

40% of UK has increased psychological distress as a result of pandemic

Submitted by: BlueSky Education

Tuesday, 28 September 2021

Two fifths of the UK have experienced severely elevated levels of psychological distress as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns, according to new research by the University of Cologne.

The study, conducted by Professor Lea Ellwardt and her co-author Patrick Präg, examined psychological distress during the pandemic in the UK and found that the number experiencing it rose significantly.

Results from the study reveal that 24 percent of the population had repeatedly increased distress during the three lockdowns, 15 percent reported constantly increased distress, and 8 percent reported temporary distress.

The research also revealed that long-term psychological distress was highest among younger people, women, people living without a partner, those who've had no work or lost income, and those with previous health conditions or COVID-19 symptoms.

"The unparalleled shock of the pandemic has provoked a natural stress for entire societies. Individuals who fail to buffer the long-term exposure of distress are vulnerable to a variety of negative health outcomes, including poor physical health, morbidity and mortality," says Professor Ellwardt.

For this reason, the researcher says that reducing stress should be key in policymaking aiming to safeguard public health, and even more so during repeated lockdowns.

The research was published in the journal Scientific Reports.

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For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak to Professor Ellwardt, contact Katie Hurley at BlueSky Education on khurley@bluesky-pr.com or call +44 (0) 1582 790708.