

Fewer than 1 in 10 adults sleeping well during lockdown

29 March 2021



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Fewer than 1 in 10 (7.7%) people say they are currently getting 'very good' quality sleep during the COVID-19 lockdown. This has deteriorated by 39.4% as the pandemic has progressed, find UCL researchers as part of the COVID-19 Social Study.

The number of people who said their sleep quality was 'very poor' increased from autumn 2020 (5.41%) to the start of the New Year (10.1%), although this figure is now decreasing (so sleep quality has started to improve)

People with lower household incomes, those with a mental or physical health condition, people with lower levels of education, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds have reported higher levels of 'very poor' sleep quality. However, adults aged 60+, people who do not have a diagnosed [mental health condition](#), men, those of white ethnicity, and people not living with children have reported better quality sleep over the past year.

Over half (52.5%) of participants have already received at least one dose of the COVID-19 [vaccine](#), and vaccine hesitancy among participants

has decreased substantially since the autumn.

Specifically, a third (32.6%) who reported being 'very unlikely' to receive the vaccine last autumn, (so the most hesitant), have now already had at least one dose. Similarly, a fifth (21.6%) of this group—those who reported 'very unlikely' the autumn of 2020—now report being 'very likely' to have the vaccine by March 2021. Less than 1% of people who were 'very likely' to get the vaccine last autumn are now 'very unlikely' to do so.

Launched in the week before lockdown started, the ongoing UCL COVID-19 Social Study is funded by the Nuffield Foundation with additional support from Wellcome and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It is the UK's largest study into how adults are feeling about the lockdown, government advice and overall wellbeing and mental health with over 70,000 participants who have been followed across the last 52 weeks.

Lead author, Dr. Elise Paul (UCL Epidemiology & Health Care) said: "Our report shows that during the pandemic, many people have suffered from poor sleep quality. This could be due to a wide range of factors, such as disruption to routines and the changes in living circumstances that lockdown has caused. Stress is also likely to be a factor, especially as those from groups living in more stressful circumstances, such as people with lower household incomes and those with mental or physical health conditions, are reporting higher levels of poor quality sleep.

"The decline in vaccine hesitancy is good news, with the narrative around the success of the UK's vaccine rollout as well as its impact on the possibility of easing lockdown both potential reasons for this shift. Despite this, a not-insignificant proportion of the population are still expressing hesitations around receiving the vaccine, meaning public health messaging around it must be maintained and stepped up to ensure

uptake is as widespread as possible."

Provided by University College London

Less than a third (28.7%) of people are now reporting being stressed around catching or becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. A substantial (36.4%) decrease from around half of the population (45.1%) at the end of 2020 and the lowest it has been since the study began.

Over a quarter (28.7%) of people still report being worried about their finances, with over a third of adults of working age (18-29 years: 32.7% and 30-59 years: 34.7%) reporting financial concerns. Stress around unemployment and finances is higher among those living with children.

Cheryl Lloyd, Education Programme Head at the Nuffield Foundation said: "The COVID-19 Social Study continues to provide valuable, real-time insights into people's experiences of the pandemic on a broad range of topics, from the quality of sleep they are getting, to whether they intend to receive the vaccine. We are proud to be funding the team to continue tracking people's psychological and social well-being across the UK for the next year.

"As lockdown restrictions start to ease, monitoring levels of compliance, and understanding how people's experiences differ, particularly those most at risk of the adverse impacts of the pandemic remains a priority to help inform health, social and economic policies. "

The study team is also running the COVID-MINDS Network: an international network of over 140 longitudinal mental health from over 70 countries. Through the network, dozens of scientists and clinicians are coming together internationally to collate results from mental health studies running in countries around the world and compare findings. The initiative is supporting the launch of new mental health studies in other countries, to research whether actions taken in specific countries are helping to protect [mental health](#).

More information: COVID-19 Social Study:
www.covidsocialstudy.org/

APA citation: Fewer than 1 in 10 adults sleeping well during lockdown (2021, March 29) retrieved 1 June 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-03-adults-lockdown.html>

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