

# COVID-19 INSIGHTS

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A weekly digest of key messages from behavioural insight studies across Europe

Insights Unit

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World Health  
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

Europe

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Overall, risk perceptions continue to decrease, although a large minority of respondents (26%) think that measures are being lifted too fast. The number of people who would like to be vaccinated is down to 66% (from 79% in mid-April). Immunity passes are not accepted by the majority of the population.	
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## Background

An increasing number of WHO Europe Member States are requesting social, cultural, and behavioural insights (BI) into how people respond to the information and restrictions that are a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. A WHO BI tool for rapid, flexible and cost-effective monitoring of public knowledge, risk perceptions, behaviours and trust has therefore been developed and is now available to countries in the WHO European Region to make their COVID-19-related response relevant and actionable. This tool is available <http://www.euro.who.int/en/covid-19-BI>.

Unfortunately, not all Member States have the resources to run and administer the survey from this tool. As a stopgap, we have collected a list of national surveys, based on or closely related to the WHO BI tool. These surveys are collecting information in a rigorous and ethical manner and are publishing their data openly and regularly (at least weekly).

This digest provides a weekly overview of these surveys, along with key findings for each week. The list is growing each week, as new surveys and results come online. Our hope is that some trends that are identified elsewhere might also prove to be useful in different national contexts.

If you would like more information about the results of a particular survey, please feel free to email the relevant contact person as indicated in the document.

If you have any comments about this weekly summary (for instance, on how to improve it), please contact Nils Fietje ([fietjen@who.int](mailto:fietjen@who.int))

Many people are contributing to the development of this document. We are incredibly grateful for their support during these busy times.

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## COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring (COSMO-DEU)

<b>Description:</b>	Serial cross-sectional monitor of public perceptions of risk, protective and preparedness behaviours, public trust, acceptance of measures, knowledge, misinformation, health and non-health related consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in Germany.
<b>Participants:</b>	1000 Germans, 18-74 year olds, online panel, representative for age and gender, federal state.
<b>Country:</b>	Germany
<b>Topics covered:</b>	Public perceptions of risk, protective and preparedness behaviours, public trust, acceptance of measures, knowledge, misinformation, health and non-health related consequences
<b>Start date:</b>	02 March 2020
<b>Frequency:</b>	Weekly
<b>Survey URL:</b>	<a href="https://www.corona-monitor.de">https://www.corona-monitor.de</a>
<b>Results URL:</b>	<a href="https://projekte.uni-erfurt.de/cosmo2020/archiv/">https://projekte.uni-erfurt.de/cosmo2020/archiv/</a>
<b>Conducted by:</b>	University of Erfurt
<b>Contact name:</b>	Cornelia Betsch
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### Key messages for Friday, 15 May 2020

Risk perception and fear for one's own health are still declining, as is the acceptance of the measures. Both have dropped almost to the pre-lockdown level. Compared to last week, acceptance of the most restrictive measures decreased significantly. The desire for demonstrations is still low, but has increased compared to last week. At the same time, uptake of protective measures declines slightly; e.g., more than a quarter of respondents make exceptions when meeting people from outside the home. Even measures such as washing hands or keeping distance are declining. The majority is indifferent about whether the measures are exaggerated or whether the lifting happens too fast. 21% think the measures are excessive. This group shows emotional distance from the outbreak: they think it is media hype, feel no risk, the virus feels far away, rather harmless and some perceive it as a hoax. This group also lacks trust in the authorities. 26% think that measures are lifted too fast. This group has higher risk perceptions and does not see it as a media hype. They are also more likely to know someone who was infected.

#### Masks

77% wear masks in public frequently or always (previous week 58%); fabric masks are worn most frequently, the proportion of FFP2/3 masks continues to decline. Most of them know about the protective effect; most of them say they wear masks to protect others. Those who report wearing masks more often report other protective behaviours, too (e.g. keeping distance, avoiding hand shakes). Those who notice that others wear masks are more likely to wear masks themselves.

#### Vaccination against COVID-19

66% would (rather) be vaccinated against COVID-19, in mid-April 79% wanted the vaccine. Trust in the vaccination and the authorities is essential for vaccination readiness.

#### Immunity pass.

49% of all respondents are against the introduction of an immunity pass, only 26% were in favour. Most respondents stated that holders of an immunity card should have "no" extra duties and responsibilities. One reason for the rejection could also be scientifically uncertain knowledge about immunity after COVID-19 infection: only 25% think they are immune after COVID-19 infection; this proportion has decreased significantly since April. The data show no evidence that people would deliberately infect themselves in order to obtain an immunity card.

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## Covid-19 Social Study (COVID-MINDS-GBR)

<b>Description:</b>	National longitudinal study of the psychological and social impact of Covid-19
<b>Participants:</b>	70,000 UK adults, online panel study.
<b>Country:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Topics covered:</b>	Health during Covid-19, confidence in government, adherence to guidelines, mental health, wellbeing, stressors, loneliness, health and social behaviours, and time use in isolation
<b>Start date:</b>	21 March 2020
<b>Frequency:</b>	Weekly
<b>Survey URL:</b>	<a href="https://www.covidsocialstudy.org/">https://www.covidsocialstudy.org/</a>
<b>Results URL:</b>	<a href="https://www.covidsocialstudy.org/results">https://www.covidsocialstudy.org/results</a>
<b>Conducted by:</b>	University College London
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### Key messages for Friday, 15 May 2020

- Compliance with government advice has decreased since lockdown began, moving from averages of 70% of adults 'completely' adhering, to just 60%. Confidence in government has fallen since the start of lockdown, and is lowest in those under the age of 30.
- Anxiety levels have fallen further in the past week, although depression levels remain relatively stable. Both appear higher than usual reported averages.
- Stress relating to Covid-19 (both catching Covid-19 and becoming seriously ill from Covid-19) has stabilised again following a rise last week, with 1 in 5 people now worried about it.
- Worries relating to accessing food have continued to fall, whilst other worries remain stable.
- Thoughts of death or self-harm and experience of self-harm or abuse remain relatively stable but are higher amongst younger people and those living alone, with low household income, with a mental health condition, and living in urban areas. Levels reported here are expected to be under-estimations of experiences.
- Life satisfaction is still noticeably lower than usual levels but is higher than when lockdown started and has plateaued over the past month following an increase after lockdown commenced.
- Loneliness levels continue to be stable since lockdown started, even amongst high-risk groups. Levels are higher in women, people living with children, and people living in urban areas.
- 50% of respondents do not currently feel in control of future plans, while 39% do not feel in control of their employment and 23% do not feel in control of their mental health.
- When comparing across age groups, younger adults report feeling less in control across all domains.
- 78% are concerned about cases of COVID-19 increasing as lockdown is eased, and 74% are concerned about people not adhering to social distancing. 62% are concerned about a recession, and 48% concerned about unemployment levels rising. 1 in 3 people are also showing concern about pollution increasing, social cohesion decreasing, and crime levels rising.
- The most prevalent factors people are missing from their normal lives are meeting up with friends (81%) and family (77%). Overall, younger adults are reporting missing more things than older adults.

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## Perceptions, worries and attitudes related to COVID-19 (COVID-FIN)

<b>Description:</b>	The purpose of this study is to examine and monitor risk perception, trust, worries, media use and behaviour, and changes in them, among the Finnish population.
<b>Participants:</b>	1,000 respondents, data is adjusted for age, gender and major region (NUTS3, county) according to the Finnish 18-79-year-old population.
<b>Country:</b>	Finland
<b>Topics covered:</b>	Risk perception, affect, trust, worries, use and need of information, policies, panic buying
<b>Start date:</b>	07 April 2020
<b>Frequency:</b>	Every second week
<b>Survey URL:</b>	
<b>Results URL:</b>	
<b>Conducted by:</b>	National Institute for Health and Welfare
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### Key messages for Friday, 15 May 2020

- Most respondents have avoided social contacts during the corona situation. However, avoiding social contacts has decreased during the three rounds of surveys that have been conducted since 7 April 2020.
- Fears and worries are still common, but less so than earlier.
- Respondents are mostly worried about societal and economic matters, such as recession, small companies running out of business, and an increase of mental health and social problems.
- Most respondents follow the media every day, but the frequency has decreased during the follow-up period.
- Respondents are mostly interested in the development of treatment and a possible vaccine.

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## COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring (COSMO-DNK)

<b>Description:</b>	Monitoring knowledge, risk perceptions, preventive behaviours, and public trust in the current coronavirus outbreak.
<b>Participants:</b>	1,000 Danish adults, online panel study, representative for age, gender, and geographical location
<b>Country:</b>	Denmark
<b>Topics covered:</b>	Knowledge regarding COVID-19; risk perceptions; attitudes toward, own and others' preventive behaviours; trust in different media and institutions; mental health; personality variables
<b>Start date:</b>	30 March 2020
<b>Frequency:</b>	Weekly
<b>Survey URL:</b>	<a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.2795">http://dx.doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.2795</a>
<b>Results URL:</b>	<a href="http://cosmo.ku.dk/">http://cosmo.ku.dk/</a>
<b>Conducted by:</b>	University of Copenhagen
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### Key messages for Friday, 15 May 2020

Denmark started to decrease its lockdown measures. Participants report high but slightly decreasing adherence to the remaining behavioural recommendations. Closing of restaurants receives much less support than previously. Yet, there are several indicators that participants feel uncertain and worried about the novel situation. Fearful thinking about the disease increases compared to the last weeks. For the first time since end of March, perceived solidarity decreases.

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