Culture and Disease: An International Analysis of Individualism and COVID-19 Outcomes

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Disease-spread and its consequences are governed by a multitude of factors, but only recently has culture been considered among its predictors. The individualism-collectivism spectrum, which measures how much emphasis is placed on the individual versus on the group, has become one of the most critical frameworks of cross-cultural research. Thus, it is also an essential part of understanding disease response across the world. This study analyzes COVID data from individualist and collectivist countries to see whether they experienced significantly different COVID outcomes and whether individualism had an impact on the pandemic's results. Regression found that individualism was positively correlated with cases and deaths and negatively correlated with masking stringency, while two-mean testing showed that individualist and collectivist countries experienced significantly different outcomes on a majority of the recorded outcomes, providing potent evidence for the interplay between culture and disease.

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