If you trust politicians and scientists, then you likely socially distance yourself

22 February 2021, by A Strong Link Between Trust In Politics and Science and Acceptance and Adoption Of Protective Behaviour Reports A German Stud

The researchers note that trust in science has been linked to factors, such as education, science knowledge, use of traditional news and social media, and learning about replicable research findings. On these lines, the research team recommends that scientists refrain themselves from publishing potentially unreliable findings: a practice which has become quite common since the coronavirus outbreak.

However, while education and knowledge take a long time to build, and the current situation calls for immediate solutions, the researchers point to effective crisis communication as the best approach. Firstly, they urge for politicians and scientists to talk openly about what is known and unknown about the disease, while role models adopt the recommendations for fighting the pandemic, thus publicly setting an example to follow. Also, it is important that society sees a diverse range of experts unanimously speaking about the effectiveness of the recommended behaviors.

Additionally, it was found that men and younger people are less likely to accept and practice protective measures, which means that specially targeted health messages need to be devised for these particular groups.

"Because the implementation of protective measures is directly related to infection and fatality rates, strong efforts should be taken to ensure that trust in politics and science is not undermined, and that those who are trusted give valid and sound recommendations on how to protect oneself and others," say the researchers.
