

Women are more concerned about COVID-19 than men, study finds

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U.S. Adults		DEMOCRATS					INDEPENDENTS					REPUBLICANS				
		MALE	FEMALE	GAP (F-M), % points	Sig	ChiSq	MALE	FEMALE	GAP (F-M), % points	Sig	ChiSq	MALE	FEMALE	GAP (F-M), % points	Sig	ChiSq
QUESTION #1: Which of these do you think is better advice right now for people who do not have symptoms of coronavirus and are otherwise healthy?																
N=15,145	To stay home as much as possible to avoid contracting or spreading the coronavirus	94%	95%	1%			59%	70%	11%	*		28%	35%	8%	*	
	To lead their normal lives as much as possible and avoid interruptions to work and business	6%	5%	-1%		0.057	41%	30%	-11%	*	0.000	73%	65%	-8%	*	0.000
QUESTION #2: If there were no government restrictions and people were able to decide for themselves about being out in public, how soon would you return to your normal day-to-day activities?																
N=15,096	Right now	7%	4%	-2%	*		36%	28%	-8%	*		69%	55%	-14%	*	
	After the number of new cases in your state declines significantly	36%	32%	-5%	*		32%	26%	-6%	*		20%	27%	7%	*	
	After there are no new cases in your state for a period of time	37%	44%	7%	*	0.000	21%	34%	13%	*	0.000	9%	14%	5%	*	0.000
	After a coronavirus vaccine is developed	20%	21%	0%			11%	12%	1%			2%	4%	2%	*	
QUESTION #3: How worried are you that you will get the coronavirus (COVID-19)?																
N=15,188	Not worried at all	4.4%	3.5%	-1%	*		23%	14%	-9%	*		37%	25%	-12%	*	
	Not too worried	29%	27%	-2%			35%	30%	-5%	*		46%	47%	1%		
	Somewhat worried	55%	54%	-2%		0.000	35%	47%	13%	*	0.000	15%	24%	10%	*	
	Very worried	11%	15%	4%	*		8%	8%	0%			2%	3%	1%	*	

* indicates differences between women and men that are significant at .05 or better.

COVID Views by Sex and Party Identification (U.S. Adults). (Table 2 from the study). Credit: Table provided by Deborah Jordan Brooks and Lydia Saad.

A Dartmouth-Gallup study finds that women are more concerned about COVID-19 than men, a difference that transcends party lines. This female perspective towards the pandemic may be overlooked due to the underrepresentation of women in the workplace that is compounded by an underrepresentation in politics, creating what the researchers refer to as a representational "double whammy" effect. The study's findings are published in *Politics & Gender*.

"Men are less likely to favor precautions for COVID-19 than [women](#), basically across the board," said co-author Deborah Jordan Brooks, an associate professor of government at Dartmouth. "We find that substantial differences exist among male and female Republicans, Independents, and Democrats, and among workplace leaders and rank-and-file workers."

Brooks adds, "The positioning of many high-profile Republicans, including President Trump, regarding a minimal need for precautions regarding COVID-19 does not match up with the substantially more cautious COVID-related preferences of women. In light of President Trump's recent COVID-19 diagnosis and its spread throughout White House staff, our findings imply that the heightened focus on the coronavirus in the final weeks of the campaign has the potential to put the Republican Party at a further disadvantage with female voters."

The study was based on a nationally, representative online survey conducted by Gallup from May 18 to June 14, 2020 on questions relating to COVID-19 concerns, individual preferences and workplace structure. (Confirmatory results from more recent surveys on many of these measures will be posted by the co-authors on the Gallup website later today, Oct. 7). The researchers sought out to examine how views towards COVID-19 may vary by gender, as well as by partisanship and an individual's role in the workplace (worker vs. workplace leader).

U.S. Adults		MALE	FEMALE	GAP (F-M), % points	Sig	ChiSq
QUESTION #1: Which of these do you think is better advice right now for people who do not have symptoms of coronavirus and are otherwise healthy?						
N=15,145	To stay home as much as possible to avoid contracting or spreading the coronavirus	61%	72%	12%	*	0.000
	To lead their normal lives as much as possible and avoid interruptions to work and business	40%	28%	-12%	*	
QUESTION #2: If there were no government restrictions and people were able to decide for themselves about being out in public, how soon would you return to your normal day-to-day activities?						
N=15,096	Right now	37%	24%	-13%	*	0.000
	After the number of new cases in your state declines significantly	30%	29%	-1%		
	After there are no new cases in your state for a period of time	22%	33%	11%	*	
	After a coronavirus vaccine is developed	11%	14%	3%	*	
QUESTION #3: How worried are you that you will get the coronavirus (COVID-19)?						
N=15,188	Not worried at all	21%	12%	-9%	*	0.000
	Not too worried	36%	34%	-3%	*	
	Somewhat worried	35%	44%	9%	*	
	Very worried	7%	10%	3%	*	

* indicates differences between women and men that are significant at .05 or better.

COVID-19 Views and Sex (U.S. Adults). (Table 1 from the study). Credit: Table provided by Deborah Jordan Brooks and Lydia Saad.

Women vs. Men on COVID-19 Overall

The results illustrate that women have a substantially greater concern for COVID-19 than men. One of the survey questions asked whether it was

better advice for people without symptoms who are otherwise healthy to stay home as much as possible to avoid contracting or spreading the coronavirus, or lead normal lives as much as possible to avoid interruptions to work and business. The findings show that 28 percent of women thought it was better to lead normal lives versus staying at home, as compared to 40 percent of men.

When asked how soon respondents would return to normal day-to-day activities if there were no government restrictions, 37 percent of men at the time of the study answered "right now," as compared to just 24 percent of women.

These findings that men perceive COVID-19 as less of a risk seem particularly notable in light of the fact that medical research indicates that men are significantly more likely to die from the coronavirus than women.

Employed U.S. Adults	Workers					Workplace Leaders					
	MALE	FEMALE	GAP (F - M)	Sig	ChiSq	MALE	FEMALE	GAP (F - M)	Sig	ChiSq	
QUESTION #1: How concerned are you about being exposed to coronavirus at your place of work?											
N=7,289 (Male leaders = 314, Female Leaders = 395)	Very concerned	12%	19%	8%	*	0.000	7%	11%	5%	*	0.000
	Moderately concerned	28%	35%	7%	*		32%	39%	7%	*	
	Not too concerned	33%	26%	-7%	*		35%	31%	-4%	*	
	Not concerned at all	28%	20%	-7%	*		27%	19%	-8%	*	
QUESTION #2: I can now return to work safely											
N=6,571 (Male leaders = 847, Female Leaders = 380)	1 - Strongly Disagree (i.e. very unsafe)	13%	30%	17%	*	0.000	11%	23%	11%	*	0.000
	2	16%	18%	3%	*		10%	10%	0%	*	
	3	19%	20%	1%	*		18%	25%	7%	*	
	4	18%	15%	-3%	*		18%	16%	-2%	*	
	5 - Strongly Agree (i.e. very safe)	34%	17%	-17%	*		43%	26%	-17%	*	
QUESTION #3: How long do you think the level of disruption occurring to travel, school, work and public events in the U.S. will continue before it starts to improve?											
N=7,291 (Male leaders = 315, Female Leaders = 396)	A few more weeks	20%	12%	-8%	*	0.000	22%	10%	-12%	*	0.000
	A few more months	31%	26%	-5%	*		28%	29%	1%	*	
	For the rest of this year	30%	38%	8%	*		34%	30%	-5%	*	
	Longer than this year	20%	24%	5%	*		16%	31%	15%	*	
QUESTION #4: Once restrictions on businesses and school closures are lifted, if your employer left it up to you, would you prefer to (return to working at office vs. work remotely; follow up on "work remotely" asks preference vs. Covid)											
N=3,447 (Male leaders = 458, Female Leaders = 229)	Return to working at your office or workplace as much as previously did	38%	26%	-12%	*	0.000	53%	43%	-11%	*	0.033
	Work remotely as much as possible as preference	39%	34%	-5%	*		29%	32%	3%	*	
	Work remotely as much as possible due to Covid	23%	39%	17%	*		18%	26%	8%	*	

* indicates gender differences that are significant at .05 or better.

COVID-19 Views for Workers vs Workplace Leaders (Employed U.S. Adults). (Table 3 from the study). Credit: Table provided by Deborah Jordan Brooks and Lydia Saad.

Gender Differences by Party

While [Democrats tend to view COVID-19 as a greater public health risk](#) than Republicans, and women are more likely to be Democrats than men, this study shows that the gender findings go well beyond that. The findings show that women are more concerned and cautious about

COVID-19 than their male co-partisans regardless of the party in question.

For example, if there were no government restrictions on being out in public, 69 percent of Republican men would resume regular activities immediately, versus 55 percent of Republican women (the same is true for 36 percent of independent men and 28 percent of independent women, and 7 percent of Democratic men versus 4 percent of Democratic women). Similarly, 37 percent of Republican men reported being "not worried at all" about contracting the coronavirus, versus just 25 percent of Republican women, with significant differences observed for independents and Democrats, as well. (See Table at the end of this release).

Gender Differences Among Workers & Workplace Leaders

The results also show that female workers are more worried about contracting COVID-19 at work and are significantly more worried about returning to work safely due to the pandemic than male workers. Female workers also think that the COVID-19 disruption will last longer than a year and indicated that they would prefer to work remotely, if employers were to leave the decision up to them. As the co-authors state, "male workers are far more bullish about returning to work life as usual than are their female colleagues, and similarly-gender patterns exist among workplace leaders."

The workplace in the U.S. may not reflect or even consider these distinct, female preferences towards COVID-19, since women are severely underrepresented at the highest leadership positions in healthcare, education and other fields. For example, the researchers point out how "only 3 percent of healthcare CEOs and medical divisions

chiefs are women" while women account for 80 percent of healthcare workers.

Implications for Party Leadership

Brooks points out that the study's findings on [workplace](#) decision-making and political preferences regarding the coronavirus might be more related than they initially appear. "Many female leaders in the Democratic Party, including Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), have been positioned front-and-center in Democratic policymaking around COVID-19. In contrast, like most high-prestige organizations today, the Republican Party has shockingly few women in its leadership pipeline. The intense focus on COVID-19 during this election—an issue with so many substantial gender differences—may be contributing to the staggeringly-wide gender gap in candidate preference that has been evident in recent poll results," explained Brooks.

Provided by Dartmouth College

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