysis](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/time-use-and-mental-health-in-uk-adults-during-an-11week-covid19-lockdown-a-panel-analysis/8F07743CB011DCB181B8491FDD6514DE)

**Title:** The Pandemic’s Impact on Children’s Mental Health

Kaiser Family Foundation | 26th May 2021

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the nation’s mental health, and this new issue brief shows that children are also facing worsening emotional and cognitive health. The brief examines factors contributing to worsening mental health and substance use outcomes among children and adolescents during the pandemic, looking closely at those who are at higher risk for negative mental health impacts, such as LGBTQ youth and children of color.

A review of recent research finds:

* More than 25% of high school students reported worsening emotional and cognitive health and over 20% of parents with children ages 5-12 reported similar worsening conditions for their children.
* There has been a large decline in pediatric mental health care usage since the start of the pandemic. While access to mental health services via telehealth has increased, mental health services via schools likely decreased with closures. Among Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) beneficiaries under the age of 18, the number of children receiving mental health services dropped by 50% from February to October 2020.
* In addition to loneliness and isolation in light of public health safety measures, the poor mental health of parents could be a contributing factor in negative mental health outcomes for children.

Full detail: [Mental health and substance use considerations among children during the covid-19 pandemic](https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/mental-health-and-substance-use-considerations-among-children-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/)

**Title:** Mindfulness practice for protecting mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic

Translational Psychiatry | 28th May 2021

Emerging evidence shows that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is negatively affecting mental health around the globe. Interventions to alleviate the psychological impact of the pandemic are urgently needed. Whether mindfulness practice may protect against the harmful emotional effects of a pandemic crisis remains hitherto unknown.

The authors investigated the influence of mindfulness training on mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak in China. We hypothesized that mindfulness practitioners might manifest less pandemic-related distress, depression, anxiety, and stress than non-practitioners and that more frequent practice would be associated with an improvement in mental health during the pandemic.

The study found lower scores of pandemic-related distress in mindfulness practitioners compared to non-practitioners. In general, older participants showed fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety. In younger practitioners, pandemic-related distress decreased from peak to follow-up. Importantly, increased mindfulness training during the preceding two weeks was associated with lower scores of depression and anxiety at both assessments. Likewise, practice frequency predicted individual improvement in scores of depression, anxiety, and stress at follow-up.

The results indicate that mindfulness meditation might be a viable low-cost intervention to mitigate the psychological impact of the COVID-19 crisis and future pandemics.

Full article: [Mindfulness practice for protecting mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41398-021-01459-8.pdf)

**Title:** Public Health Wales launches new COVID-19 wellbeing campaign

Public Health Wales | 24th May 2021

Public Health Wales has launched a new wellbeing campaign to address the negative impact of COVID-19 on the mental, physical and social wellbeing of people in Wales. The new ‘How are you doing?’ campaign has been created to support the people of Wales to look after their wellbeing and to ensure public health is protected during the isolation period.

This follows a call by many charities and human rights experts warning that emergency isolation measures to tackle COVID-19 will put disabled, vulnerable and older people at risk, as well as having an increased negative impact on the wider public mental and physical wellbeing.

Further detail: [Public Health Wales launches new COVID-19 wellbeing campaign](https://phw.nhs.wales/news/public-health-wales-launches-new-covid-19-wellbeing-campaign/)

**Title:** The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and work morale of radiographers within a conventional X-ray department

Radiography | May 2021

There is a plethora of literature that has described the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of healthcare staff worldwide. The aim of this paper was to investigate the physical and mental demands of mobile x-ray imaging on radiographers during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, within a local NHS Trust.

A total of 16 participants from 1 NHS Trust took part within this study. Both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained through an online survey.

Three key themes emerged from the data. These include mental health challenges/work morale in Radiology, demand of mobile imaging and departmental and Trust-wide mental health support. Results indicate a high demand in mobile imaging which has made a significant difference in the working life of some radiographers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the mental health of a proportion of radiographers at this Trust. Results indicate high workload and demand in mobile imaging has made a significant difference to the working life of radiographers, specifically the ones who were relatively newly qualified.

Two key interventions are proposed from this study. The first one is to provide and promote mental health support within radiology departments. The second is to encourage dual working on mobile x-ray examinations to help manage the emotional and physical burden.

Full detail: [The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and work morale of radiographers within a conventional X-ray department](https://www.radiographyonline.com/action/showPdf?pii=S1078-8174%2821%2900047-X)

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