

Activity patterns saw dramatic shifts during and beyond COVID-19 pandemic in UK

July 13 2022



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A new analysis describes how UK residents shifted the amount of time they spent on various activities over the course of the pandemic and whether they participated online or in-person. Lan Li of University

College London, Center for Digital Health in Emergencies (dPHE), U.K., and colleagues present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on July 13, 2022.

When the COVID-19 [pandemic](#) began, the U.K. joined many countries in introducing restrictions on people's movement and [social activities](#) to mitigate viral spread. A growing body of research reveals how such restrictions have affected people's lifestyles worldwide. However, it has been less clear how behavioral patterns of U.K. residents changed over time as different restrictions were implemented and lifted.

To help clarify, Li and colleagues conducted six online surveys of U.K. residents between April 2020 and July 2021 and were ultimately able to follow 203 people who responded to multiple surveys. The surveys included questions about 16 different types of activities respondents participated in during different phases of the pandemic, such as journaling, shopping, and getting active, and whether they participated online or in person.

Statistical analysis of the responses showed that the biggest changes in terms of amount of time spent—as well as the biggest changes in online versus in-person participation—occurred for [cultural activities](#), spending time with others, and traveling. Changes were most pronounced in March to June 2020, corresponding with the first lockdown period, when participation in all 16 activities decreased. The biggest shift from in-person to online participation occurred from March to October 2020, which included the first lockdown followed by relaxation of restrictions.

On July 19, 2021, all restrictions were eliminated in the U.K. However, this analysis found, participation in cultural and group activities remained lower than before the pandemic. The majority of respondents also continued to participate in many activities online.

These findings could help U.K. policymakers understand the impact of their pandemic restrictions. In the future, the researchers plan to investigate how demographic factors, such as age and employment, may have affected the results, as well as long-term mental health implications of the lifestyle changes.

Prof. Patty Kostova, director of UCL dPHE and the lead of the study, adds: "This longitudinal research study illustrated citizens' resilience throughout the stages of the pandemic."

Lan Li adds: "This [longitudinal study](#) determines the frequency and way of people doing activities from Spring 2020 to Summer 2021 during different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. The findings provide an invaluable insight into understanding how people in the UK changed their lifestyle, including what activities they do, and how they accessed those activities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health policy implemented to address the pandemic."

More information: To Zoom or not to Zoom: A longitudinal study of UK population's activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, *PLoS ONE* (2022). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0270207](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0270207)

Provided by Public Library of Science

Citation: Activity patterns saw dramatic shifts during and beyond COVID-19 pandemic in UK (2022, July 13) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-07-patterns-shifts-covid-pandemic-uk.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.