

Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Families: An Applied Developmental Science Study

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Ongoing project

- An exhaustive Research Synthesis and Review of peer-reviewed evidence on the multiple collateral effects of COVID on Children and families (Globally but with Canadian-relevance)
- Methodology: literature search through Carleton's Library OMNI tool including simultaneous search through all major engines: Web of Science, PubMed, PsychLit, ERIC, Ulrichweb, and more.
- Context: Compiling a detailed report of what we know given the best evidence available
- Supplementary evidence from grey literature and other sources
- Acknowledgment: Assistance of students in the NICER lab and Theoretical Advances in Developmental Science 3rd year course

Results

- There exists a literature of about an estimated 100 high quality peer-reviewed papers which may provide useful and valid information
- So far I have examined 70 of them
- Findings can be grouped in 3 (sometimes overlapping) Areas:
 - Family dynamics & Stress**
 - Children's Mental Health**
 - Nutrition, Physical Activity & Media**

Stress on parent-child relationships

- Homeschooling
 - Parents feeling responsible of their child's homeschooling
 - Feeling overwhelmed
- Parental Careers
- Creating financial stress from taking leave, quitting, or reducing hours since their children are now home.
- Lack external support.
 - Needing to bring their children to work with them.
 - 1 out of 3 parents admitted to leaving their child unsupervised at home for a short period of time.
- Protective factors and positive influence on family dynamics

Unpaid work during the quarantine

Reconfiguration of family/work dynamics

- Collective family efficacy self-report
 - Family domestic work more equal
 - Females expected to be responsible for childcare
- Reconfiguration still does not benefit women's situation
 - Women less likely to have a job they can perform from home
 - 15h more/ week of unpaid domestic labour
 - More likely to lose their jobs or quit
 - Risk of increased gender gap (increased poverty and divorces)

Mental Health in young, middle and adolescent children: Main sources of vulnerability vary by developmental period

- ASD, Special Education Needs, & Disability
- Domestic Violence
- Lack of socialization
- Isolation/ Virtual Learning
- Youth Living in Poverty
- Child Awareness and Media Exposure
- Use of Social Media as a coping mechanism

- Changes due to school closure

- Main outcome is increase in Anxiety and Depression

Physical activity, Nutrition and Media

- Changes in play behaviours, decreased active play vs increased screen time
- Increase of sedentary behaviours and sleeping patterns among children and families & changes in physical activity settings (parks to streets)
- Decrease of play behaviours associated with depression, anxiety and cognitive impairment
- Overeating to cope during the Pandemic
- Increased Fast Food Consumption
- Increased risks of obesity and overweight

Three useful keys of interpretation

- Central role of *mesosystem* (after ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner): services, support systems and school influence individuals within family and their reciprocal interactions/relationships
- Change and adaptation (positive role of short-term stress and detrimental effect of long-term stress)
- Intersectionality of aspects of identity such as race, socioeconomic status, as well as pre-existing systemic inequalities

Family Dynamics & Parental Stress

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