



## EATING IN THE LOCKDOWN DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC; SELF-REPORTED CHANGES IN EATING BEHAVIOUR, AND ASSOCIATIONS WITH BMI, EATING STYLE, COPING AND HEALTH ANXIETY.

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The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in national lockdowns, which resulted in isolation within people's homes. This cross-sectional survey examined changes in eating patterns and behaviour during lockdown. Of the 620 participants included in the study, eating higher energy density foods was more common in females with a higher BMI and higher health anxiety. Although there was a change in emotional eating behaviours across the sample as a whole, it was not in the expected direction, with many participants reporting a decrease in emotional eating after the implementation of lockdown.

There were also increases in fruit and vegetable consumption and home-prepared foods. Many of these behavioural responses were influenced by pre-lockdown tendencies. Therefore, it is important to consider these when understanding coping strategies during lockdown, and how to support clients as we come out of lockdown.

### EXPERT REVIEW

The role of eating behaviours and psychological responses during lockdown has become an area of interest, particularly with the uncertainty of going into future lockdowns. With Covid-19, and individual's responses to it, being a relatively new research topic, there is not yet enough evidence for longitudinal outcomes of the findings in these studies. It is also difficult to ascertain the influence of confounding variables prior to the national lockdown, such as food insecurity, not accounted for due to the unpredictable start to the pandemic. [Read more....](#)

## HEALTH ANXIETY, CYBERCHONDRIA, AND COPING IN THE CURRENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WHICH FACTORS ARE RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS ANXIETY?

Jungmann, SM ; Witthöft, M  
Journal of anxiety disorders. 2020;73:102239

Besides the high infection and mortality rate, the COVID-19 pandemic also causes considerable psychological stress. Research from previous epidemics and pandemics found that health concerns and anxieties relating to a virus outbreak can have a significant psychological impact and have been linked to behaviours ineffective for disease prevention. Health anxiety exists on a spectrum from absent health awareness to pathological health anxiety or hypochondria. Unhelpful practices, such as excessive online information searching (cyberchondria) or doctor visits can amplify or sustain such anxieties. Furthermore, media consumption during a pandemic has been positively associated with anxiety, and so has been related to dysfunctional emotion regulation (i.e. ruminating, catastrophizing).

So far, it was assumed that individuals with pre-existing health anxiety are particularly prone to experience virus anxiety with little numerical evidence to back this up. Hence this study sought to quantify whether during the COVID -19 pandemic, pre-existing health anxiety influenced levels of virus anxiety and whether there was a relationship between cyberchondria and virus anxiety. An online survey was conducted within the German population in March 2020 (N = 1615, female predominant, mean age of = 33.36 years) and data was collected using a series of questionnaires.

The outcome was consistent with previous studies showing that about half of the participants reported moderate to severe anxiety associated with COVID-19, women being particularly affected. Predisposition to health anxiety and cyberchondria were consistently positively correlated to virus anxiety. Whereby being well informed and having coping strategies seemed to contribute to reduced levels of virus anxiety. The study may be of interest to those who seek evidence on the association between health anxiety and media consumption in relation to pandemic-associated anxiety.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS ON HEALTH BEHAVIORS IN ADULTS.

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In response to the global outbreak of COVID-19, a wave of quarantine and stay-at-home mandates were issued to attenuate the rapid worldwide spread.

The aim of this study was to quantify changes in habitual dietary behaviours, physical activity, sleep, sedentary behaviours, and mental health before and during the initial peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study is based on an anonymous survey via paid advertisements on the social media platform Facebook. A total of 7,753 completed the first COVID-19 question and were thus included in the analysis.

Results indicate that:

- declines in healthful eating behaviours were coincident with reductions in physical activity. These negative behaviours were characteristic of individuals reporting weight gain in response to the pandemic outbreak.
- anxiety scores nearly doubled in response to the pandemic and 20% of the sample reported that symptoms were severe enough to interfere with daily routines.
- home confinement led to shifts in daily work and household responsibilities which resulted in mental health declines alongside some positive and many negative changes to health behaviours.

Authors conclude that with increased cases of weight gain and significant declines to mental health, COVID-19 may impact clinical practice for years to come.

