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### Mental Health Declines During Quarantine and Isolation

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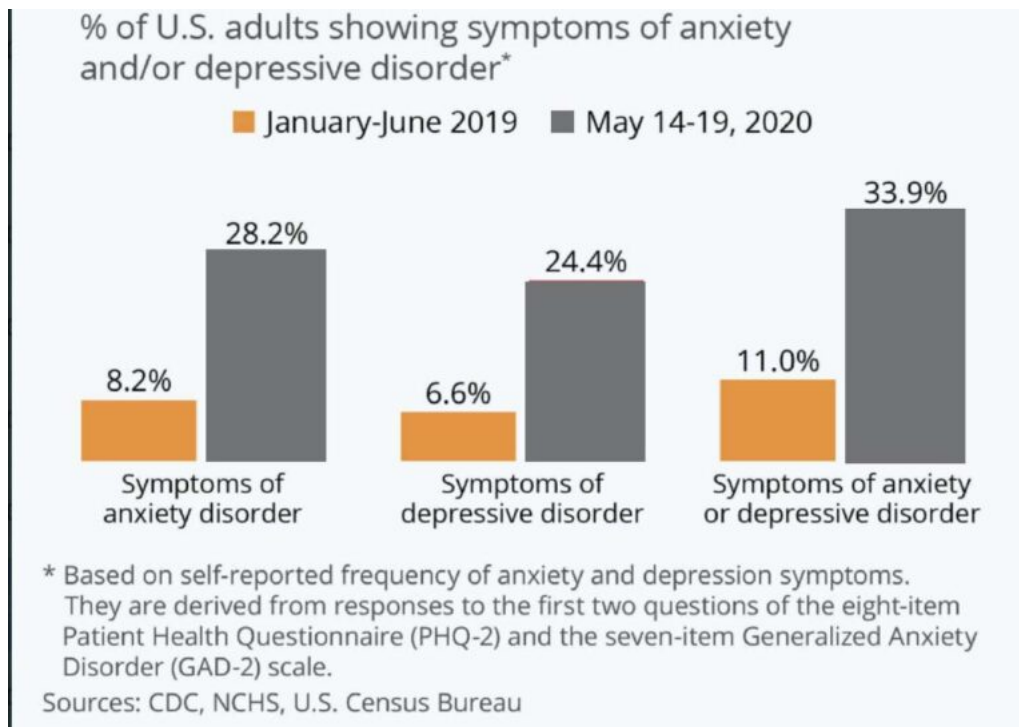
# Mental health declines during quarantine and isolation

By Faith Parandhamaia



Recent studies have shown that quarantining and isolation, due to COVID-19, negatively affects the mental health of people in the U.S.

A vast amount of data shows the heaviness of the global pandemic that is going on in the United States. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation nearly 36% of adults are having difficulty sleeping, 32% are having trouble eating. There has been a 12% increase in alcohol consumption, and 12% of people have had worsened chronic conditions. All of these increased percentages are from the effects of COVID-19 being present in the U.S. Additionally, job loss, isolation, lack of motivation, and fear are also effects of COVID-19.



Shylee Stocks, a student at Appalachian State in Boone, North Carolina, spoke about her experience with quarantining for six days and isolating for five. Stocks described how she would sit on top of her air conditioner, pressed against the window, trying to feel the sunlight.

"I was a lot luckier than most to only spend five days in isolation, but the time I was there, my mental health violently spiraled," Stocks said.

Stocks, a sophomore track athlete and bodybuilder, said this situation added to her decreased mental state by not being able to be as active as she normally was. During her isolation, she tried creating her own work out equipment. For example, she used hotel chairs to do "mock sled pulls".

Stocks said she tried everything to keep her mind busy. Whether it was working out, which led to significant anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

"Every noise I heard I would run to the window or to the peephole at the door just so that I could see someone pass by," Stocks said.

After Stocks sixth day in isolation, she tested negative for COVID-19, which allowed her to go back to her college room. She stated that the moment she stepped outside into the sun she began to sob.

"Isolation was an awful experience. I didn't realize how much I had taken for granted. Overall, it taught me a lot about how grateful I am for little things like sunshine and human interaction," Stocks said.

Although quarantine may affect others differently, counselor Stephanie Allen from Gardner-Webb University, says that she has seen an increase in anxiety and other mental health symptoms.

"I've seen some students who have never before experienced anxiety or other mental health symptoms become anxious or depressed during their isolation period," Allen said.

Allen also said the mental health of many students is only getting worse with quarantine and isolation. However, she also said there are many ways people can try to get through the experience in the healthiest way possible. Allen suggested that people in quarantine or isolation can plan zoom calls with friends, or practice self-care through working out, reading a beneficial book, or writing out personal goals.

Although COVID-19 is still a huge issue in the United States today, people are still hopeful for a better tomorrow where the world will not revolve around this virus. According to the National Institutes of Health, a Phase three clinical trial has begun in order to investigate a COVID-19 vaccine known as AZD1222. This shows promise for a vaccine to be released within the next few months.