

COVID-19 pandemic fallout worse for women

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Researchers from The University of Queensland have found the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia has had a greater financial and psychological impact on women than men.

A study conducted by the UQ Business School shows women have experienced more significant impacts on their overall employment, [hours of work](#), domestic labor and [mental health](#) and well-being.

Lead researcher Dr. Terry Fitzsimmons said one reason was the over-representation of women in industries most affected by lockdowns.

"Women are also more likely to be casual, [part-time](#) or [contract workers](#) which were among the first to lose their jobs as businesses struggled in response to lockdown," Dr. Fitzsimmons said.

Additionally, the study found women were less likely to be considered "essential workers," so bore a greater share of caring responsibilities including home schooling, when schools and child care centers closed.

"Women either reduced their [work hours](#) or stopped working altogether and took on more domestic labor than their male counterparts while at home with their children," Dr. Fitzsimmons said.

The study, co-authored by Dr. Miriam Yates and Professor Victor Callan, involved a [national survey](#) of 1,931 men and 1,691 women employed across various industries including construction, mining, education, health care and the arts, as well as a series of focus groups.

It found female respondents opted out of professional development opportunities throughout the pandemic.

"The effects of these job losses, reduced income and domestic labor burdens meant women suffered greatly from fatigue, stress, anxiety and depression," Dr. Fitzsimmons said.

"Some female respondents also reported having suicidal thoughts."

As well as gender, Dr. Miriam Yates said the study found 19 other variables that could affect an individual's experience of the pandemic.

"They include a person's age, whether they're married, have children, if they're classed as an 'essential' or 'frontline' worker, their employment type and whether they're eligible for Job Keeper," Dr. Yates said.

The study provides 13 recommendations to address the ongoing impact that the pandemic has had upon women and men.

"There is a need for a national strategy, which should include greater investments in childcare, and social and mental health support," Dr. Yates said.

"Governments also need to better incorporate hybrid working arrangements, provide equal access to parental leave entitlements and overhaul wage-setting mechanisms."

More information: Experiences of COVID-19: The pandemic and work/life outcomes for Australian men and women, [business.uq.edu.au/files/78939 ... simmons-research.pdf](https://business.uq.edu.au/files/78939...simmons-research.pdf)

Provided by University of Queensland

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