



Living Document I: Belgian mental health (care) data repository version 5

7/05/2021

Van Hoof, Elke¹; De Laet, Hannah¹; Resibois, Maxime², Gérard, Sylvie³, Dekeyser, Sarah⁴; Loix, Ellen¹; Philips, Evelien¹; Snoeck, Sylvia¹; Maratovna Safiullina, Zamira¹; De koker, Benedicte⁵; De Witte, Nico⁵; Lambotte, Deborah⁵; Cruyt, Ellen⁶; Van de Velde, Dominique⁶; Godderis, Lode⁷; Blavier, Adelaïde⁸; Van den Broeck, Kris⁹; Luminet, Olivier⁴; Van den Cruyce, Nele¹

1 Vrije Universiteit Brussel

2 CRÉSaM

3 Superior Health Council

4 UCLouvain

5 HOGENT

6 UGent

7 KU Leuven

8 ULiège

9 Uantwerpen

Contact : info.hgr-css@health.fgov.be

Fifth Version

Summary status until now:

We initially started with 169 studies in the Belgian Mental Health Data Repository (BMHDR). After applying the inclusion criteria described in version 3 (update 2) (which are: Belgian data, impact on mental health, non-intervention study, non-small data set study unless similar study with larger dataset available) 94 studies remained. We are continuously keeping track of new studies and since the last update 23 studies have been added bringing the total number of studies currently in the data repository to 114 studies. In the last update we analyzed the highest levels of evidence using an adapted version of the Oxford CEBM standard level of evidence and provided an overview of the different studies in those levels of evidence. The levels we are using are, ordered by importance: longitudinal studies, cross sectional panel studies representative of the population, cross sectional panel studies with a convenience sample, Delphi methods, surveys (one-shot questionnaires) representative of the population, surveys (one-shot questionnaires) with a convenience sample, small datasets, and qualitative research. The previous analysis showed clear evidence that covid-19 has a negative impact on mental health. Even though the general Belgian population seems to be quite resilient, certain groups are more at risk for the development of mental health problems. The development of these problems is subject to a complex interplay of different risk factors such as prior mental health disorders, low social support, marital status,...

This is the **fifth version** of the Belgian mental health (care) data repository of the Superior Health Council, commissioned by the Policy Coordination Working group on Mental Health. In this update, we will continue with the analysis by performing a systematic review of the data by focusing on the remaining levels of evidence not analyzed [in the previous version](#). These levels of evidence concern the one-shot (*i.e.*, which did not consist of several waves) surveys with population and convenience samples, qualitative data, and small datasets. The



rationale behind the different levels of evidence used and their definition can be found in [version 3](#) (second update) of the Belgian Mental Health Data Repository. First, we will provide a systematic analysis of the studies in the lowest levels of evidence. Second, a synopsis for each study in the lowest levels of evidence will be given.

ATTENTION:

If you yourself, have performed or are performing research on covid-19 and mental health in Belgium and are not yet in the data repository, please do feel free to fill in the Qualtrics for each of the research topics you are working on: [link to Qualtrics](#)

If you know of any additional research performed by other researchers, please do put us in contact with them and send their contact information to the Superior Health Council using the following email address: info.hgr-css@health.fgov.be

1. Studies within the lowest level of evidence

Not all studies currently in the Belgian mental health data repository have findings to report. The studies taken into account in the analysis are only the ones for which (1) results were available at the date of this update and for which (2) we received enough information from the authors. In the next update, all levels of evidence will be updated with additional studies and studies for which we received sufficient information. In this review we will focus on 18 studies in the four lowest levels of evidence, namely one-shot survey representative of the population (1), one shot survey convenience with a convenience sample (14), small data sets (1), and qualitative research (2).



level of evidence	author (alphabetical per type of evidence)	study	contact details
Survey one shot population	Hompes T., Foulon V. & Ceulemans M.	Mental health status of pregnant and breastfeeding women during the COVID-19 pandemic: A call for action	Michael.ceulemans@kuleuven.be
Survey one shot convenience	Baert S., Lippens L., Moens E., Sterkens P., & Weytjens J.	How do employees think the COVID-19 crisis will affect their careers?	Louis.Lippens@UGent.be
	Blekic, W., Wauthia, E., Kandana Arachchige, K. Lefebvre, L. & Rossignol, M.	Intolerance to Uncertainty Influences Self-Reported Psychological Distress due to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings from an Online Survey in Belgium.	wivine.blekic@umons.ac.be
	Crunelle, C. L., Vanderbruggen, N., Matthys, F., Van Laere, S., Zeeuws, D., Santermans, L. & Van den Ameerle, S.	Self-Reported Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Use during COVID-19 Lockdown Measures: Results from a Web-Based Survey	cleo.crunelle@gmail.com
	Cruyt, E., De Vriendt, P., De Letter, M., Vlerick, P., Calders, P., De Pauw, R., Oostra, K., Rodriguez-Bailón, M., Szmalec, A., Merchán-Baeza, J. A., Fernández-Solano, A. J., Vidaña-Moya, L. & Van de Velde, D.	Meaningful activities in times of Covid-19	dominique.vandevelde@ugent.be ; ellen.cruyt@ugent.be
	Damar, G., Blampain, S. & Madagac C.	The year 2020 of families in Wallonia	geraldine.damar@ucm.be
	De Pue, S., Gillebert, C., Dierckx, E., Vanderhasselt, M., De Raedt, R. & Van den Bussche, E.	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on wellbeing and cognitive functioning of older adults	sarah.depue@kuleuven.be
	Masciantonio, A., Bourguignon, D., Bouchat, P., Balty, M. & Rimé, B.	Don't put all social network sites in one basket: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and their relations with well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic	alexandra.masciantonio@univ-lorraine.fr
	Oomen, D., Nijhof, A. & Wiersema, R.	The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.	danna.oomen@ugent.be
	Roskam, I. & Mikolajczak, M.	The impact of lockdown on families and more specifically parents	isabelle.roskam@uclouvain.be
	Service Disability/UN Convention - Unia	COVID and human rights: Impact on handicapped people and their loved ones	info@unia.be , Marie-Ange.Vandecandelaere@unia.be
	Severin M., Vandegehuchte M., Hooyberg A., Everaert G., Raes F., Buysse A.	Effect of the Belgian coast on wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic	marine.severin@vliiz.be
	Stassart, C.	COVID-19 and children: emotional behavioral impact	cstassart@uliege.be
	Van Daele, T., Bernaerts, S., Van Assche, E., Willems, S., Belmont, A. & De Witte, N.A.J.	Use of online consultation technology by mental healthcare professionals.	tom.vandaele@thomasmore.be
	Van Praag L., Molenaar J., Loos J. & Theeten H.	Impact of covid 19 on vulnerable groups	Lore.VanPraag@Uantwerpen.be
Small data set	Chartier S., Delhalle M., Baiverlin A., & Blavier A.	Parental peritraumatic distress and feelings of parental competence in relation to COVID-19 lockdown measures: What is the impact on children's peritraumatic distress?	Adelaide.Blavier@ulg.ac.be
Qualitative research	Charles J. & Desguin S.	Aux cofins - Travail et foyer à l'heure du (dé)confinement	samuel.desguin@usaintlouis.be
	Kaelen S., van den Boogaard W., Pellicchia U., Spiers S., De Cramer C., Demaegd G., Fouqueray E., Van den Bergh R., Goublomme S., Decroo T., Quinet M., Van Hoof E. & Draguez B.	How to bring residents' psychosocial wellbeing to the heart of the fight against Covid19 in Belgian nursing homes—A qualitative study	sanne.kaelen@hotmail.com

2. Systematic analysis

2.1 One-shot survey: Population sample

There is currently only one study in the one-shot survey population level of evidence. This study pertains to the effects of Covid-19 on the mental health of pregnant and breastfeeding women. This study took place during the first lockdown. The researchers found an increased prevalence in depressive symptoms and anxiety for expectant and breastfeeding mothers.



2.2 One-shot survey: Convenience sample

In line with other levels, in this level of evidence, it was found that the general well-being decreased as when compared to before lockdown. It needs to be taken into account that all but one study (specifically identified) discussed in this paragraph pertain to the first lockdown in March-June. First, we will discuss the first lockdown studies and afterwards the study pertaining to the second lockdown that started in November.

First lockdown

In the general population, **lower mental health and lower resilience** were found. In one study 75% of the sample indicated an **increase in depression and anxiety symptoms** during the pandemic. In another study half of the population reported **mild to severe psychological distress**. Different **explaining factors** were identified including gender, having children, living space, marital status, engaging in meaningful activities and intolerance to uncertainty.

Moreover, in the general population an **increase in consuming alcohol and smoking cigarettes** was found, compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, no increase in cannabis use was observed. The main reasons for increase in consumption were feelings of boredom, lack of social contacts, loss of daily structure, reward after a hard-working day, loneliness, and conviviality.

Several studies also investigated the impact of Covid-19 on mental health in specific groups. The different groups that were identified were **specific age categories** (parents, children and elderly), the **employees**, and **precarious groups** (disabilities and dependencies). Since most of the time, only one study assessed one of these groups, it is difficult to draw general conclusions for each level of evidence. However, we can address their results in line with the ones pertaining to the already analyzed highest levels of evidence.

For about 30% to 36% of parents, **well-being increased** during the first lockdown because they were able to do things that they were not able to do before. However, 15% to 20% of parents reported an **increase in parental burnout**, depending on their perception of the impact of the health crisis and lockdown on their parenting. Moreover, a relationship was found between having more children being at home and an increase in alcohol consumption. For children, it was found that the most frequently reported difficulties were worry, agitation, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, nervousness, arguing, anger, frustration, boredom, irritability, behavioral problems, and laziness. Furthermore, parents mentioned that Covid-19 had an impact on their family well-being. **Family well-being, age, and social contacts** before and during the lockdown were found to be explaining factors of various emotional and behavioral changes observed in children. For the elderly, Covid-19 had a severe impact on their **mental health**. After a couple of weeks in lockdown a **significant decrease** was found in **well-being, activity level and sleep quality**.

Regarding work, employees attributed mostly **positive characteristics to teleworking** such as an increased efficiency and a lower risk of burnout. However, it was also found that about 20% of employees feared losing their job and some expressed concern that teleworking could **reduce their opportunities for promotion and could weaken the bond** with colleagues and employer. As for mental health care workers, they indicated having



positive experiences and a **high uptake of online consultations**. They did, however, have additional questions about the performance of online consultations. It was also found that being a health care worker is a **protective factor** against an increased alcohol consumption during lockdown compared to before lockdown.

For the studies concerning precarious groups, two studies looked into the effects of the lockdown on people with a disability. In general, it was found that individuals with a disability felt that their opinion was not considered in the measures taken. Another problem that arose was the **cancellation or cessation of care** due to the pandemic, which caused great psychological distress for the persons with disability. For individuals with autism spectrum disorders, it was found that these individuals **showed a greater increase in depression and anxiety symptoms** compared to the non-autism group.

Second lockdown

In contrast to results found for the first lockdown, during the second lockdown, parents indicated to be **more stressed, more tired and felt lonelier** when they had children under 18. Many parents expressed concerns about resuming their professional activities while their children remained in lockdown and no support from families or friends was allowed.

2.3 Small data set (<500 participants)

One criterion used to decide upon the level of evidence was the sample size of the studies. The studies with small datasets have thus been grouped into one level of evidence, no matter what their methodology was, in order to compare whether they **support findings found in the other levels of evidence**. At this point, this is the case for only one study, in which a **relationship between the children's and parent's peritraumatic stress** was found, with mothers being more affected than fathers by the lockdown. These findings support previously reported results of **(expectant) mothers having higher depressive and anxiety symptoms**. Similarly, well-being was also found to be an explaining factor for emotional and behavioral changes in children.

2.4 Qualitative Research

There are two qualitative studies in the current data repository on the impact of Covid-19 on mental health. Both studies concern data from the first lockdown. For nursing home residents, it was found that they experienced **more depressive, anxious, and frustrated feelings** as well as **decreased meaning and quality of life**. Staff of nursing homes also reported feeling unprepared to deal with the challenges of a lockdown. Another large-scale study investigated general well-being and the effects of lockdown on the working population. They found that a lot of people felt **deprived in different life areas**. They also observed that the most precarious employee groups (low income, atypical jobs, job seekers, students) have **lost more income** compared to other employee groups.

2.5 Conclusion from studies with lowest levels of evidence

Based on the analysis of the lowest levels of evidence, we can again conclude that **Covid-19 has a negative impact** on mental health. These findings corroborate the conclusions drawn from the studies with highest levels of evidence.



In the current analysis, different **explaining factors** that influence well-being were identified: gender, having children, living space, marital status, engaging in meaningful activities and intolerance to uncertainty. These explaining factors largely overlap with the explaining factors found in the highest levels of evidence. Females overall were found to experience more negative well-being. On the other hand, being married or living with a significant other and engaging in meaningful activities were identified as being protective factors against negative feelings.

In addition to these explaining factors influencing well-being, certain groups are also more at risk for the development of mental health problems. In the current analyses, the identified risk groups were individuals with a disability, new mothers, nursing home residents, and children. Although, for each of these groups there is currently only one study present in the Belgian mental health data repository, making it hard to draw conclusions, these findings do corroborate at-risk groups that were identified in the highest levels of evidence as well as the two advices published by the Superior health council mental health working group.

The Covid-19 pandemic also magnified pre-existing problems in multiple different areas. To name two examples, precarious employee groups tend to lose more income and individuals with a disability experience more problems in getting the care they need. This is partly due to the fear/worry about Covid-19 as well as the discontinuity of care.

Lastly, it is clear that the disappearance of certain aspects of a healthy lifestyle or healthy lifestyle structures have a negative impact on well-being. Furthermore, social cohesion also plays an important role for well-being. This social cohesion can pertain to being part of a group of friends, a family cohesion, or any other sense of belonging to a group. This is again in line with the analysis from the highest levels of evidence where it was found that the number of life areas affected negatively impacts well-being.

Overall, the findings of the lowest levels of evidence corroborate the ones from the highest levels of evidence. There are however still some gaps in the literature that need to be addressed.

3 Synopsis for each study

3.5 One shot survey: Population sample (1 study)

[Mental health status of pregnant and breastfeeding women during the COVID-19 pandemic: A call for action](#)

[Hompes, T., Foulon, V. & Ceulemans M.](#)

This aim of this study was to investigate the maternal health status after a few weeks of lockdown. Therefore, an online survey was conducted in April-May 2020. In total, 5866 women completed the survey (i.e. 2421 pregnant and 3445 breastfeeding women). Overall, almost half of the (expectant) mothers experienced depressive or anxious symptoms. The prevalence of self-reported major depressive symptoms in pregnancy (25.3%) and postpartum (23.6%) was explicitly higher compared to estimates obtained in Belgium prior to the pandemic. The results of the study further revealed



higher levels of generalized anxiety during the lockdown, with in total more than 40% of (expectant) mothers scoring ≥ 5 on the EDS subscale of anxiety. In addition, 14% met the criteria for high anxiety on the GAD-7 (≥ 10). In conclusion, our results point towards an increased likelihood of depressive symptoms and anxiety among (expectant) mothers during the Covid-19 lockdown, calling obstetricians upon action to safeguard perinatal mental health.

3.6 One shot survey: Convenience sample (14 studies)

[How do employees think the COVID-19 crisis will affect their careers?](#)

[Baert S., Lippens L., Moens E., Sterkens P., & Weytjens J.](#)

The goal of this study was to investigate the expected impact of the Covid-19 crisis on career outcomes and career aspirations. To this end, a survey was sent out to a relevant panel of Belgian employees in March, 2020. 3821 participants filled out the online survey. The researchers found that about 21% of employees fear losing their jobs due to the Covid-19 crisis and 14% are concerned that they will even lose their jobs in the near future. In addition, 26% expect to miss out on promotions that they would have received had the Covid-19 crisis not occurred. This fear of a negative impact is higher in vulnerable groups, such as migrants. In addition, we observe that many panel members believe they will look at the labour market differently and will have different work-related priorities in the future. In this respect, more than half of the panel members indicate that they have attached more importance to working conditions and work-life balance since the Covid-19 crisis.

[Intolerance to Uncertainty Influences Self-Reported Psychological Distress due to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings from an Online Survey in Belgium.](#)

[Blekic, W., Wauthia, E., Kandana Arachchige, K. Lefebvre, L. & Rossignol, M.](#)

This online survey study aimed to (1) measure self-reported distress in French-speaking Belgium after 6 weeks of strict application of lockdown and (2) explore the determinants of this distress by investigating a specific role of intolerance of uncertainty. To this aim, 548 participants completed a single online survey. Data collection began on the 27th of April 2020 and finished on the 4th of May 2020. The global Covid-19 Peritraumatic Distress Index score was of 33.41 and fifty-four percent of the sample reported mild to severe psychological distress. As hypothesized, psychological distress was only predicted by intolerance of uncertainty. Our results highlight the rapidity with which the containment situation caused psychological distress, and discuss intolerance to uncertainty as a predisposed personality trait as well as an inherent consequence of the pandemic situation.

[Self-Reported Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Use during COVID-19 Lockdown Measures: Results from a Web-Based Survey](#)

[Crunelle, C. L., Vanderbruggen, N., Matthys, F., Van Laere, S., Zeeuws, D., Santermans, L. & Van den Aemele, S.](#)

This web-based survey assessed changes in alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis consumption and was administered between April 9 and April 29, 2020. A total of 3,632 respondents completed the online survey. Overall, respondents reported consuming more alcohol and smoking more cigarettes than before the Covid-19 pandemic. No significant changes in the consumption of cannabis were noted. The odds of consuming more alcohol during the lockdown were associated with younger age, having



more children at home, nonhealthcare worker, and being technically unemployed related to Covid-19. The odds of smoking more cigarettes during the lockdown were associated with younger age, current living situation, lower education, and working situation related to Covid-19. Boredom, lack of social contacts, loss of daily structure, reward after a hard-working day, loneliness, and conviviality were the main reasons for consuming more of the various substances.

[Meaningful activities in times of Covid-19](#)

[Cruyt, E., De Vriendt, P., De Letter, M., Vlerick, P., Calders, P., De Pauw, R., Oostra, K., Rodriguez-Bailón, M., Szmalec, A., Merchán-Baeza, J. A., Fernández-Solano, A. J., Vidaña-Moya, L. & Van de Velde, D.](#)

This cross-sectional study took place during the first lockdown between April 24 and May 4, 2020 and was administered to 1781 participants. The spread of Covid-19 has affected people's daily lives and the lockdown may have led to a disruption of daily activities and a decrease of people's mental health. The aim of the study was to identify correlates of adults' mental health during the Covid-19 lockdown in Belgium and to assess the role of meaningful activities in particular. A cross-sectional web survey for assessing mental health, resilience, meaning in activities and demographics was conducted during the first Belgian lockdown between April 24 and May 4, 2020. The lockdown consisted of closing schools, not-essential shops and recreational settings, employees worked from home or were technically unemployed and it was forbidden to undertake social activities. Every adult who had access to the internet and lived in Belgium could participate. They were recruited online through social media and e-mails. Hierarchical linear regression was used to identify key correlates. The findings from the survey suggest that sociodemographic factors, resilience, and meaning in activities were associated with reduced mental health. The extent of performing meaningful activities during the Covid-19 lockdown in Belgium is positively related to adults' mental health.

[L'année 2020 des familles wallonnes](#)

[Damar, G., Blampain, S. & Madague C.](#)

This aim of this cross-sectional study was to evaluate how Walloon-based families with children under 18 were feeling after months of Covid-19 related restrictions and to get an objective look at the consequences on mental health and a sense of their intentions about the future. A survey was conducted among 2670 participants on November 30, 2020. Results showed that 3 in 4 parents reported they are tired at the end of 2020 and 62% are stressed. Almost one in five parents feel lonely. Regarding children, parents say that 44% of them are stressed, 33% are tired, 31% cannot take a hold of the situation and 16% are calm. These figures are less alarming than those of the parents but still remain quite negative. 60% of families will keep a negative memory of this year, 78% of Walloon families declare that they will respect the sanitary measures for the end of year celebrations, more than one in three families already thinks of not vaccinating anyone when the vaccine will be available, while four in ten don't know. Only one in ten families say that the whole family will be vaccinated, and one in ten families also thinks of vaccinating those at risk only. In conclusion, the study has shown that the impact of the social restrictions has a massive impact on the well-being of Walloon families with children under 18.

[The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on wellbeing and cognitive functioning of older adults](#)

[De Pue, S., Gillebert, C., Dierckx, E., Vanderhasselt, M., De Raedt, R. & Van den Bussche, E.](#)

Covid-19 took a heavy toll on older adults. Using an one-time online survey, this study established the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on adults aged 65 years or older, and which factors moderate this



impact. A total of 640 people participated in the survey, conducted between May 19 and June 22, 2020. Participants reported a significant decrease in activity level, sleep quality and well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic. Depression was strongly related to reported declines in activity level, sleep quality, well-being and cognitive functioning. Our study shows that the Covid-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the mental health of older adults. This implies that this group at risk requires attention of governments and healthcare.

[Don't put all social network sites in one basket: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and their relations with well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
[Masciantonio, A., Bourguignon, D., Bouchat, P., Balty, M. & Rimé, B.](#)

This research examined the relationships between well-being and using various SNSs—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok—during the Covid-19 pandemic, more specific between April 7 and April 16, 2020. Social support and upward social comparison were considered. 1004 persons completed a one-time online survey during the quarantine measures. Results showed that passive usage of Facebook is negatively related to well-being through upward social comparison, whereas active usage of Instagram is positively related to satisfaction with life and negative affect through social support. Furthermore, active usage of Twitter was positively related to satisfaction with life through social support; while passive usage was negatively related to upward social comparison, which, in turn, was associated with more negative affect. Finally, TikTok use was not associated with well-being. Results are discussed in line with SNSs' architectures and users' motivations.

[The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.](#)
[Oomen, D., Nijhof, A. & Wiersema, R.](#)

This study, collecting quantitative and qualitative survey data from 1044 adults with and without autism across three European countries (BE, NL & U.K.), took place between April 3 and May 7, 2020. The study found an increase in depression and anxiety symptoms in response to the pandemic for both the non- autism and the autism group, which was greater for adults with autism. Furthermore, adults with autism showed a greater increase in worries about their pets, work, getting medication and food, and their own safety/security. They felt more relieved from social stress, yet experienced the loss of social contact as difficult. Adults with autism also felt more stressed about the loss of routines. Pleasant changes noted by adults with autism were the increase in solidarity and reduced sensory and social overload. Adults with autism frequently reported problems with cancellation of guidance due to the pandemic and expressed their wish for (more) autism-specific information and advice.

[L'impact du confinement sur les familles et les parents en particulier](#)
[Roskam, I. & Mikolajczak, M.](#)

"What is the effect of the coronavirus crisis and lockdown on parents?" To answer this question, the UCLouvain Institute for Research in Psychological Sciences surveyed 1212 French-speaking Belgian parents (90% mothers) between March and May 2020.

Our results show that the prevalence of parental burn-out (PB) has not changed compared to before the health crisis. The health crisis and the lockdown have therefore not had a deleterious impact on all parents. A closer look at these data shows that for some parents the health crisis and lockdown was an opportunity (30% of fathers; 36% of mothers). For these parents, the level of PB has decreased:



there is less mental burden parents took the opportunity to do things they had wanted to do for a long time and seized the chance to spend more quality time with their children since they had to "run around" less, etc. Conversely, the health crisis and lockdown have caused more stress for some parents (15% of fathers; 20% of mothers). For the latter, the symptoms of PB increased.

In the context of lockdown, many parents are worried about resuming their professional activities (and therefore also about the workload) while most children remain locked down and support from the family or friends remains forbidden. What really influences the level of PB and the resulting child abuse is the parents' perception of the impact of the health crisis and lockdown on their parenting. These results give meaning to the psychological support/guidance of parents in a lockdown situation, with a view to prevention.

[COVID et droits humains : impact sur les personnes handicapées et leurs proches Service Disability/UN Convention - Unia](#)

In order to investigate the impact of Covid-19 on persons with a disability, 865 participants were recruited and filled in an online survey from April 28 to June 1, 2020. People participated in the online survey a single time. Results showed that persons with disabilities and their families did not feel taken into account or heard in the decision-making process related to the health crisis. During the first lockdown, persons with disabilities testified about their sometimes dramatic situation and a general feeling of being abandoned. The cessation of care, therapy, support and domestic help caused great psychological distress, and a regression or worsening of their state of health. They also shared their daily difficulties in doing their shopping, getting around, going out, studying, working.

[Effect of the Belgian coast on wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic Severin M., Vandegehuchte M., Hooyberg A., Everaert G., Raes F., Buysse A.](#)

This study investigated whether access and visits to the coast were positively associated with well-being by using a survey. During the first-wave lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic in Belgium, access to the coast was restricted due to restraint in circulation. The emotions of awe and nostalgia were studied as potential mediators between coastal visits and well-being. A total of 687 Flemish adults took part in an online survey that was launched end of April until beginning of June 2020. After controlling for covariates, results showed that access to the coast, but not visit frequency, was positively associated with well-being. More specifically, coastal residents reported less boredom and worry, and more happiness than inland residents. Awe and nostalgia were not associated with coastal visits, but awe was negatively correlated with boredom. The study suggests a potential buffer effect of residential proximity to the coast against negative psychological consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting the notion that the coast has a positive impact on well-being.

[COVID-19 and children: emotional et behavioral impact Stassart, C.](#)

This exploratory study assessed parents' perceptions of the emotional and behavioral impacts of the COVID-19 quarantine on their children. The total sample included 749 children, aged 4 to 13 years old (353 girls, 396 boys) and 524 parents took part. The emotional and behavioral changes observed during the quarantine, family coexistence, the impact of Covid-19 on family well-being, and the frequency of social contacts before and during the quarantine were investigated. The results show that the most frequently reported difficulties were worry, agitation, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, nervousness, arguing, anger, frustration, boredom, irritability, behavioral problems, and laziness.



Family coexistence declined significantly during the quarantine, and parents mentioned that COVID-19 had an impact on family well-being. Various ordinal logistic regressions showed that family coexistence during quarantine, children's nervousness due to COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on family well-being, age, and social contacts before and during the quarantine seemed to explain the various emotional and behavioral changes observed in children during the quarantine.

[Use of online consultation technology by mental healthcare professionals.](#)

[Van Daele, T., Bernaerts, S., Van Assche, E., Willems, S., Belmont, A. & De Witte, N.A.J.](#)

This study investigated the uptake of online consultations provided by mental health professionals during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic from March 18 to May 5, 2020, with a specific focus on professionals' motivations, perceived barriers, and concerns regarding online consultations. An online survey on the use of online consultations was set up in March 2020. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) guided the deductive qualitative analysis of the results.

In total, 2,082 mental health professionals from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden were included. The results showed a high uptake of online consultations during the Covid-19 pandemic but limited previous training on this topic undergone by mental health professionals. Most professionals had positive experiences with online consultations, but questions about the performance of online consultations in a mental health context and practical considerations appear to be major barriers that hinder implementation.

[Impact of covid 19 on vulnerable groups](#)

[Van Praag L., Molenaar J., Loos J. & Theeten H.](#)

This study is still in the preparation stages and so far, no data has been collected. The COVINFORM project will draw upon intersectionality theory and complex systems analysis in an interdisciplinary critique of Covid-19 responses on the levels of government, public health, community, and information and communications. The project will conduct research on different levels: Within 15 target countries, documentary sources on the national level and in at least one local community per country will be analyzed and in 10 target communities, primary empirical research will be conducted, utilizing both classical and innovative quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g. visual ethnography, participatory ethnography, and automated analysis of short video testimonials). Promising practices will be evaluated in target communities through case studies spanning diverse disciplines (social epidemiology, the economics of unpaid labour, the sociology of migration, etc.) and vulnerable populations (Covid-19 patients, precarious families, migrating health care workers, etc.). The project will culminate in the development of an online portal and visual toolkit for stakeholders in government, public health, and civil society integrating data streams, indices and indicators, maps, models, primary research and case study findings, empirically grounded policy guidance, and creative assessment tools.

3.7 Small data set sample (1 studies)

[Parental peritraumatic distress and feelings of parental competence in relation to COVID-19 lockdown measures: What is the impact on children's peritraumatic distress?](#)

[Chartier S., Delhalle M., Baiverlin A., & Blavier A.](#)



The goal of this study was to research what the impact of the lockdown was on parents' and children's peritraumatic stress. To this end, the researchers sent out a questionnaire that was filled out by 287 parents and 161 children between the ages of 8 and 18 during the months of May, June, July, and August. The results of our study indicated that there is a significant association between the parents' and the children's peritraumatic stress. We also found a significant relationship between the sense of parental competence and the trauma suffered as a result of the lockdown. We also showed that people who usually felt more stressed have lower peritraumatic distress. In addition, the data indicated that mothers were more affected than fathers by the lockdown, whereas there was no difference between girls and boys in the sample of children. The peritraumatic feelings appeared to be more related to the difficulty of combining teleworking with the daily management of children than to the fear of the virus itself. All these results bear witness to the differences in the experience of lockdown between mothers and fathers, and the impact on their children's well-being.

[Impact of covid 19 on vulnerable groups](#)

[Van Praag L., Molenaar J., Loos J. & Theeten H.](#)

This study is still in the preparation stages and so far, no data has been collected. The COVINFORM project will draw upon intersectionality theory and complex systems analysis in an interdisciplinary critique of Covid-19 responses on the levels of government, public health, community, and information and communications. The project will conduct research on different levels: Within 15 target countries, documentary sources on the national level and in at least one local community per country will be analyzed and in 10 target communities, primary empirical research will be conducted, utilizing both classical and innovative quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g., visual ethnography, participatory ethnography, and automated analysis of short video testimonials). Promising practices will be evaluated in target communities through case studies spanning diverse disciplines (social epidemiology, the economics of unpaid labour, the sociology of migration, etc.) and vulnerable populations (Covid-19 patients, precarious families, migrating health care workers, etc.). The project will culminate in the development of an online portal and visual toolkit for stakeholders in government, public health, and civil society integrating data streams, indices and indicators, maps, models, primary research and case study findings, empirically grounded policy guidance, and creative assessment tools.

3.8 Qualitative Research (2 studies)

[Aux cofins - Travail et foyer à l'heure du \(dé\)confinement](#)

[Charles J. & Desguin S.](#)

An online questionnaire was sent via social media and newsletters to the French-speaking Belgian population to be completed between May 18 and May 31, 2020. The aim of the study was threefold: 1) To analyze the impact of the lockdown on the experience of work, 2) To identify how these measures impact on non-work life 3) To support individual reflections and contribute to public debate. 1450 people filled in the questionnaire (mean age 47 years).

Results showed that people, brutally confined to their homes from 18 March, were drawn into a series of unprecedented experiences; withdrawal from daily life and home, new consumption habits, almost intimidating freedom, and boredom that seems to increase. The lockdown brings its share of suffering (distance from loved ones, fear and loss of reference points, etc.) and its share of benefits (regained time, perspective on life, more focus on family...). Deprivation was experienced and it felt like to step back from the previous life, which was unsatisfactory in various ways.



Focusing on the “neglected groups” in the general working population, 32% of respondents claim to have lost part of their income, for an average amount of € 665 for the duration of the lockdown. 5% of the sample said they had reduced their expenses, for an average amount of € 434. Atypical workers (temporary, freelance, self-employed) declare more than double (73% against 32% in the general population) to have lost income, and 15 times more likely to declare not to have had any income at all during the lockdown period. People with a net monthly income of less than € 1,500 lose in 32% of cases, or almost 1.5 times more frequently than people with incomes above € 2,500. Changes in working conditions give rise to new difficulties for 93% of respondents. For people teleworking (62% of workers before lockdown), the lack of social contact appears to be mainly problematic (first with colleagues, then with customers and users). For those who have continued to work in their usual place of work (25% of workers before lockdown), fatigue and worries for the future predominate.

The measures taken by the government to slow down the spread of the Covid-19 virus have left some of the population in poverty and exposed the boundaries of our social protection system as a safety net. Social law measures, in particular the collective solidarity system, have largely demonstrated their role as a shock absorber and pacification by allowing many workers not to bear the brunt of the effects of Covid-19, even if it has proved insufficient by places. The protections that social law will not have been able to ensure during confinement are those intended for those who were previously neglected by our social protection system: women, atypical workers, creators, volunteer workers, beneficiaries, social assistance, single-parent families ...

They observe that the populations who were already the most precarious are more "losers": low income, atypical jobs, job seekers, students, etc. We are thus witnessing a strengthening of income inequalities in the post-Covid society.

[How to bring residents' psychosocial wellbeing to the heart of the fight against Covid19 in Belgian nursing homes—A qualitative study:](#)

[Kaelen S., van den Boogaard W., Pellecchia U., Spiers S., De Cramer C., Demaegd G., Fouqueray E., Van den Bergh R., Goublomme S., Decroo T., Quinet M., Van Hoof E. & Draguez B.](#)

This qualitative study aimed to better understand the psychosocial and mental needs of nursing home residents in times of Covid-19 and how staff could respond accordingly. The study was conducted in June, 2020 within the first wave and lockdown phase in Belgium. Eight focus groups with direct caring staff and 56 in-depth interviews with residents were conducted in eight NHs in Brussels. Thematic content analyses showed that NH residents experienced losses of freedom, social life, autonomy, and recreational activities that deprived them of their basic psychological needs. This had a massive impact on their mental well-being expressed in feeling depressed, anxious, and frustrated as well as decreased meaning and quality of life. Staff felt unprepared for the challenges posed by the pandemic; lacking guidelines, personal protective equipment and clarity around organization of care. They were confronted with professional and ethical dilemmas, feeling ‘trapped’ between IPC and the residents’ well-being. They witnessed the detrimental effects of the measures imposed on their residents.

Attention:

If you yourself, have performed or are performing research on covid-19 and mental health in Belgium and are not yet in the data repository, please do feel free to fill in the Qualtrics for each of the research topics you are working on: [link to Qualtrics](#)



If you know of any additional research performed by other researchers, please do put us in contact with them and send their contact information to the Superior Health Council using the following email address: info.hgr-css@health.fgov.be

DISCLAIMER:

This Belgian mental health data repository is part of the advice of the workgroup 'mental health & covid-19' of the Superior Health Council. It was created on the demand of the Minister of Health as well as the Policy Coordination Working group in order to provide insight of the impact of the pandemic on the Belgian mental health.

Do also take a look at the already published advices by the group:

- Advice nr 9610 Psychosocial care during the Covid-19 pandemic: revision 2021
<https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/node/38685>
- Advice nr 9589 - Mental health and covid-19
https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/20200520_shc-9589_covid-19_and_mental_health_vweb_0.pdf

Scientific Acknowledgements and personal contributions:

Elke Van Hoof was involved in the creation of the Belgian Mental Health Data Repository, the research question, the research design & the conceptualization, identified studies and data collection, data cleaning, performed all analyses, interpreted the obtained data and was responsible for supervision of the team. She reviewed and edited all updates included in this data repository.

Nele Van den Cruyce was involved in the research design & the conceptualization, the recruitment of studies and data collection, cross-checking, analyses, interpretation, supervision and drafting of all updates in this data repository.

Hannah de Laet was involved in the research design & the conceptualization, the recruitment of studies and data collection, cross-checking, cleaning, analyses, interpretation, drafting of all updates in this data repository.

Olivier Luminet was involved in the conceptualization, data interpretation, supervision and review editing of all updates in this data repository.

Maxime Resibois involved in the creation of the Belgian Mental Health Data Repository, the research question, the research design & the conceptualization, additional studies identification and data collection, cross-checking, data cleaning and interpretation, supervision and review editing of all updates in this data repository.



Sylvie Gerard was involved in research design & the conceptualization, contacting participants, data cleaning, analyses and provided the scientific secretariat for the data repository group.

Evelien Phillips and Sylvia Snoeck were involved data collection, data cleaning and analyses of data and technical support for the updates in this data repository.

Dekeyser, Sarah and Zamira Maratovna Safiullina were involved in data collection and data cleaning and technical support for all the updates in this data repository.

De Koker, Benedicte; De witte, Nicco and Lambotte, Deborah were involved in collecting data and data cleaning in update 4.

Van den Broeck, Kris was involved in collecting data and data cleaning and the review of update 4 and next.

Cruyt, Ellen; Van de Velde Dominique were involved in the qualitative data analysis in update 4.

Blavier, Adelaïde and Godderis, Lode were involved in the review of update 4 and next.



Non-responderslist:

The authors in the list below have been contacted at least three times but we have not yet received a response. Please contact info.hgr-css@health.fgov.be if you have more information about these studies.

authors	title
Mathys F.	Psygiitaal: impact of teleconsultations during COVID-19 on professionals (psy and psychiatrists) and patients
Nyssen, A.S., Bilsen, G., & Steenhout, I.	ACADE-COVID: Work and welfare among academic staff within the university
Nyssen, A.S., Bilsen, G., & Steenhout, I.	ACADMIN-COVID: Work and welfare among administrative and technical staff within the University
Cauberghe V. , Van Wesenbeeck I., De Jans S., Hudders L., and Ponnet K.	How Adolescents Use Social Media to Cope with Feelings of Loneliness and Anxiety During COVID-19 Lockdown
Vlaeyen, J, D'Agostini, M, Carra, G, & Walentynowicz, M	Exploratory study on the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on the well-being, work, and work-related social interactions of PhD Students in Belgium
Scheveneels S.	Covid and the sec. wave
Eerdekens A.	COVID and Birth
Thunus S, Nicaise P, Mahieu C, Darcis C, De Winter M, & Schoenaers F.	Mes réunions au virtuel.
Schaefer A, Su TT, Douilliez C, Shee D, Kei CJ.	Condition socio-économique, cognition et santé pendant la crise COVID-19
Duprez V. , Vansteenkiste, M. Vermote B., Verhaeghe R. , Eeckloo K., Van Hecke A., Malfait S.	Coronacrisis legt motivatie van studenten verpleegkunde voor de job sneller dan ooit bloot
Engels, N., & Strijbos, J.	Welbevinden op school
Vandekerckhove, M.	Hoe beïnvloedt de coronacrisis ons existentieel welbevinden?
Vlaeyen, J, D'Agostini, M, Carra, G, & Walentynowicz, M	Exploratory study on the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on the well-being, work, and work-related social interactions of PhD Students in Belgium
Fraser, S., Lagacé, M., Bongué, B., Ndeye, N., Guyot, J., Bechard, L., Garcia, L., Taler, V., Adam, S., Beaulieu, M., Bergeron, C. D., Boudjemadi, V., Desmette, D., Donizzetti, A. R., Éthier, S., Garon, S., Gillis, M., Levasseur, M., Lortie-Lussier, M., ... Wittich, W.	Ageism and COVID-19: What does our society's response say about us?