The Analysis of the Differential Impacts of Material and Social Stressors on Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

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Depression cripples a large percentage of the population, and the novel coronavirus pandemic has acted as an additional stressor, further exacerbating a decline in mental health. To effectively combat this, more information surrounding the virus' impact on mental health is vital. The virus has introduced two substantial issues, affecting even those who have not contracted the virus: a disruption in the economy that results in large-scale unemployment and loss in income, as well as laws that have limited the sociability of individuals. This project acknowledges the presence of COVID-19 and examines financial, isolative, and emotional factors as potential culprits for the rise in depression. Our project follows a "horse-race" model, where financial stressors are tested relative to limitations in sociability to see which dimension of life is more indicative of having depressive symptoms. Our results suggest the causes of depression are different for various moments in time, deeming two potential winners to the "horse-race" schematic. This study has additionally elucidated the struggles of several demographic groups during the pandemic and uncovered many underlying relationships that are especially predictive of depression, irrespective of the dimension they belong to. The data collected and conclusions made in this project are noteworthy and valuable for federal and state institutions to better allocate their resources to help the masses of people who suffer from depression in the future.

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