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## **The Effect of Covid-19 on Mental Health**

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### **Abstract**

The Covid-19 outbreak quickly affected people's lives and played a significant role in their lifestyle, way of thinking and health. The global pandemic caused many common changes among people such as spending more time inside a safe hygienic place. In order to reduce the spread of the virus, a lot of restriction has been imposed by governments and some places such as hospital's and school's working style has considerably changed. These changes have a pivotal role in the physical and mental health of individuals. New happenings due to these reasons, occurred severe problems such as physical diseases primarily on an individual's musculoskeletal system as a result of a lack of outside activities. Plus, a lack of social interaction with other people and being alone for a long time, affected people's mindset and motivation, therefore this result leads to damage to mental health. This research mainly focuses on the

effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on people's mental health, discusses the positive and negative impacts of the new occurrences caused by the global pandemic, how it affects people's health in different aspects and future possibilities with statistics.

**Keywords:** mental health, Covid-19 effects, quarantine, global pandemic



## The Effect of Covid-19 on Mental Health

The essay focuses on the effects of Covid-19 on people's lives and their mental health individually. A questionnaire has been created for people about how they feel affected by the global pandemic, the questionnaire mostly shared via social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram. The majority of the participants, **%69.6** of them are from Europe, plus we have other participants from Asia and America. All of the participants were Turkish. **%73.6** of the participants are aged in the range of 12-25, the total number of participants is **125**. The questions asked in the questionnaire were asked to be answered between 1 and 10. The questions were about how the situations affected the person, 1 is negative and 10 is positive. The data from people saved by google forms and graphs created via them. The graphs that you will see in the presentation are going to be the results of the research. The total number of questions is 10 and I would like to introduce these topics one by one and give brief information from our research and discussion.

Quarantine is seen as a loss of control, as a sense of entrapment, and as a denied freedom. Separation from loved ones, **loss of freedom, uncertainty** about health and boredom, can sometimes create dramatic effects on a person's mental health. As we can see from the outcomes of the questionnaire, only **12.8%** of the people indicated that the quarantine period affected their freedom positively. The main consideration is likely to think that the period negatively affected the freedom of themselves. The reduction of the necessity to go outside such as work and school may push people to feel even more restricted and affect their sense of freedom.

An individual's perspective of the future can be strongly associated with serious **physical** and mental health. As a result, a long-term uncertainty of the future may cause problems for

the well-being of the individual. The outcome of the questionnaire shows that, people state that their perspective on their future is likely to be negatively affected by the pandemic. The continuous changes that are made by the authorities such as new regulations on lockdowns etc, these changes affect the people, they tend to believe that the future is even more uncertain than ever it is. The constant changes in social and economical areas are enabling the future to be uncertain at some point. Complexity and constant changes in situations affect the perspective of the future of an individual.

This topic is about one of the most changeable situations from a person to another person. The happenings and the intensity of the situations are playing a significant role in a person's perspective of themselves. The findings of the other researches come to a conclusion that different situations that people have may cause different thoughts and acts on people. In our questionnaire, we can see that **32%** of people believe quarantine negatively affected their relationship with themselves, **20.8%** of people believe the period did not change many, **47.2%** of people feel like the period affected them positively. We can say that the results are fluctuating. I believe that the results vary from one individual to individual.

We cannot ignore the fact that feeling lonely is one of the significant impacts on an individual. Lack of quality in a close relationship with a person directly leads to feeling lonely. Numerous epidemiological studies reported that poor social support is associated with many mental diseases such as depression and mood disorder. Plus, physical diseases are also associated with the lack of social support as well as mental diseases. As an example, multiple sclerosis and cancer can be caused by the lack of social relations in a roundabout way. Previous researches indicate that social isolation and low levels of social support is associated with increased morbidity and **mortality** in a host of medical illness. As we see from the answers of our research, **73.6%** of the people evaluated below

5 and 5 (1-10) when they asked to evaluate the effects of quarantine on their relationship with their close friends and relatives.

Lack of outside activities, and not seeing people face-to-face as often as we used to be, affected everybody. Many people had hard times meeting new people or even sustain their relationship with their close friends and families. New bondings between people are even harder in virtual platforms. The outcomes from the research more likely to support the idea. **63.2%** of the participants evaluated the effect of covid-19 on their newly made relationships negatively.

According to other researches made on this topic, social restriction measures mostly have a negative impact on the productivity of groups composed predominantly of introverts, they may actually improve the productivity of groups composed predominantly of extroverts. And also it is reasonable to think that stress is associated with a reduction in productivity also in remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings from our research vary, **41.8%** of the participants stated that managing free time productively is negatively affected by covid, on the other hand, **49.2%** of them stated otherwise. A similar number, in this case, shows people affected and reacted differently to the new happenings of covid. In simple terms, we can say that introverts and extroverts react differently to outside activities and as a result; social restrictions.

Deficiency of outside activities during the outbreak caused unhealthy lifestyles, reduction of physical activities lead to weight problems and an increase in cardiovascular risks. Pains in joint points and muscles may occur because of lack of physical action that naturally happens in daily lives because everyone is obligated to stay at their homes. ***unhealthy diet, the reduction of physical activity will contribute to weight gain and many other physical problems during quarantine.***

The outcome of our research is as many of us predicted, the majority, **%88.8** of the participants evaluated the effects of lack of outside activities as negative.

The new happenings that these rules bring in an instant in March 2020, was a huge impact on people's lives, and as a result, the majority of the people have had hard times keeping up. The outcome of the questionnaire shows that, the majority of the participants evaluated the effects of social distancing and wearing mask rules negatively.

Cities well-known for their active street life such as New York, Rome or Barcelona now appear ghost cities. Many public places shut down temporarily, some food-related shops changed their system to take-away. It's hard to see many people outside at the same time like it used to be before March 2020. **85.6%** of the participants stated the pandemic affected negatively being in public places. Many restrictions have been made on the usage of public places such as public parks, restaurants, cafes in these past months. Being socially inactive for a long time leads to feeling lonely and developing stress.

Global digitalization provides more opportunities and enables access to information easier and quicker. In March 2020, a lot of institutions changed their working platform to internet-based platforms. The popularity of online meetings has increased rapidly during the first months of covid-19. Although there are many pros of digitalization, there are cons too. Many people do not have easy access to the materials that are necessary for connecting to people, this is just one negative point, there are a lot of them. The results of the research show that a vast amount of participants believes that the increase in the speed of global digitalization affected their lives positively and enabled a variety of opportunities. Despite its negative effects, a big part of the participants evaluated global digitalization's affects mostly as positive.

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