

Mental Health and COVID-19: Living in a Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The global pandemic (COVID-19) has affected every aspect of our lives. As students of psychology, we were interested in finding out about mental health changes in 2020 compared to 2019. A survey was posted to social media that included measures of depression, anxiety and time management skills. Results indicated that there were significant increases in anxiety and depression and significant decreases in time management skills in 2020 compared with 2019. Additionally, in 2020 students reported higher levels of anxiety and depression and poorer time management skills compared to nonstudents.

INTRODUCTION

- This project is a data collection with the goal of examining how COVID-19 has impacted individuals' mental health.
- Health officials and researchers have been investigating how this global pandemic has influenced their citizens' symptoms of mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. These experts have expressed concerns of what they call an "echo pandemic" of mental health problems in response to the ramifications of COVID-19 (Dozois, 2020).
- In a nationally representative sample from a study conducted in Canada, 20% of participants reported that their anxiety levels were "high" or "extremely high," and 10% self-reported levels of high depression (Dozois, 2020). Prior to the pandemic, only 5% of participants reported high/extremely high levels of anxiety, and only 4% reported high levels of depression (Dozois, 2020).
- The United Kingdom has also seen an increase in mental health difficulties. One study found that that "individuals' ability to tolerate uncertainty was predictive of mental health difficulties, and this was mediated by their coping responses" (Rettie & Daniels, 2020).
- With increased levels of depression and anxiety, there may be further implications of COVID-19 on mental health and time management skills.
- If Canada and the UK are seeing significant increases in mental health problems, then it would be reasonable to deduce that the United States will suffer similar consequences.

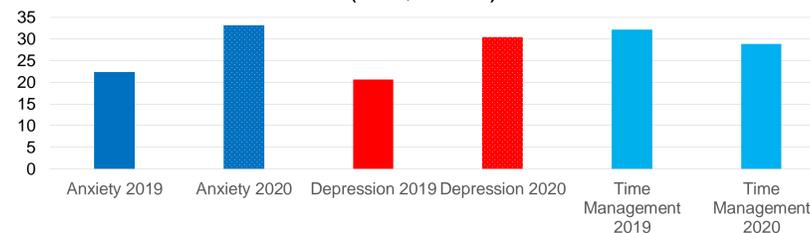
METHOD

- Each question was asked twice. Once for 2019 (pre-pandemic, Fall 2019) and once for 2020 (during the pandemic, Fall 2020).
- "In 2020, I felt...."
 - Depression (MFQ, Angold & Costello, 1988)
 - Anxiety (GAD-7, Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Lowe, 2006)
 - Time Management ("How good is your time management?" 2020)
- "One year ago, in 2019, I felt...."
 - Depression (MFQ, Angold & Costello, 1988)
 - Anxiety (GAD-7, Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Lowe, 2006)
 - Time Management ("How good is your time management?" 2020)
- 144 Individuals participated in the project
 - 125 females, 19 males
 - 41 students, 103 nonstudents
 - 38 single, 105 married or In a relationship
 - 83 had children, 61 did not



RESULTS, 2019 & 2020

Mental Health and COVID-19
Pre-pandemic (Fall, 2019) and During pandemic
(Fall, 2020)



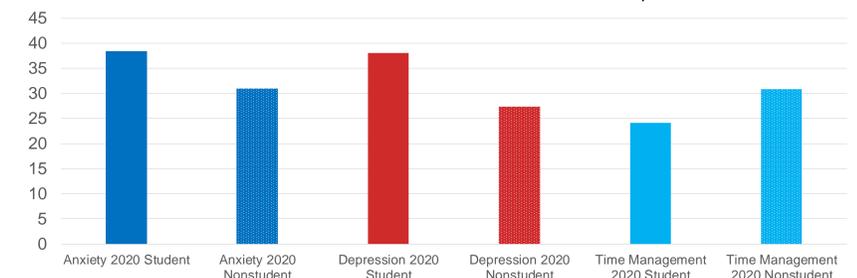
Anxiety: $t(141) = 3.95, p < .001, d = .73$ ($M_{2019} = 22.3, SD = 9.02; M_{2020} = 33.1, SD = 10.76$)
Anxiety scale ranges from 7 to 49 with higher scores indicating higher anxiety.

Depression: $t(142) = 4.63, p < .001, d = .86$ ($M_{2019} = 20.6, SD = 9.39; M_{2020} = 30.4, SD = 13.43$)
Depression scale ranges from 8 to 56 with higher scores indicating higher depression.

Time Management: $t(142) = -5.14, p < .001, d = .95$ ($M_{2019} = 32.2, SD = 7.64; M_{2020} = 28.9, SD = 6.23$)
Time management scale ranges from 7 to 49 with higher scores indicating better time management.

RESULTS, STUDENTS & NONSTUDENTS

Mental Health and COVID-19
for Students and Nonstudents in Fall, 2020



Anxiety: $t(142) = 13.71, p < .001, d = 1.15$ ($M_{student} = 38.4, SD = 6.53; M_{nonstudent} = 31, SD = 11.38$). Anxiety scale ranges from 7 to 49 with higher scores indicating higher anxiety.

Depression: $t(143) = 10.75, p < .001, d = .90$ ($M_{student} = 38, SD = 10.54; M_{nonstudent} = 27.3, SD = 13.21$). Depression scale ranges from 8 to 56 with higher scores indicating higher depression.

Time Management: $t(143) = -6.30, p < .001, d = .53$ ($M_{student} = 24.1, SD = 6.92; M_{nonstudent} = 30.8, SD = 7.09$). Time management scale ranges from 7 to 49 with higher scores indicating better time management.

DISCUSSION

- During 2020, COVID-19 brought about huge changes in our lives. We wear masks in public, limit our outings, and limit our social circles. We stay 6 feet away from others and our social events have been almost completely curtailed.
- Additionally, the move to remote learning has been especially hard on young people.
- We found that the global pandemic (COVID-19) was related to significantly higher levels of anxiety and depression and lower levels of time management in students and nonstudents. However, students were disproportionately affected. They reported more anxiety, depression and lower time management skills than nonstudents during the Fall of 2020.

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