COVID-19: impact on mental health

18th December 2020

**Title:** Is there a causal link between mental health problems and risk of COVID-19 infection?

The Mental Elf | 15th December 2020  
  
The Mental Elf have published a blog post that looks at two new studies that have investigated the possibility that people with mental illness are at increased risk of infection with COVID-19, and in one case that infection may stimulate the development of mental illness among people with no previous psychiatric history.

These two studies point to the possibility that poor mental health may be a risk factor for COVID-19 infection; additionally, Taquet et al indicate that falling victim to the virus may increase risk of future psychiatric problems.

Read the full commentary from [The Mental Elf](https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/substance-misuse/mental-health-covid-19-2/)

Primary papers:

Taquet M, Luciano S, Geddes JR, et al. [Bidirectional associations between COVID-19 and psychiatric disorder: retrospective cohort studies of 62,354 COVID-19 cases in the USA](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/medrxiv/early/2020/08/16/2020.08.14.20175190.full.pdf). | *Lancet Psychiatry.*2020.

Wang Q, Xu R, Volkow ND. [Increased risk of COVID-19 infection and mortality in people with mental disorders: analysis from electronic health records in the United States](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/wps.20806).

**TITLE:** SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS INTO US MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF TWITTER DATA

Journal of Medical Internet Research | 14th December 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic led to unprecedented mitigation efforts that disrupted the daily lives of millions. Beyond the general health repercussions of the pandemic itself, these measures also present a challenge to the world’s mental health and health care systems.

This study aims to answer three research questions: (1) What themes emerge from a corpus of US tweets about COVID-19? (2) To what extent did social media use increase during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic? and (3) Does sentiment change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The study findings underscore the negative effects of the pandemic on overall population sentiment. Increased use rates suggest that, for some, social media may be a coping mechanism to combat feelings of isolation related to long-term social distancing. However, in light of the documented negative effect of heavy social media use on mental health, social media may further exacerbate negative feelings in the long-term for many individuals.

Full document: [Social Media Insights Into US Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Longitudinal Analysis of Twitter Data](https://www.jmir.org/2020/12/e21418/pdf)

**Title:** Longitudinal increases in childhood depression symptoms during the COVID-19 lockdown

Archives of Disease in Childhood | 9th December 2020

There has been widespread concern that so-called lockdown measures, including social distancing and school closures, could negatively impact children’s mental health. However, there has been little direct evidence of any association due to the paucity of longitudinal studies reporting mental health before and during the lockdown. This study provides the first longitudinal examination of changes in childhood mental health, a key component of an urgently needed evidence base that can inform policy and practice surrounding the continuing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The authors concluded that during the UK lockdown, children’s depression symptoms have increased substantially, relative to before lockdown. The scale of this effect has direct relevance for the continuation of different elements of lockdown policy, such as complete or partial school closures. This early evidence for the direct impact of lockdown must now be combined with larger scale epidemiological studies that establish which children are most at risk and tracks their future recovery.

Full document[: Longitudinal increases in childhood depression symptoms during the COVID-19 lockdown](https://adc.bmj.com/content/archdischild/early/2020/11/26/archdischild-2020-320372.full.pdf)

**TITLE:** IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON NURSES’ MENTAL HEALTH: A PROSPECTIVE COHORT STUDY

Environmental Research | 11th December 2020

This study aimed to evaluate variations in nurses’ sleep quality and symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to evaluate whether the presence of potential risk factors influenced these symptoms over time.

The study found:

* Over the COVID-19 outbreak, nurses seem to have adapted to the “new normal”
* The fear to infect others and the fear to be infected had impact on nurses’ mental health
* Being displaced from home presented no association with nurses’ mental health
* It is crucial to provide nurses with emotional support during the COVID-19 outbreak
* Caring for nurses’ mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak is a question of public health.

Full document: [Impact of COVID-19 outbreak on nurses’ mental health: a prospective cohort study](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935120315176)

**TITLE:** THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND PSYCHOSOCIAL OUTCOMES ACROSS AGE THROUGH THE STRESS AND COPING FRAMEWORK

Gerontologist | 15th December 2020

The emergence of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the measures implemented to curb its spread may have deleterious effects on mental health. Older adults may be at increased risk for adverse psychosocial outcomes since opportunities to remain socially connected have diminished.

The purpose of this study was three-fold: 1) to examine the influences of COVID-19 pandemic-related stress on depression, anxiety, and loneliness, 2) to assess the mediating role of coping style and social support, and 3) to investigate whether these relationships vary across age.

Social support and coping style were found to relate to psychosocial outcomes. Avoidant coping was the strongest mediator of the relationship between pandemic-related stress and psychosocial outcomes, particularly depression. Avoidant coping more strongly mediated the relationship between stress and depression in younger adults compared to older adults.

These results were consistent with the stress and coping framework and recent work highlighting older adults' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings highlight the associations between positive coping behaviors and psychosocial well-being and indicate that older adults may use unique adaptive mechanisms to preserve well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Full article: [The COVID-19 pandemic and psychosocial outcomes across age through the Stress and Coping Framework](https://watermark.silverchair.com/gnaa205.pdf?token=AQECAHi208BE49Ooan9kkhW_Ercy7Dm3ZL_9Cf3qfKAc485ysgAAAs4wggLKBgkqhkiG9w0BBwagggK7MIICtwIBADCCArAGCSqGSIb3DQEHATAeBglghkgBZQMEAS4wEQQMbFMyLvqoGclrimSIAgEQgIICgX9xQ-FtE-a5rKuURHDzWOTj6MA_4CT4ui4AJaWP5HHhUZBDOeI9ICYE7VlZKndeGkxR_Ro7OiAxxU1ARwPBPXroejvA9hqiiB9f7qpeebdWD4GyB3OHpqLPezulf3riDm8PhfdTjFET-RKKI7n0c5XfQaOCIDXrkO7nI-4Co0jb6wn96r_CFP-s2OiAWuiSM6i3cKoNZB97nwRMuVxEgp0iTiHSOlUC6o04ZV_IkcoWdWu93dulk7VuVZzKAMb__kP_AOBSYQnT7otrn1Fisx9pal50pOmDrF5sqXR1fPywvP2zlcrI11mYZ4gW8H5bpoCiYBpvJgx9vJaR8exqSU5VqdcGotuMDr7I-NL9j0pjHDGmsBVFQxAYhJJDWZVQgSOjp1S1y6qoX3J-EYSrrZItQewP5gGNK8tGKOU5lqPQuwgJngKK8zQeL4RlIMLwKsTb-9EG6zp7FCCbAvb6sV6fqiJ7UVFb5RRcrNKPHNGWrp6LpT43-5b9J799CPp3h154f3FquGag7kIv8c3Tp6kTmGZNQvpq7JYySZDshWdO23X5RuRjDjl1l9sdq2xmsVicJABFoWWvy61q0IGr5QdqVYdZZO9N2Wtp9y5Aj-vlvZn-OIW5oLRtaY9wjImSwD7k4CxXK4e3j3yckf-Omf0Uj1fRlbLQTGiAiHV9WvcWtNjnPbLS1xU6XhCs9jY1nYoeDBaMqACmOTM495afcAgjwdM6v7jwRWlMNcT2j3KM5GeJgR_hIcrdT4PAK8i8K3lHeDMYFDbrArV2vPR1UuppdDU7yZ1n78Qpu7T0wVoaagHaNquADZ5EyC8dvnDYCWXCCRttvyuSzWaHh1-nRE45)

**Title:** Factors affecting mental health of health care workers during coronavirus disease outbreaks (SARS, MERS & COVID-19): A rapid systematic review

PLOS ONE | 15th December 2020

The novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak currently puts health care workers at high risk of both physical and mental health problems. This study aimed to identify the risk and protective factors for mental health outcomes in health care workers during coronavirus epidemics.

The level of disease exposure and health fear were significantly associated with worse mental health outcomes. There was evidence that clear communication and support from the organization, social support and personal sense of control are protective factors.

The authors conclude safeguarding mental health of health care workers during infectious disease outbreaks should not be treated as a separate mental health intervention strategy, but could benefit from a protective approach. The study suggests that embedding mental health support in a safe and efficient working environment which promotes collegial social support and personal sense of control could help to maximize resilience of health care workers.

Full article: [Factors affecting mental health of health care workers during coronavirus disease outbreaks (SARS, MERS & COVID-19): A rapid systematic review](https://read.qxmd.com/read/33320910/factors-affecting-mental-health-of-health-care-workers-during-coronavirus-disease-outbreaks-sars-mers-covid-19-a-rapid-systematic-review/free-pdf-1)

**Title**: Mental health consequences of infections by coronaviruses including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

Brain and Behavior | 13th December 2020

Anxiety and stress like mental illnesses are the common outcomes of viral epidemics and pandemics. This paper aims to highlight and discuss the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental or psychological health.

 COVID-19 infection has already been declared as a global pandemic, which in association with infodemic has increased the risk of psychiatric/psychological disorders. A large population of the world is prone to develop anxiety, depressive disorders, and other mental abnormalities. Therefore, timely psychological interventions and preventive strategies are required. Moreover, the infection has been reported to be linked with cerebrovascular conditions; therefore, patients with underlying cerebrovascular diseases should be given attention.

COVID-19-mediated mental health complications and cerebrovascular conditions may cause a huge burden on healthcare communities in the future. Therefore, timely intervention and the development or application of preventive strategies are required to decrease the risk of neurological consequences.

Full article: [Mental health consequences of infections by coronaviruses including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/brb3.1901)

**Title:** COVID-19 worries and mental health: the moderating effect of age

Aging & Mental Health | 9th December 2020

Older age (60+ years) increases the risk of contracting and dying from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which might suggest worse mental health for those in this age range during the pandemic. Indeed, greater worry about COVID-19 is associated with poorer mental health. However, Older age is generally associated with better emotional well-being, despite increased likelihood of negative events (e.g. death of a spouse) with age. This study examined whether age moderated the

The authors found that older age was associated with better mental health (i.e. lower levels of anxiety and depression). Greater perceived likelihood of contracting COVID-19 was related to higher anxiety. However, this effect was moderated by age. At younger ages (18-49 years), the positive association between perceived likelihood of contracting COVID-19 and anxiety was significant, but the association was not significant at older ages (50+ years).

The study concludes that older age may buffer against the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health. More research is necessary to understand the potential protective nature of age during the pandemic, as well as the recovery period.

Full article: [COVID-19 worries and mental health: the moderating effect of age](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13607863.2020.1856778?needAccess=true)

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