

The Impact of Social Support and Psychological Resilience on COVID-19 Pandemic Mental Health-Related Outcomes

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Introduction

- ❖ The COVID-19 pandemic impacted nearly every area of daily life for most people: financial, occupational, social, travel, health, etc.
- ❖ Job losses, loss of homes, mandated social distancing and travel restrictions all contributed to poor mental health outcomes.
- ❖ Depression, anxiety, and stress levels all increased, exacerbated by higher levels of quarantine requirements and fear of COVID (Erbiczer, 2021; Morin et al, 2021).
- ❖ These findings combine to demonstrate that COVID-19 and the resultant social changes significantly impacted the mental health of a variety of populations, especially vulnerable groups.
- ❖ The literature on social connection and psychological resilience have demonstrated that these two factors contribute to better mental health outcomes. This study sought to determine whether these factors had a significant impact on mental health markers during the pandemic.

Methods

- ❖ The 596 participants ranged in age from 18-85; 66.6% of the sample identified as female, 32.2% as male, 0.7% as transgender female, and 0.5% as non-binary. 68.6% of participants identified as White, 18.8% Black, 8.2% Hispanic or Latino, 2.7% Asian, 0.7% American Indian or Alaskan Native, .2% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 0.8% reported Other ethnic identity.
- ❖ Measures given included the Patient Health Questionnaire – 9 (PHQ-9), Generalized Anxiety Disorder - 7 (GAD-7), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and selected social connection items from the COVID-19 Pandemic Health Questionnaire (CoPAQ).
- ❖ Participants were recruited and data was collected through Qualtrics, a national data collection website. Using this site, participants completed the survey electronically. After consenting electronically, participants individually completed the CoPaQ, PHQ-9, GAD-7, and BRS.

Results & Discussion

Social difficulty + low resilience accounted for **54%** of the variance in depression scores.

Social difficulty alone accounted for **45%**; adding resilience into the model accounted for another **9%**.

Social difficulty + low resilience accounted for **54%** of the variance in anxiety scores.

Social difficulty alone accounted for **42%**; adding resilience into the model accounted for another **12%**.

- ❖ The COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant societal, social, and financial changes significantly impacted mental health.
- ❖ However, **some individuals did not experience elevated levels of anxiety or depression throughout the pandemic.**
- ❖ The results of this study demonstrated that the more social connectedness a person reported experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the less likely they were to report symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- ❖ This study also demonstrated that self-reported psychological resilience correlated significantly with lower levels of anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Linear Regression Model Summary: Predicting Depression

Model	R	Adjusted R	F	p	df	df
	.54	.54	233.15	<.001	1	392

Coefficients for Model Variables Predicting Depression

Model	B	β	t	Bivariate r	Partial r
Social connection	.32	.52	14.68	.57	.60
Resilience	-.65	-.41	-11.45	-.54	-.50

Linear Regression Model Summary: Predicting Anxiety

Model	R	Adjusted R	F	p	df	df
	.54	.54	227.80	<.001	1	392

Coefficients for Model Variables Predicting Anxiety

Model	B	β	t	Bivariate r	Partial r
Social connection	.25	.49	13.84	.56	.57
Resilience	-.58	-.43	-12.08	-.56	-.52

Implications & Conclusions

- ❖ Both social support and resilience are amenable to psychological and lifestyle interventions.
- ❖ These findings stand to inform initiatives toward overall community wellness as well as inform preventative plans.
- ❖ **As public health policy evolves to accommodate the growing body of literature that links mental and physical health, understanding factors that improve overall psychological wellbeing can inform intervention at individual and public health levels.**
- ❖ The current study explored the relationships that exist between social support and mental health outcomes and psychological resilience and mental health outcomes.
- ❖ There were strong negative correlations between social support and depression, social support and anxiety, resilience and depression, and resilience and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ Social support and psychological resilience together predicted 54% of the variance in both depression and anxiety scores.
- ❖ **This study provides valuable insight into the protective factors that existed during the globally impactful COVID-19 pandemic.**
- ❖ **Findings stand to inform prevention and intervention at individual and community levels, for potential application during globally distressing events.**
- ❖ Archival data set with cross-sectional data from January 2021, specific to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ Correlational analyses cannot determine directionality or causality.
- ❖ Future research could benefit from collecting data around other global disasters and assessing at multiple time points, with baseline comparisons.

References available upon request.