

How is COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) affecting behavior in young adults?

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Introduction

The COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic has had a global impact on human behavior. According to the Encycloedia Britannica, human behavior is defined as the potential and expressed capacity for physical, mental, and social activity during the phases of human life (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). In 2019-2020, a study was conducted on how COVID-19 impacted behavior in humans (Bornstein, 2020) and it showed that COVID-19 has triggered multiple mental health illness such as depression, anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

The pandemic had a major impact on the adolescent population. Between 2019-2020, multiple studies were conducted on how COVID-19 impacted adolescent behavior. A study by Natasha R. Magson (2021) discussed how challenging the restrictions were for adolescents. It weighed severely on the adolescent population because they relied on socializing and emotional support .

Objectives

This literature review will be an overview of six scholarly articles on how adolescents are affected by restriction from COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2). The studies will address how young adults struggled with restrictions which caused adolescents to have issues at home with family members, relationship building and social interactions.

Methods

This review accumulated over seventy- two sources associated with young adults, COVID-19; Social distancing; Motivation; Depression; Anxiety; Belongingness correlates between each other.

Peer-reviewed publications were searched through PUBMED, The Benedictine online library, Center for disease control, National Institute of Health, PLOS One, EBSCO. Using search term such as: Covid-19 adolescents' behavior, depression, social distancing.

Other articles were searched by terms such as COVID-19 causing anti-social skills, COVID-19 and anxiety. The reference lists of retrieved sources were analyzed, and the timeline of article publications ranged between 2019 and 2021.

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FIGURES

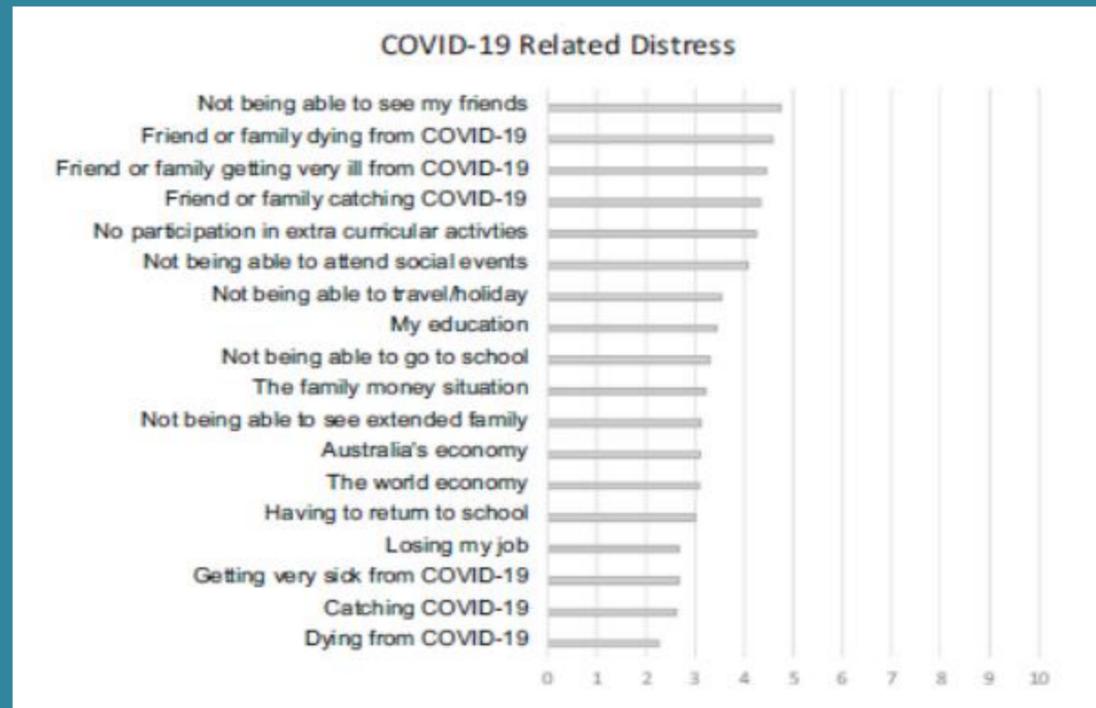


Fig. 1: Factors contributing to COVID-19 related distress among adolescents. Rated on a scale of 0 (not at all distressed) to 10 (extremely distressed) (Magson et al., 2020).

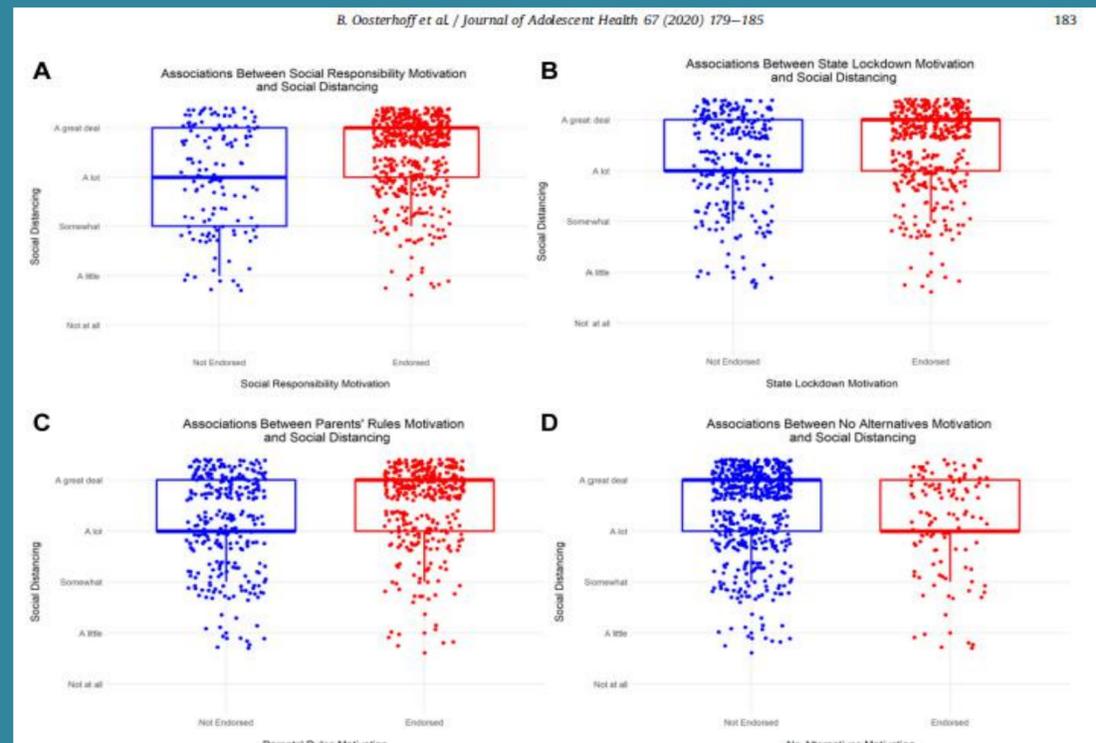


Fig. 2: Boxplots displaying differences in degree of social distancing by motivation. Only significant effects are displayed (Oosterhoff et al, 2020)

Literature Review

Reducing the spread of the COVID-19 infection during the pandemic caused the CDC to recommend social distancing to keep individuals safe and limited the spread of the respiratory virus. With today's youth, social distancing is challenging because young adults enjoy being out with friends at social gatherings and large events. During the pandemic, young adolescents struggled with anxiety, self-inflicted violence and unwanted weight gain due to restrictions to public gyms and physical activities. Young adults also struggled with online learning affecting their education (Marques de Miranda,D., 2020). Fig 1. shows factors that contributed to COVID-19 related distress among adolescents.

Oosterhoff et al (2020) collected data after COVID-19 was declared a national emergency globally. The study included over 600+ young adults using social media surveys and composed of qualitative and quantitative data. In the survey, 98.1% of young adults reported that they engaged in following the social distancing restrictions. However, this study found associations between motivations to social distance and the mental and social health during COVID-19 as seen in Fig. 2 with 63% of young adults feeling their anxiety and depression increase due to social distancing mandates.

Conclusion/Limitations

The findings in this literature review concluded that young adolescents struggled with the pandemic's restrictions orders. The restrictions triggered multiple mental health behaviors which caused young teens to feel sad, worried and even rebel on restriction orders. Most felt socially isolated from friends, family and other counter parts.

While having the fear of contracting COVID-19 and dying, young adults felt like the isolation phase caused them to socialize more on social media platforms while weakening their interpersonal skills. The limitations to this study are not having evidence on how restriction can cause more harm on mental health disparities on young adults.

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