

**THE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC  
COVID-19 ON THE MENTAL  
HEALTH OF ADULTS IN IRELAND**  
*(Research on Mental Health in Ireland)*

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### **Abstract**

The COVID 19 pandemic situation has had a wide range of effects on the lives of people all around the world. People have been affected in many ways including mentally and mental health issues of people is a serious point of discussion. The study has been conducted focusing on the population of Ireland specifically on the adult population of Ireland. To conduct the study survey method has been chosen. Furthermore, from the survey, it has been found that mental illnesses like depression and anxiety are common among the people of Ireland. This has mostly been due to the COVID 19 situation faced by the mass and acute crisis that it has brought with it. The COVID 19 situation has brought with it uncertainty over jobs in the country which has led to an increase in the feeling of depression. Moreover, life due to isolation has also resulted in loneliness which aggravates the depressing situation full of anxiety. The research work has immense scope since it involves primary data collection and future researchers can benefit from it as well. Moreover, the data from this research can be used by government agencies seeking answers to mental health-related issues all around the world.

### **Declaration**

I Surabhi, declare that this research work has been conducted solely by me and no unfair means have been taken to conduct the study. The study has not been presented to any of the universities or institutions anywhere in the world to receive a Degree or Diploma. Additionally, I have referenced all the literature and sources taken to conduct the study and have given due credit to the authors of the sources. Furthermore, the work has been completed by complying with all the rules and regulations of the National College of Ireland.

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Course: Masters in International Business

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Date: 05/05/2021

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### **Abbreviations**

- WHO - World Health Organisation
- UN - United Nations
- COVID– Corona Virus Disease
- ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- CSO - Central Statistics Office
- CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

## Glossary

- ***International Labour Organisation*** - The International Labor Organization (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity.
- ***Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*** - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, or rape or who have been threatened with death, sexual violence or serious injury.
- ***Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*** - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, or excessive activity and impulsivity, which are otherwise not appropriate for a person's age.
- ***SARS-CoV-2 virus*** - Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is a novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus. It was first isolated from three people with pneumonia connected to the cluster of acute respiratory illness cases in Wuhan.
- ***Central Statistics Office*** - The Central Statistics Office is the statistical agency responsible for the gathering of "information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions" in Ireland, in particular the National Census which is held every five years.
- ***World Bank*** -The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low- and middle-income countries to pursue capital projects.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	12
1.1 Research Background .....	12
1.2 Research Problem .....	13
1.3 Research Significance.....	15
1.4 Research Rationale.....	15
1.5 Gap in Existing Literature.....	16
1.6 Probable Outcome.....	16
1.7 Dissertation Structure.....	17
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	19
2.1 Introduction.....	19
2.2 Factors Leading to Mental Health Issues.....	19
2.3 Global Impact of COVID 19 on Mental Health.....	20
Effects of COVID 19 on depression .....	22
2.4 Effects of COVID 19 on the Job Market .....	25
2.5 Disruption in mental health services due to COVID-19.....	26
2.6 Psychological Impact of COVID 19 on the adult Irish Population .....	27
2.7 The need for secondary mental health service response in Ireland .....	28
2.8 Effects of Mental Illness on the Distribution of COVID-19 in the Irish Population.....	29
2.9 Mental Health Legislation in Ireland .....	31
2.10 Literature Gap .....	31
2.11 Conceptual Framework.....	32
2.12 Summary .....	32
Chapter 3: Research Questions .....	34
3.1 Research aim.....	34
3.2 Research questions.....	34
3.3 Research objectives.....	34
3.4 Research hypothesis.....	34
Chapter 4: Research Methodology.....	35

4.1 Introduction.....	35
4.2 Research philosophy .....	35
4.3 Research approach .....	36
4.4 Research strategy .....	36
4.5 Research Choice.....	37
4.6 Data collection method .....	38
4.7 Sampling method .....	39
4.8 Data analysis technique.....	39
4.9 Time horizon.....	40
4.10 Ethical considerations .....	40
4.11 Research Limitations .....	40
4.12 Summary.....	41
Chapter 5. Data Analysis .....	42
5.1 Introduction.....	42
5.2 Survey data analysis.....	42
5.3 Summary.....	53
Chapter 6. Findings and Discussion.....	54
6.1 Findings.....	54
6.2 Discussion.....	55
Chapter 7. Conclusion and recommendations .....	57
7.1 Conclusion .....	57
7.2 Recommendations.....	58
7.3 Limitation of the study.....	59
7.4 Future scope of the study .....	59
References.....	61
Appendices.....	71
Appendix 1: Survey questions .....	71
Appendix 2: Covid-19's Widespread Impact On Mental Health .....	74
Appendix 3: Global COVID-19 crisis index June 2020 .....	75



Appendix 4: Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic among UK population .....	76
Appendix 5: Share of countries with mental health as part of COVID-19 response funding Aug 2020.....	77
Appendix 6: Symptoms of Depression .....	78
Appendix 7: Pandemic sinks UK youth mental health to new low .....	79
Appendix 8: The UK's uneven jobs recovery .....	80
Appendix 9: Share of countries with disruptions to mental health and substance abuse support 2020.....	81
Appendix 10: Share of adults with mental health concerns during COVID-19 by country 2020 .....	82
Appendix 11: Health care expenditure in Ireland in 2018 by financing scheme.....	83
Appendix 12: Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health in the UK as of May 2020 .....	84

**List of figures**

Figure 1: 4 Waves of COVID 19 Pandemic ..... 14

Figure 2: Mental disorder due to effect of Covid 19 ..... 20

Figure 3: Adults reporting different symptoms of Anxiety due to Covid 19..... 22

Figure 4: Grafton Street in Ireland during lockdown..... 23

Figure 5: Current situation in Ireland..... 23

Figure 6: Contempt caused by loneliness ..... 24

Figure 7: Personal distress caused by loneliness shared by Irish woman..... 24

Figure 8: Disruptions in MNS related services due to COVID-19..... 27

Figure 9: Conceptual Framework ..... 32

Figure 10: Covid-19's Widespread Impact on Mental Health ..... 74

Figure 11: Global COVID-19 crisis index June 2020 ..... 75

Figure 12: Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic among UK population ... 76

Figure 13: Share of countries with mental health as part of COVID-19 response funding Aug 2020  
..... 77

Figure 14: Symptoms of Depression..... 78

Figure 15: Pandemic sinks UK youth mental health to new low..... 79

Figure 16: The UK's uneven jobs recovery ..... 80

Figure 17: Share of countries with disruptions to mental health and substance abuse support 2020  
..... 81

Figure 18: Share of adults with mental health concerns during COVID-19 by country 2020 ..... 82

Figure 19: Health care expenditure in Ireland in 2018 by financing scheme ..... 83

Figure 20: Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health in the UK as of May 2020..... 84

**List of tables**

Table 1: Dissertation structure ..... 18

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### *1.1 Research Background*

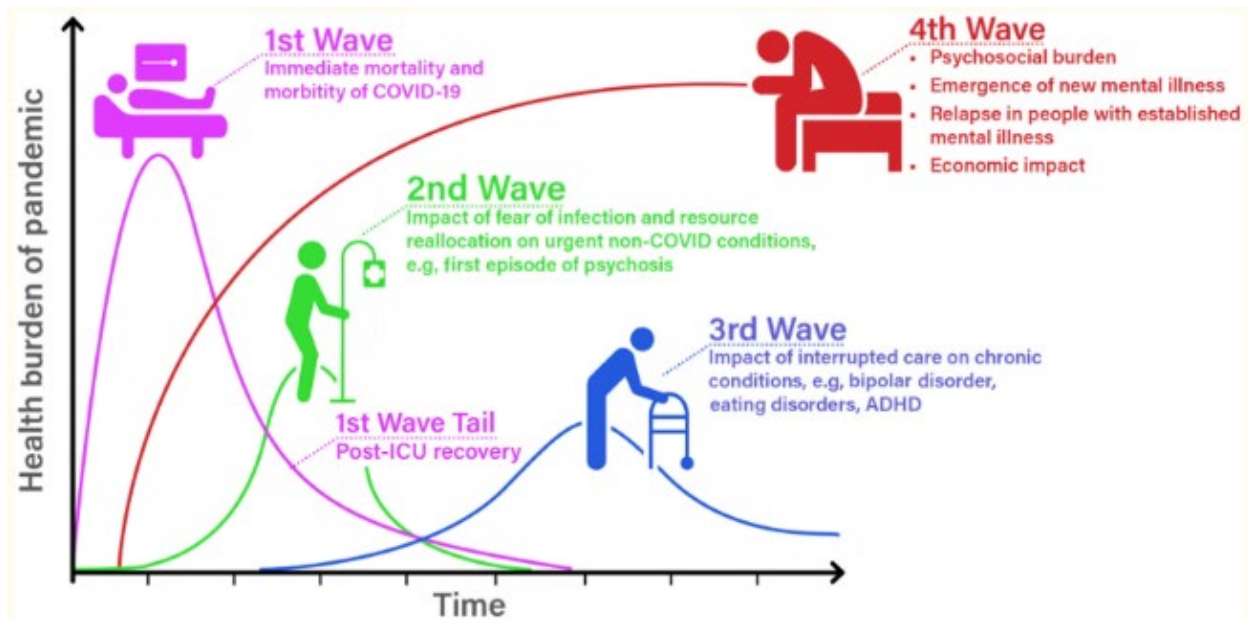
Towards the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, the world witnessed the emergence of a virus that ultimately led to a pandemic situation affecting lives, livelihood, businesses and more. The pandemic resulted in a huge loss of human lives all over the world and many people had lost their near and dear ones due to the pandemic. The world has also been exposed to challenges leading to public health, food systems and the economy (WHO, 2020b). Furthermore, the pandemic situation has become a hurdle in front of delivering a lot of services worldwide and the most significant have been the disruption in providing mental health services. It has been found that mental health services of about 93% of the countries globally have been stopped (WHO, 2020a). On the other hand, the demand for mental health services has been increasing day by day (*Refer to Appendix 2*). As per the report of Jones, Palumbo, & Brown (2020), COVID 19 pandemic has spread through nearly every country in the world and has affected the economies and business of the country. Governments all around the world have imposed lockdowns which have affected the economies as well as the lives of the people in the affected countries. Moreover, the pandemic has also posed a serious challenge in front of the people that are seeking employment as there has been job losses and income cuts all over the world. Supporting this fact, the report of UN News (2020), reveals that the International Labour Organization has also predicted that the pandemic situation would pose a threat to 25 million jobs. Furthermore, the global unemployment rate had already been standing at 190 million even before the onset of COVID 19 (UN News, 2020) (*Refer to Appendix 3*).

As mentioned by Chandu, Marella, Panga, Pachava, & Vadapalli (2020), it is noticed that the COVID-19 pandemic has strictly increased the number of mental health issues due to isolation, quarantine and prolonged detachment of the individuals from the relatives and closed ones. It has developed mental health disorders, insomnia, anxiety, depression and mental stress. Xiong et al. (2020) also stated that the increasing trend of mental health issues also created suicidal attempts among certain individuals. Medical workers all over the world stated that the number of mental health issues has increased significantly due to staying away from the closed ones, fear of infection, anxiety and depression.

The report of PTI (2020), suggests that according to the survey conducted by International Labour Organization, 50% of the youth globally are depressed and 17% of the youth have lost their jobs. The pandemic situation has posed a serious threat in terms of mental health as the youth is subjected to anxiety and depression due to the looming uncertainty regarding their future. The report also suggests that if actions are not taken to address mental health, then it will have a long-lasting effect on the people suffering from mental health issues. As per the research conducted by Xiong et al. (2020), the outbreak of the COVID 19 disease has brought about unexpected hazards to mental health (*Refer to Appendix 4*). Significant mental health support to the patients and healthcare professionals has been given, however, it is necessary to look over the mental health situation of the general populace as well. Furthermore, it has also been evidenced that people living in poor economic conditions, with lower educational levels and unemployed are more prone to mental illness causing depression in the pandemic situation. The research of Roy et al. (2020), suggests that mental health treatments receive a setback if resources of treatment become limited. Apart from this, it has also been suggested historically that outbreak of any infectious diseases or pandemic leads to mental health problems. In 2014 the outbreak of the Ebola virus had caused Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder along with anxiety and depression to the people affected directly or indirectly.

### ***1.2 Research Problem***

It has been identified in the research of O'Connor, Wrigley, Jennings, Hill, & Niazi (2020), that the COVID 19 pandemic has offset global health emergencies due to its massive scale, spread and nature of the disease. Furthermore, it can be analysed that the psychological impact of a medical emergency is much greater than the medical impact. It has been identified by the experts of National Clinical Advisor and Group Lead for Mental Health in the Health Service Executive in Ireland in the below graph that there are four waves of the COVID-19 pandemic,



*Figure 1: 4 Waves of COVID 19 Pandemic*

(Source: O'Connor, Wrigley, Jennings, Hill, & Niazi, 2020)

Furthermore, in Ireland, it has been seen that pandemic has affected the mental health issues of all age groups and especially groups that are sent to isolation leading to greater feelings of loneliness irrespective of age group. As stated by Kennelly et al. (2020), in Ireland in the year 2016, it has been found that 18.5% of the population have been subjected to mental health disorder. The mental health disorders pertain to anxiety, schizophrenia, depression, alcohol abuse or drug abuse. Furthermore, the mental health organisations in the country have reported that there has been an increase in the number of people seeking mental health support over the telephone. As per the report of Kelly (2020), it has been found that there has been a significant rise in the mental health situation in Ireland with feelings of greater loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown as compared to normal times. People in the country are suffering from depression, loneliness and anxiety due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the report of Bowers (2020), suggests that issues related to mental health like depression, loneliness, anxiety and stress will come to the forefront as the pandemic situation progresses which will be irrespective of any age group. Moreover, Burnett (2021) reports that problems relating to mental health are looking at the end of the COVID 19 pandemic even if there is a positive sign of things coming back to normal

*(Refer to Appendix 5)*. It has been seen that there is a widespread economic fallout due to the pandemic and this will give rise to mental health issues in the country.

### ***1.3 Research Significance***

The COVID-19 pandemic is considered to be one of the most serious and deadly pandemics which took a lot of lives but an increase in deteriorating mental health has been identified as people were getting frustrated from staying at their homes. The research will analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of adults in Ireland. The COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the mental health of the global population as the pandemic has formed different types of psychological disorders such as depression, fear of infection, eating disorder, bipolar disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Among the psychological disorders, depressions, loneliness and anxiety attacks are the most commonly reported cases. The Irish government has stated that the lockdown measures have created a significant amount of problems for the citizens and the government has also reported that depressions are mainly reported amongst adults. One of the major reasons that influence the psychological problems is the lack of social interaction as lack of gathering and entertainment has created a significant amount of problems for the people mentally. The study will help in determining the degree of adverse mental impacts such as loneliness in a comparative way (normal times and lockdown phase) in two different age groups of **21-31**. Thus, the research will help in identifying and understanding the key areas that are influencing psychological disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland. People under the age of 35 are more prone to get affected by the virus than older people and recorded data shows that there are around 5,000 deaths that have been issued in Ireland due to the virus (Pope, 2020).

### ***1.4 Research Rationale***

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a significant amount of global chaos as it has taken a lot of lives and the deadly spread of the infection has created anxiety and fear among the people. Thus, to avoid the rapid spread of the virus governments had to implement strict lockdown measures which do not allow people to get out of their houses and this affected the mental health of the global population. According to O'Connor et al. (2020), the Irish people were facing

challenges in coping up with their psychological issues as most of them were going through severe depression because of monetary problems due to the loss of their jobs. They were also facing psychological problems like fear of infection, eating disorder, bipolar disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, the Irish government has failed to deal with the rising cases of psychological disorders as due to the COVID-19 pandemic they focused more on stopping the spread of the infection. However, the government has stated that currently, they are facilitating policies that will also help the adults as well as the senior citizens of the country. Thus, it can be said that there are many challenges present which can still increase the rate of mental health disorder among the Irish adults which the government needs to address and analyse properly.

### ***1.5 Gap in Existing Literature***

Mental health is very important for human beings as it helps in maintaining the emotions and way of thinking of human beings. The research has been mainly developed to identify the key factors that are influencing the mental health of the adults of Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic. While analysing the research topic it has been observed that the COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the mental health of the global population as due to social distancing and lockdown measures they had to stay in their homes. Ireland has reported that the country is expecting a fourth wave of COVID-19 spread but statistics related to the impact of the previous three waves on the mental health of its population has not been found. The rate of unemployment has risen significantly which created depression among the workers but during the analysis of such aspects of the research topic few research have been identified. Thus, it can be said that more in-depth research needs to be conducted which will help in developing further research. In addition to that statistical data regarding the perspectives of the citizens of Ireland regarding the impact of the COVID-19 on their mental health is missing and information related to policies of the government are not clearly mentioned in the chosen literature.

### ***1.6 Probable Outcome***

The research has been conducted to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of the people in Ireland. While developing the research it has been identified that



during the COVID-19 pandemic the Irish people have suffered immensely as their mental health condition has also deteriorated significantly. This research will help in providing in-depth knowledge about the reasons that are creating mental health issues amongst the Irish people. It will also address the economic impact which will help in identifying the reasons for increased depression and anxiety in the Irish people. Thus, it can be said that the research effectively helps in addressing and analysing different aspects of the research topic to help future researchers.

### *1.7 Dissertation Structure*

<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>Chapter1: Introduction</b>	Research Background, Problem Statement, Research Significance, Research Rationale, Gaps in Existing Literature.
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	Different themes of several literatures have been critically analysed in this section.
<b>Chapter 3: Research Questions</b>	Research Aims, Research Objectives, Research Questions and Research Hypothesis are introduced in this section.
<b>Chapter 4: Methodology</b>	Methods implemented to conduct the research have been addressed and analysed in this section.
<b>Chapter 5: Data analysis</b>	The data analysis process has been analysed in this section and an in-depth analysis of the key findings has also been presented.
<b>Chapter 6: Findings and discussion</b>	The chapter primarily introduces outcomes from the data analysis process. In this section, a critical analysis between

	existing literature and different theories will be conducted based on the key findings.
<b>Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	A conclusion has been presented based on the literature that has been critically evaluated and recommendations have also been presented which will help in improving further research.

*Table 1: Dissertation structure*

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### *2.1 Introduction*

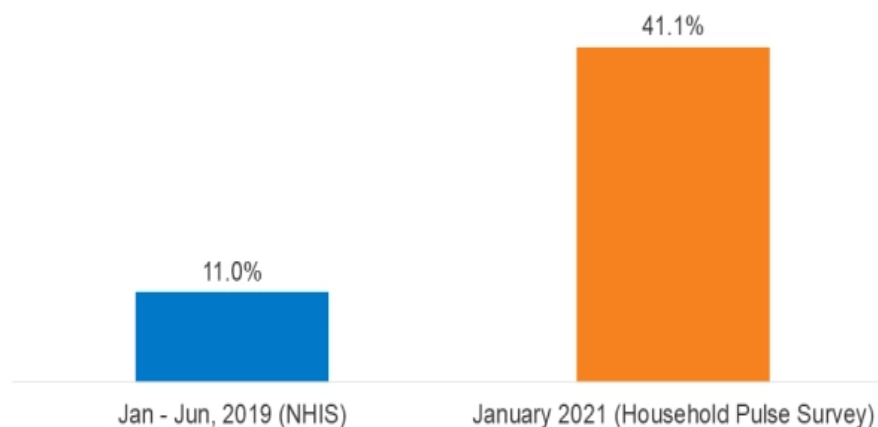
In this chapter of the dissertation, the secondary information has been gathered and reviewed thoroughly to get in-depth ideas about the mental health-related issues among the individuals. Besides, the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the mental health condition of the people of Ireland as well as the whole of the world have been analyzed and presented in a form of literature. Apart from this, a conceptual framework has been drawn deriving variables identified while researching the COVID 19 and its impact on mental health conditions.

### *2.2 Factors Leading to Mental Health Issues*

The most prominent mental health issue is depression. It is one of the common mental health issues currently prevailing in the world and close to 264 million people worldwide are affected by it. This ill factor can last in a person for a long time and in extreme conditions, this may even lead to suicide (Who, 2019). Furthermore, such mental health issues lead a person to extreme behaviour and this change in behaviour results in self-abuse. Such a condition mainly occurs due to the emotions experienced by a person during a certain period (Rokach, 2019). Apart from this the research of Pinto et al. (2014), points out that in a person the signs of mental illness are prominent if that person is exposed to problems relating to poverty, social exclusion and educational disadvantages. Moreover, a person affected by mental health issues normally experiences a sense of low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with life in general, depression and anxiety. The study of De Brier, Stroobants, Vandekerckhove, & De Buck (2020), suggests that the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic has had a serious effect on every sphere of human life. It has increased the mental pressure of patients, health care workers as well as people affected by the pandemic situation. Furthermore, such mental health-related issues lead to a change in the thinking process of a person, feelings and behaviours (*Refer to Appendix 6*). All these effects of poor mental health problems are undesirable inefficient dealing of such conditions may lead to detrimental results. It can be seen from the research of Manaf, Mustafa, Rahman, Yusof, & Aziz (2016), that mental health-related issues are commonly found in people who are elderly. Such a situation arises due to the factors like social, psychological and biological and this leads to emotional instability and

depression. People in their old age are often subjected to social exclusion which leads to a psychological impact and altering their mental and emotional state (Panchal, Kamal, Orgera, Muñana, & Chidambaram, 2021). Furthermore, the COVID 19 pandemic has proven to the world the importance of healthcare workers and before that, a healthcare worker is a person and is subjected to the same level of mental health issues. It can be seen that healthcare workers experience psychological issues resulting from anxiety, mood disorder and stress after any trauma (Philip & Cherian, 2020). Apart from this the research of Elflein (2021), found that anxiety and depression are the main factors that lead to mental health disorder. In the year 2017, it has been found that 284 million and 264 million people worldwide suffer from anxiety and depression respectively (Elflein, 2021).

Average Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety Disorder and/or Depressive Disorder, January-June 2019 vs. January 2021



*Figure 2: Mental disorder due to effect of Covid 19*

(Source: Panchal, Kamal, Orgera, Muñana, & Chidambaram, 2021)

### **2.3 Global Impact of COVID 19 on Mental Health**

As per the report of Collinson (2020), the lockdown that followed due to the COVID 19 pandemic has had a tremendous negative effect on mental health which increased the rate of suicidal thoughts. A study revealed that the most vulnerable groups that are affected by the poor mental health conditions due to the pandemic are the young population and women because of

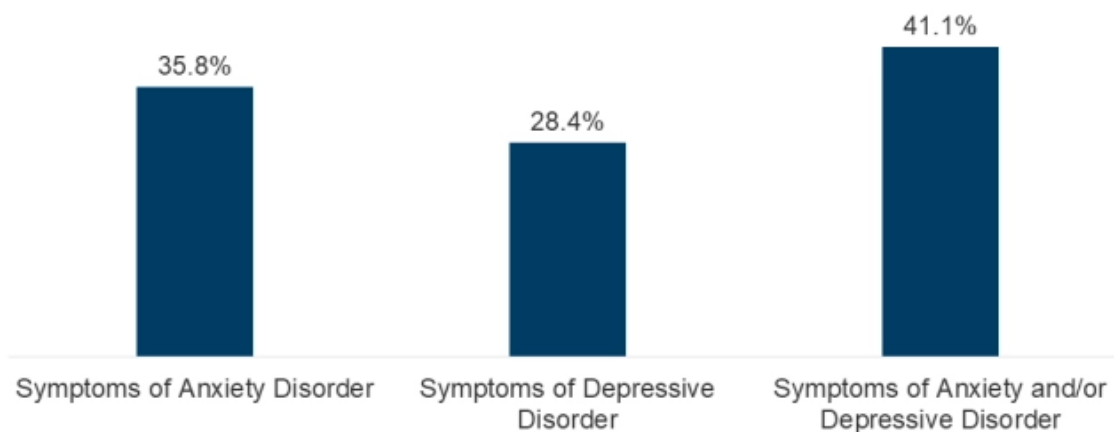
socially-disadvantage. Furthermore, the study revealed that the increase of suicidal thoughts has been highest among young adults amounting to an 8% to 10% increase. Furthermore, Schraer (2021), pointed out that COVID 19 has a direct linkage with depression and dementia. Moreover, the most common form of mental health issues that is prevalent after the COVID 19 situation is anxiety and mood disorder. These two issues mainly occur due to the stress related to the diseases that a person feels. The research conducted by Torales, O'Higgins, Maia, & Ventriglio (2020), suggests that the outbreak of the global pandemic has an additional effect on the health of an individual other than the ill effect of the virus. The deadly virus poses a serious threat to an individual relating to stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, insomnia, denial, anger and fear. All these factors lead to a more serious and long-lasting effect on the mental health of a person.

According to Brodeur, Clark, Fleche, & Powdthavee (2020), it is estimated that the complete lockdown in the western countries has significantly impacted the mental health standard of the citizens. The lockdown has generated a significant rise in the google search related to boredom and loneliness. Bu, Steptoe, & Fancourt (2020) also stated that the detachment of the citizens from the closed ones also increased anxiety, stress and sadness. The prolonged period of lockdown and detachment has increased the degree of boredom, suicide, loneliness, sadness, insomnia, reduction of sleep quality, contentment and irritability.

As per Narayanan (2021), the impact of COVID 19 on mental health is huge among the patients and causes a lot of neurological problems. These neurological disorders are also seen widely even among patients with low symptoms of the disease. Patients with such neurological disorder exert signs of anxiousness, depression and sleeping disorders (Panchal, Kamal, Orgera, Muñana, & Chidambaram, 2021). As perceived from the research of Chaturvedi, Vishwakarma, & Singh (2020), the COVID 19 pandemic has had a widespread impact on various people in society. Moreover, it has also affected the social life of many individuals mostly the students and as a result frustration, stress, and depression are the common traits found in them. Furthermore, it has been identified from the research of Giorgi et al. (2020), that rules and regulations of COVID 19 prevention, the anxiety of getting sick, suspension of activities and loss of income have a deep influence on the mental health of citizens and workers. Moreover, insecurity regarding job, isolation and uncertainty of the future comes with the pandemic situation and this has an ill effect on the mental health of highly educated younger people (*Refer to Appendix 7*). Apart from this

the study of Schäfer et al. (2020), reveals that 16% to 18% of people have shown signs of anxiety and depression due to the global pandemic. Furthermore, it has been found that women, young people and people with sleeping disorders are more likely to experience mental health issues due to such situations.

### Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder During the COVID-19 Pandemic



*Figure 3: Adults reporting different symptoms of Anxiety due to Covid 19*

(Source: Panchal, Kamal, Orgera, Muñana, & Chidambaram, 2021)

#### *Effects of COVID 19 on depression*

One of the ways by which depression can be conceptualised is by understanding its neuropsychiatric elements. These elements in turn create illness among people in general. At the same time, there are other forms of elements that are aligned with the idea of depression. For instance, remission, relapse, disorder and recurrence (Kanter, Busch, Weeks, & Landes, 2008). According to the report of the Central Statistics Office (CSO), half of the surveyed people are consumed by depression due to the impact of COVID 19. At the same time, an online survey was conducted amongst the 1,621 individuals of Ireland to check their mental health, especially depression levels.



**Figure 4: Grafton Street in Ireland during lockdown**

(Source: Hilliard, 2021)

The findings, suggests that depression has caused 57.1 % of people serious damage to their well-being. Therefore, 41.7 % of people are rated as their alow overall life satisfaction level. People in the age groups of 18 to 34 reported as “downhearted or depressed (Hilliard, 2021).”

New cases	Total cases	New deaths	Total deaths
429	247	1	4,873

**Figure 5: Current situation in Ireland**

(Source: Hilliard, 2021)

***Effects of COVID 19 on loneliness***

Loneliness can be best described as a mental stature of a person when their social perceptions and basic requirements are not fulfilled. Therefore, when it is not met, people become extremely

distressed about being not accepted as a social creature. At the same time, by a tool called UCLA Loneliness Scale, a person's loneliness can be measured (Hawkley&Cacioppo, 2010). Therefore, it is one of the distressing feelings which is subserved by the mind that actually doubles physical pain, thirst and hunger-related issues.

“

Being lonely when most of the country is asleep is a specific kind of loneliness. The hours pass so much more slowly. The inner hamster wheels in my head keep turning, wondering when this feeling of isolation will end

*Figure 6: Contempt caused by loneliness*

(Source: Bol, 2021)

For instance, due to extreme lockdown periods where people are bound to be isolated at their house are now feeling the same effect of loneliness. Rosita Boland, an Irish woman who said that loneliness has bothered her so much during the lockdown periods (Bol, 2021).

“

I am sick of my own company after months alone in lockdown. There's no choice involved in spending all this time by myself, and, entertaining and all as I am, I'd quite like a break from myself

*Figure 7: Personal distress caused by loneliness shared by Irish woman*

(Source: Bol, 2021)

*Effects of COVID 19 on anxiety*



At any given time, people around 33 % can have the potential to succumb to anxiety disorders. According to Swiss Psychoanalytic specialist Carl Gustav Jung, the energy of constellated complexes can control the conscious mind, thoughts, willful behaviours which may leave the person to behave in such a manner that later perceived by that person as irrational (Machado, 2020). When the mental condition improves, the individual remains wounded and in particular, the physical sensitivity through the mental trauma remains present in the person.

At the same time, the effects of anxiety are also very prominent among the people in Ireland because, on February 27, 2020, around 1741 people died due to COVID 19 (Hyland et al., 2020). . The middle-aged people of 48 years old and women approximately 57 % of them are getting affected by the virus more than men (Hyland et al., 2020). At the same time, most of the people who were largely affected by the virus reside in the capital city of Dublin which raised the issues of depression among the people this much. People around the age of 83 years(men), 48 years(women) are being affected by the virus most commonly (Hyland et al., 2020).

#### ***2.4 Effects of COVID 19 on the Job Market***

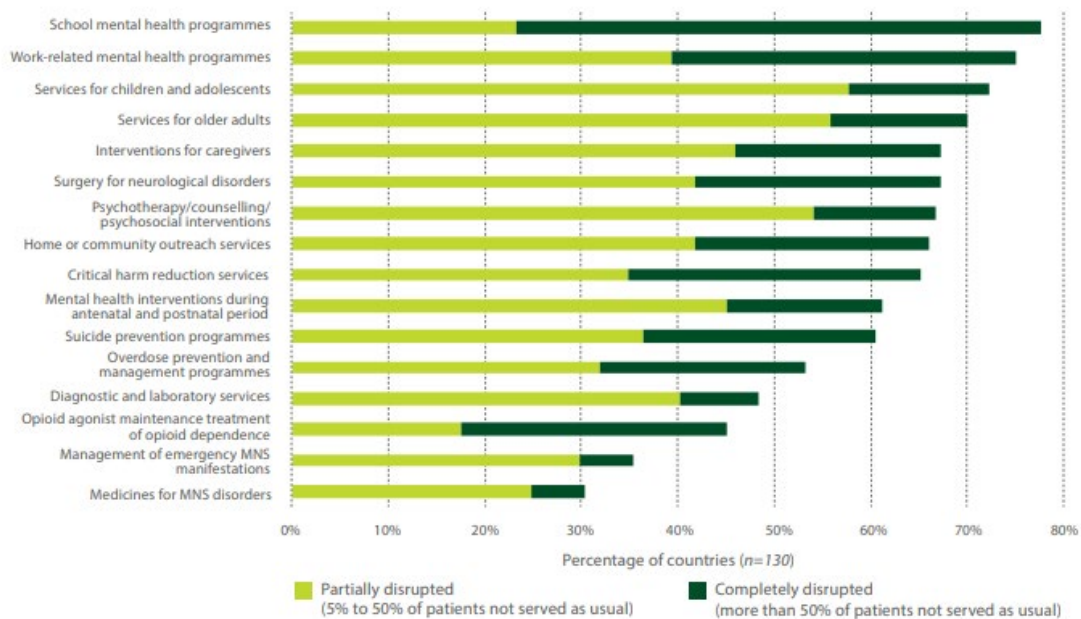
The global health crisis created by the COVID 19 pandemic has soon turned into an economic and labour market crisis and resulted in a crisis in the job market. Due to the pandemic situation, people are not able to find jobs and this is resulting in mental dissatisfaction. In the present situation, there is a 3.3 billion workforce globally and out of which 2 billion are from the informal economy(economic activities not regulated by the state). Adding to this the jobs in the informal economy are in a more vulnerable state and people are more likely to lose income Lee, Schmidt-Klau, &Verick (2020). The drive to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 virus has resulted in the imposition of lockdowns and social distancing. Such impositions have a serious effect on the businesses and in some cases, businesses had to be closed down. As a result of which many people are out of work and the income of many individuals have been slashed (Botha, New, New, Ribar, & Salamanca, 2021). The research of Hensvik, Barbanchon, &Rathelot (2020), also points out the fact that there has been a negative impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the labour market. The result of such a situation indicates that the unemployment rates have been soaring and vacancies for jobs are becoming unavailable (*Refer to Appendix 8*). It can be evidence from the study of Singh, Singh, &Baruah (2020), that the lockdown policy taken by governments all around the

world has had the most detrimental effect on the economy of the world. The fear of the spread of the pandemic had already forecasted the contraction of the world economy and the lockdowns have added salt to the injury. Due to the lockdowns, a large scale loss of income and employment have been witnessed by the world. As per the research of Posel, Oyenubi, & Kollamparambil (2021), the widespread economic fallout of the pandemic has brought in job losses and unemployment which has a direct relation with the mental health of an individual. As a result of a job loss, an individual experiences a sense of anxiety due to the uncertainty of the future and with this uncertainty people tend to go to depression. This affects the mental condition of a person and leads to serious effects as far as deaths. The research of Griffiths et al. (2021), suggests that desperate times need desperate measures and during the desperate time of the COVID 19 pandemic, restrictions in business activities and working hours were necessary to curb the spread of the disease. Such a situation has resulted in the loss of 400 million full-time jobs globally. Furthermore, the impact which has been felt on the mental health of the individuals leading to the anxiety of whether they will get a job or not and whether they will remain employed or not.

### ***2.5 Disruption in mental health services due to COVID-19***

In 93% of the world, mental health services have either been halted or disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic as demand for the service continues to increase (WHO, 2020). A survey has been conducted in 130 countries and the data reveals that the pandemic has had a devastating effect on access to mental health services which implies that increased funding is an urgent need at this moment. The countries have been spending less than 2% of the national health budgets on mental health and were unable to meet the needs of the customers before the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020). Furthermore, the different effects of COVID-19 on mental health are increasing the demand for these services, such as, isolation, fear, bereavement, loss of income are serving as triggers for mental health issues or worsening the condition of the existing mental health issues for people. Increased levels of consumption of alcohol, drug use, anxiety and insomnia can be noticed among a large number of people (WHO, 2021). Apart from the disease itself can cause mental and neurological complications, namely, stroke, agitation, delirium. People who already have neurological, mental or substance use disorders are more likely to get infected by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which may result in some severe impact on their health and even cause death (WHO, 2021).

As per the reports of the survey conducted by WHO, it can be said that 60% of the participants have reported that there has been a disruption in mental health services for vulnerable people, that includes adults, women, children and adolescents (*Refer to Appendix 9*). Disruptions in psychotherapy and counselling have been noticed by 67%, in critical harm reduction (WHO, 2020). Disruptions in accessing medicine for neurological, mental health and substance use issues have been noticed by 30% of the participants and disruptions of mental health services in the workplace and schools have also been noticed by three-quarters of the participants (WHO, 2020). To overcome these disruptions, many of the countries have adopted telemedicine or teletherapy disparities have also been noticed in terms of taking action.



**Figure 8: Disruptions in MNS related services due to COVID-19**

(Source: WHO, 2020)

### 2.6 Psychological Impact of COVID 19 on the adult Irish Population

As stated in the research of Burke et al. (2020), the psychological impact of a pandemic like the COVID 19 is multifaceted, acute and long term. In order to validate the study a survey conducted on the Irish Population showed that the level of the psychological impact of the pandemic is high and the people show signs of depression, anxiety and stress. The result of such a

condition is due to the concerns over child care, care given to old people, social isolation and employment. Furthermore, the study of Ali, Maguire, Marks, Doyle, & Sheehy (2020), reveals that the healthcare workers in the Irish hospitals are also prone to psychological distress during the pandemic. The individuals associated with the healthcare system exert adverse mental and emotional outcomes and this is mainly due to depression, anxiety, sleeping disorder and stress. Furthermore, this type of situation occurred due to the increased workload of an individual and the thought of getting the virus and infecting the near and dear ones. The research of Hyland et al. (2020), indicates that in order to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic in Ireland, a nationwide lockdown had been announced on March 27th 2020. However, this lockdown had brought in some ill effects which resulted in mental health issues of an individual residing in the country (*Refer to Appendix 10*). Furthermore, the pandemic and the lockdown situation had grappled the population of the country and covered it with the bracket of the uncertainty of the future and disruption of socio-economic systems. As per the report of Moriarty (2020), it can be seen that the psychological impact of the pandemic during the initial stages of lockdown had been high. It has been found that people have experienced anxiety and depression relating to the COVID 19 pandemic. Furthermore, it has also been evidenced that these signs of mental illness have been found more among people with already existing mental conditions from the past. Apart from this, it can also be estimated that the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of an individual is more likely to stay for a longer time. Moreover, there has been a sense of living through a catastrophe with uncertainties among the people of Ireland which adds up to the mental health-related issues of an individual (McGrath, 2020). Furthermore, the report of McGrath (2021), suggests that 60% of people in Ireland have been impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic and the younger people have a fair share of contribution in this percentage. Furthermore, the women also face the drastic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on their mental health as they are more likely to feel lonely during this time. Women also face certain situations like pregnancy which invites the fear of infection.

### ***2.7 The need for secondary mental health service response in Ireland***

In Ireland, the funding for mental health services has always remained low, which is around 6% of the entire health budget in comparison to the UK and New Zealand where it is 12%

(O'Connor et al., 2020). In Europe, Ireland has the lowest number of psychiatric beds (Eurostat, 2017). However, despite the lack of funding, recognition has been given to the need for mental health services among young people, but they still do not have easy access to secondary care. The reason behind this could be the mental health services not being able to give proper responses to the young people until the crises have occurred repeatedly or the adult-pediatric split. In order to address these situations, urgent funding is required so that their mental health needs can be solved on time through innovation and increased capacity (O'Connor et al., 2020). One of the ways could be having additional ring-fence budgeting for mental health during COVID-19, which is a specific amount of budget for building capacity, innovating and adapting in mental health services. A ring-fenced research budget for COVID-19 should also be introduced to and services are required to transform. However, the acceptability or feasibility of the approaches must be properly evaluated, and the outcomes are good for the users of the service and their families (*Refer to Appendix 11*). The infrastructure for information technology has witnessed a rapid upscaling due to COVID-19, however, some of the issues that are faced by many is access to high-quality broadband, smartphones, laptops. Furthermore, digital health interventions such as family interventions, peer-to-peer support, psychological interventions, physical health interventions, need to be adapted and developed for delivering evidence-based care at a time like this (Alvarez-Jimenez et al., 2015). In order to monitor the outcomes of patients, the data collection systems and electronic records should also be developed together with telemedicine. Lastly, the acceleration of implementing NCPs in mental health should be considered and a specific budget should be allocated for it (O'Connor et al., 2020).

### ***2.8 Effects of Mental Illness on the Distribution of COVID-19 in the Irish Population***

According to the report of WHO, the world has been severely hurt by the spread of the COVID-19 and it has disrupted the social abilities of people and due to its massive spread inside the globe a lot of sacrifices has been made and a lot of casualties regarding pre-existing issues have been noticed which played a key role in the impact of the virus on human lives (WHO, 2020). As per the report of The World Bank (2020), due to the rapid spread of the virus, the government of different countries had to impose strict lockdown measures and social distancing has become the new normal and this sudden change has severely impacted the social lives of the people as it has

been compromised in order to maintain safety and breaking the chain of the rapid spread of COVID-19 (The World Bank, 2020). Thus, parks, movie theatres and other social gathering places were closed to avoid gatherings and strict lockdown measures have been also imposed to contain the spread of the virus by not allowing anyone to come out of their house except in emergencies. This shows the severity of the disease (Jones, Palumbo, & Brown, 2021). According to the report of the Central Statistics Office (2018), the total population of Ireland stands at 6.6 million which shows that the country is densely populated and it makes it difficult for the government to contain the spread of the virus (Central Statistics Office, 2018). Ireland has suffered significantly due to the spread of the COVID-19 as the country has registered on 11 May 2020 that almost 23,000 people in Ireland have tested positive for COVID-19 and approximately 1,458 casualties have been observed (Kennelly et al., 2020). The country has faced a significant amount of challenges regarding maintaining the health, social and economic aspects of the country during the pandemic (*Refer to Appendix 12*). In addition to that COVID-19 pandemic has significantly contributed to the psychological distress and mental illness and it has been also identified that the pre-existing mental illness or psychological disorders also had a significant impact on the pattern and distribution of the COVID-19 pandemic across the Irish population (O'Connor, Wrigley, Jennings, Hill, & Niazi, 2020). While analysing the different aspects of the research it has been further identified that job losses, the frustration of staying at home and joblessness have significantly impacted the mental health of the Irish People. According to Frawley et al. (2020), in Ireland, the odds of infection with COVID-19 are more than seven times higher among the people having psychological disorders and mental health issues compared to the general population having issues regarding comorbidities such as cancers, high pressure, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Thus, it can be said that pre-existing mental health issues have also impacted the Irish population during the COVID-19 pandemic. As opined by (Frawley et al., 2020), In 2019, the inspector of the Mental Health Services, Dr Susan Finnerty reported that patients having a mental illness and psychological disorders have a tendency of accessing the healthcare facilities in a reduced manner as in most of the cases delayed presentation of the illness, the difficulty of coping up with required and demanded monitoring, reduced uptake of health screening and misattribution of the symptoms (Frawley et al., 2020). Thus, the Irish

population needs to be more active in terms of getting medical access but due to the pandemic, the situation has become even worse than before.

### ***2.9 Mental Health Legislation in Ireland***

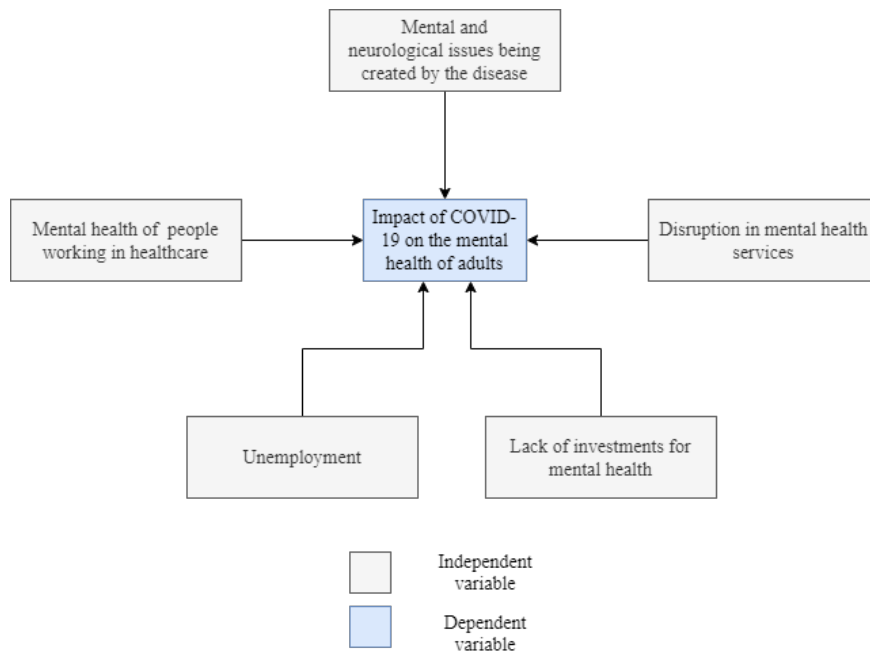
The mental health legislation in Ireland is currently required to mitigate the number of casualties identified due to the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of the Irish population (Latif & Malik, 2012). According to the Psychological Society of Ireland, it has been warned that the pandemic has been the main reason for escalating mental health issues and psychological disorders among the Irish population and it has been also identified that the mental health impact of COVID-19 is likely to stay for a longtime (McGrath, 2020). The report further stated that the Irish healthcare workers are observing an increased rate of psychological disorders and mental health issues because of their work pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic (McGrath, 2020). It has been also identified that the nurses and women healthcare workers of the Irish hospitals who are working in the epicentres of the virus are facing tremendous mental and physical pressure in treating the patients affected by the virus and it is significantly affecting their mental health (McGrath, 2020). To safeguard such increasing issues regarding the mental health of the Irish population the Irish government has taken few steps to improve the current situation as the government has imposed the Mental Health Act, 2001 which helps the Irish patients to get proper treatment which will also include proper mental health services. The government has also implemented the Mental Treatment Act 1945 which will help patients with psychological disorders to voluntary admission to hospitals during a crisis (Latif & Malik, 2012). It has been also identified that before this legislation provisions were only allowed in private hospitals but it is now also available in government hospitals. The Irish government has also stated that they are effectively monitoring the current situation and they are also asking the people to be patient as it will help them in implementing more suitable and necessary reforms by analysing the current situation (Latif & Malik, 2012).

### ***2.10 Literature Gap***

While finding the existing literature on the topic and exploring the different areas a lack has been identified regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of Irish people. The impact on

younger people of Ireland has been covered in the existing literature, but there has been insufficient data related to the impact on adults. The issues being faced by the Irish adult people and ways to mitigate those issues have not been considered previously. In this study, this gap would be fulfilled regarding the lack of details on the specific issue of mental health among adults in Ireland.

**2.11 Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 9: Conceptual Framework**

In the conceptual framework, the dependent variable is the Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of adults, which is dependent on various independent factors, that are- mental and neurological issues being caused by the disease itself, the disruption and lack of investments in mental health services, unemployment, and mental health of people working in the healthcare sector.

**2.12 Summary**

In this section, the various aspects of the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of people throughout the world and the Irish population have been discussed. The different types of mental health issues that have been identified here are depression, self-abuse, issues caused by



social exclusion, poverty or educational disadvantages and anxiety. The emergence of COVID-19 has created a negative impact on mental health as suicidal thoughts have increased, and depression, dementia, isolation, uncertainty, insecurity of the jobs have also been noticed. The pandemic has resulted in the closing down of many businesses, and have created a severe negative impact on the job market which has also affected the mental health of people. Disruptions have been noticed in mental health services in the majority of the countries. Among the Irish population, signs of depression, stress, anxiety have been noticed. Individuals who are associated with the healthcare system have shown signs of depression, anxiety, sleeping disorder has also been noticed. Thus, urgent investments for mental health, the use of digital ways for providing mental health services, and acceleration of implementing NCPs in mental health services through specific amounts of budget are some of the ways to mitigate these issues.

## **Chapter 3: Research Questions**

### ***3.1 Research aim***

The aim of the study is to identify and evaluate the impact of Covid 19 on the mental health of adults in Ireland.

### ***3.2 Research questions***

- What are the impacts of Covid 19 on the mental health among different adults in Ireland?
- How does the psychological health condition of male and female were affected due to the involvement of Covid 19 in Ireland?
- What are strategic measures for mitigating the psychological stresses of different persons in Ireland?

### ***3.3 Research objectives***

- To identify the effect of Covid19 upon the mental health of adults in Ireland.
- To analyse the differentiated psychological effect between Irish men and women due to the pandemic of COVID 19
- To recommend the possible measures in terms of overcoming the mental well-being Challenges of Irish adults.

### ***3.4 Research hypothesis***

H0: COVID 19 does not have an increased psychological impact upon different adults in Ireland.

H1: COVID 19 has an increased psychological impact upon different adults in Ireland.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

The research methodology chapter is important in a dissertation as it explains the wide philosophical underpinnings of the selected methods of data collection. It also helps in assessing the validity and reliability of the entire research. This chapter will describe the chosen data collection method, tools and techniques, strategies and approaches relevant to address the main intent of the study.

### ***4.2 Research philosophy***

The researcher has chosen positivism philosophy based on the collection of data through online surveys. Positivism research philosophy has been selected because of the inclusion of quantitative data in the research. It has helped the researcher to evaluate the facts and figures based on the mental health of Irish adults because of the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Žukauskas, Vveinhardt&Andriukaitienė (2018), this philosophy was also selected because it is directly oriented to the concept of objectivism and with the help of positivism philosophy, researchers can exhibit their perception to assess reality. Positivism relies on the quantifiable observations grounded on the survey results leading to statistical evaluations. In this research, a survey has been conducted on 100 adult individuals from Ireland, irrespective of gender to know about the mental health condition in this pandemic situation.

Positivism was specifically chosen for analysing the percentages that have been acquired from the survey results. This research philosophy has benefited the researcher to understand the actual mental condition of the Irish people with proper logic and truth. Moreover, this is so because of the incorporation of numeric information that has been accumulated with the help of survey methods. With the use of the positivism philosophy, the researcher has been able to collect data and has analysed it objectively. It has also allowed the researcher to reflect an accurate knowledge to answer the research question based on knowing the mental health condition of adults in Ireland because of Covid-19.

### ***4.3 Research approach***

The research approach is recognised as the plans and procedures incorporated within research spanning the phases from wider assumptions to elaborative methods of data interpretation. The approach that has been used in the research is deductive not only grounded on the purpose of testing the hypothesis of the research but also to define the causal integration between the variables and concepts associated with the same. Examination and justification of research hypotheses through the aspect of deductive approach have been facilitative towards furnishing logical reasoning based on the subjective area of the research. As per Hyde (2000), the deductive approach of research is commenced with the aspect of generalisations and seeks towards understanding if the same can be applied to specific instances. In retrospect to the present research deductive approach has been utilised towards furnishing specific perspectives on the phenomenon related to the influence of COVID 19 on the mental health condition of Irish adults.

Additionally, the commencement of statistical intervention has been formalised towards testing the hypothesis in compliance with the deductive research approach. In order to generalize the findings of the research, with a comprehensive perspective deductive approach has been utilised. In short, the deductive approach was specially selected because according to Zalaghi&Khazaei (2016), it helps in deducing the outcomes from the results. Besides, the formulation of meaning assumptions based on the subjective area of the research has been possible through the deductive method. Thus, the aim of incorporating deductive research within this quantitative study has been to examine the hypothesis thereby drawing a specific conclusion. Precisely the influence of COVID 19 on the increment of psychological footprint has been determined through the aspects of deductive reasoning in the research.

### ***4.4 Research strategy***

The research strategy is considered as the systematic plan for conducting in which planning, monitoring and execution processes are introduced. As per the view of different types of research strategies are introduced such as,

**Observational research strategy:** The observational research strategy mainly deals with natural viewpoints. In this aspect, laboratory observational process and naturalistic observational process are introduced.

**Survey research strategy:** The survey research strategy mainly considers close-ended questionnaires in terms of collecting quantitative information regarding a topic. Further, the involvement of survey research strategy provides multiple advantages in identifying core values regarding a topic.

**Qualitative interview:** The qualitative interview strategy mainly deals with open-ended questionnaires for introducing detailed analysis regarding a case or subject.

**Case study:** The case study method mainly considers the in-depth analyses and evaluation regarding a subject or topic (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

For the study, the *quantitative survey research strategy is introduced* in terms of collecting numeric information. With the involvement of quantitative information, the study was able to define the impact of Covid 19 upon mental health. According to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, (2019) the involvement of survey research strategy provides multiple advantages in identifying subsequent research findings based on objectives. To identify different problems related to mental health, it is also essential to introduce a quantitative survey research strategy in the study. Further, after collecting information through a survey, the study was also able to develop strategic measures for mitigating mental health problems. With the involvement of large numbers of samples, the survey strategy also helps in finding the problems of anxiety and fear among different populations.

#### ***4.5 Research Choice***

The research design that has been incorporated within the periphery of this inquiry process includes a mono-quantitative method. Precisely the presence of survey strategy within the research has been influential towards the selection of mono-quantitative methods. The mono method means the use of a single type of data collection method and in this research study, the only survey has been used for which it stated as a mono-quantitative method.

The gathering of numerical data through the aspect of the online survey has been responsible for the choice of the mono-quantitative method. Additionally, the above-mentioned research design has been impactful towards including real-time perspective in the research thereby ascertaining the credibility and reliability of the same. Moreover, allowance of significant accuracy and objectivity in the research has been framed through the execution of the mono-quantitative design. Thereby, understanding of the psychological condition of the adults in Ireland during the

outbreak of COVID 19 has been aligned towards the inclusion of practical observation in the research. Hence, implementing a mono-quantitative method has been with the prerogative of achieving research objectives with credible and updated information. Therefore, the mono-quantitative method has catered towards strong influence in the research to summarize the phenomenon associated with the subjective arena.

Furthermore, the vitality of the mono-quantitative design in the research has been related to furnishing credible information about the mental health scenario of a particular group that is Irish adults through the strategy of the survey. Therefore, the understanding of deterioration and changes in the mental health condition, amongst Irish adult individuals has been facilitative through the considered design of research. Subsequently, a justification for the research objectives has been ascertained.

#### ***4.6 Data collection method***

The data for this research study has been collected with the help of the survey method and it was done online. The reason for conducting the online survey was the pandemic situation, keeping in mind the safety of the respondents. It has already been stated above that 100 participants from the Irish population have been selected without considering gender. The researcher has selected only those participants who were between 18-35 years because this age group, according to Petry (2002), falls under the category of young adults. The only reason for selection for this age group is because this is age group is the best for our study. The survey has been selected out of other data collection methods because according to Jones, Baxter &Khanduja (2013), it is an effective way for collecting data from a wide cohort. The use of online surveys has helped the researcher to select a large population, that is, 100 participants which in turn provided a higher statistical power.

However, it is also stated by Jones, Baxter &Khanduja (2013), that collecting large amounts of data through surveys helps to validate the results. Further, by conducting surveys, the researcher has got to know about the mental state of Irish adults due to the pandemic situation. It has also helped in knowing about both the adverse and positive impact of lockdowns on them. However, this method has been specially selected because no other method is there that can get in such extensive capability. Collecting data through surveys has helped the researcher to obtain

targeted and accurate results that aided in reaching the desired conclusion. The quantitative data were also used to test the hypothesis as the latter is a significant process in statistics. For this research, quantitative data has also been used to govern which statement is validated by the survey results. The survey method was important for this research to analyse the significant aspects like frustration, depression, fear of losing lives, prolonged lockdown and their impact on the adult minds of Irish people.

#### ***4.7 Sampling method***

Purposive sampling was selected by the researcher because according to Robinson (2014), it allows for intentional selection of the participants on the basis of their capability to address the main intent of the research. Here, in this study, the purpose is oriented to select participants who fall under the age group of 18-35 years as they called the young adults. Selection of participants based on this age group was necessary because it has helped in knowing the mental condition of the young people of Ireland at the time of Covid-19. This sampling method was also chosen by the researcher because as per Sharma (2017), it offers proper clarification for making a generalisation based on the responses of the selected participants.

#### ***4.8 Data analysis technique***

The technique for analysing the data in the research has been associated with the utilisation of statistical methods. Interpretation of the gathered data has been based on the usage of a comprehensive statistical tool whereby the feasibility of factual data has been incorporated in the premises of the research. From the results collected through Google Forms, tables and pie charts were presented to show the data. These tables and pie charts were then evaluated to infer the ultimate conclusions. On the other hand, utilisation of statistical methods for collecting data through survey has catered towards the depiction of results through graphical representation thereby furnishing a reliable conclusion. Therefore, the execution of statistical models in the incorporated data has been significant towards accomplishing research objectives based on factual context.

#### ***4.9 Time horizon***

Time horizon mainly defines a time frame for the research in which two types are involved such as longitudinal time horizon and cross-sectional time horizon. For the study, a *cross-sectional time horizon* is introduced because for a survey short time is required. According to Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan, & Moorman (2008), the cross-sectional time horizon mainly deals with the collection and analysis of data for a specific point of time. Further, due to the short number of samples, the cross-sectional time horizon is introduced as it helps in collecting better information related to the mental health problems due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### ***4.10 Ethical considerations***

The right to privacy is followed in terms of collecting survey data from respondents. For this research primarily, information sheets and consent forms are delivered to different sample populations. In the survey, sample populations gain the opportunity of voluntary participation rules. The online survey method is introduced in the study due to the pandemic situation of Covid 19. In this aspect, the Google form is introduced in terms of delivering close-ended questionnaires to sample populations.

#### ***4.11 Research Limitations***

The main limitations have been associated with inadequacy of cost and time for the culmination of the research. Lack of proper financing has catered towards restriction in terms of gathering in-depth information. Therefore, one of the shortcomings related to the research has been the unavailability of adequate finance which hindered the aspects of utilising varied sources of data collection. Additionally, time constraint has been implicative towards completing the research has catered towards the accomplishment of goal with limited information thereby feasibility of in-depth inquiry has been hindered. Apart from this lack of proper information in the previous research based on the present subject has posed a hindrance in the study for securing relevant empirical perspective. Due to the shortage of time and pandemic situation, the researcher was unable to conduct interviews.



#### *4.12 Summary*

The researcher has utilised positivism research philosophy, deductive research approach and survey strategy for the commencement of the inquiry process. Also, the execution of mono-quantitative design has been formulated towards gathering factual information in the research. On the other hand, the performance of surveys through the random sampling method has been significant towards reducing the quotient of bias from the research. A deductive approach has been selected for the study to examine the hypothesis. However significant limitations of the research have been aligned with inadequate timeframe, cost as well as deficiency of information in the previous studies.

## Chapter 5. Data Analysis

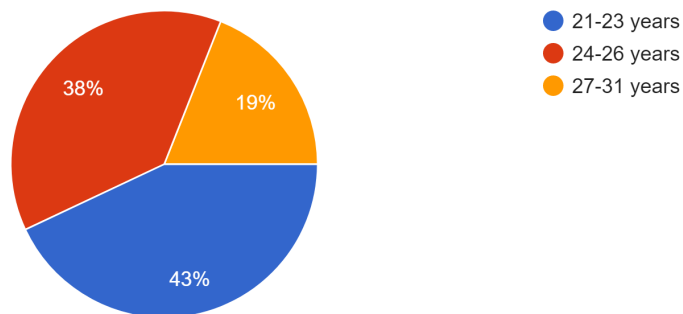
### 5.1 Introduction

In this part of data analysis, the survey responses will be focused upon is related to the subject of COVID 19 effect on the mental illness of Irish adult people. At the same time, after the discussion on data analysis, discussion, recommendations and conclusions will also be presented.

### 5.2 Survey data analysis

1. What is your Age?

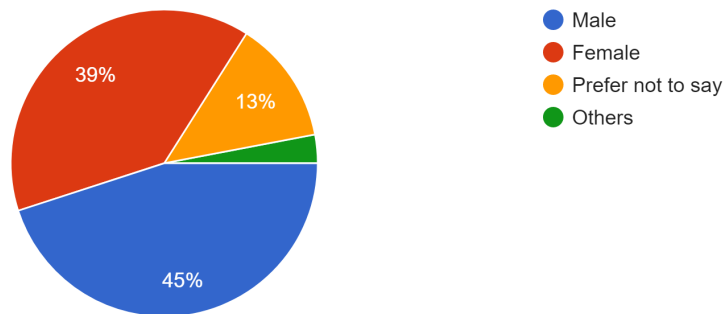
100 responses



It can be seen in the graph that most participants fall under the age of 21 to 23. People between these age groups are more socially active and are more curious and willing to participate in mental health issue which indicated that they are more vulnerable to the illness or can relate to it. On the other hand, the participants that come after the younger group, are the people under the age group of 24 to 26 years. These age groups and their proneness to such illnesses are also implying the fact very clearly that men and women under such ages go through a variety of mental illnesses due to many serious factors. In this case, this ratio is higher also because of the heinous impact that COVID 19 has injected on the people of Ireland and also on all over the world at a devastating pace. Lastly, the participants of Ireland that are situated at the bottom of this graph are the category of people under the age of 27 to 31 years.

2. What is your Gender?

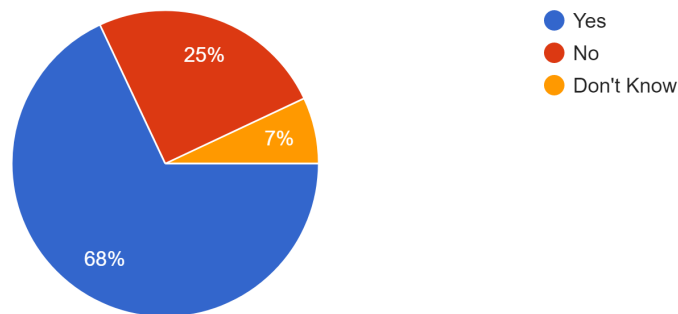
100 responses



As per this graph demonstration, it is quite transparent that male participants are more relating to the illness than female participants. Emotional pain which deliberately yet unconsciously brings into being by the dubious nature of the mind arises disorders, mental illnesses, anxiety disorders and loneliness. Furthermore, the female participants are the next second category who are curious about the illness after male participants. Females are not that much behind by their quantity as they are also the mediators to household income nowadays in Ireland, they are also becoming vulnerable due to the effects of COVID 19. There are very limited numbers of people who have agreed to answer their gender and their views on how COVID 19 is fostering mental illness to the people.

3. Do you think that the government policies have helped the patients in recovering from the psychological diseases?

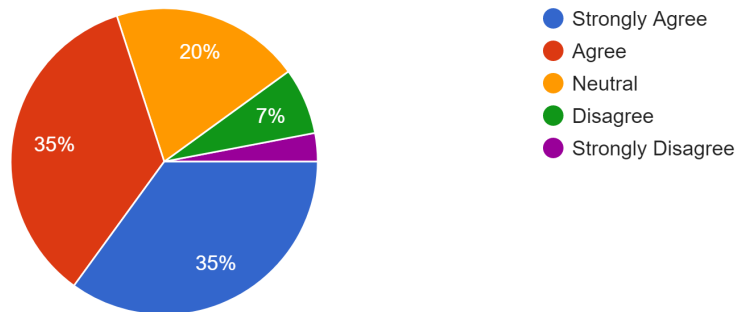
100 responses



The graph represents whether the people who have the symptoms of mental illness can be benefited or have found remedies from the Government policies or not. As per the graph results, it is quite visible that most people have recovered their illness from the initiatives of the Irish government policies. From around 100 survey participants, most of the people have agreed to the fact that their psychological problems have not only been addressed by the government but also solved. On the other hand, only medium percentages of people have not digested the fact of their psychological recovery through the government policies. Psychological diseases are one of the main problems that are very common in Ireland and can be the source of the COVID 19 scenario in the economy of the country and its human resources as a whole. For example, Prof Martin Cormican, lead for infection control, of the Health Service Executive, said that Ireland will have positive COVID cases in the upcoming days and also claimed that the amount of vaccine that is presently there in Ireland will not reduce the spread of the virus to the Irish community.

4. Do you think that the COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the mental health of the Irish population?

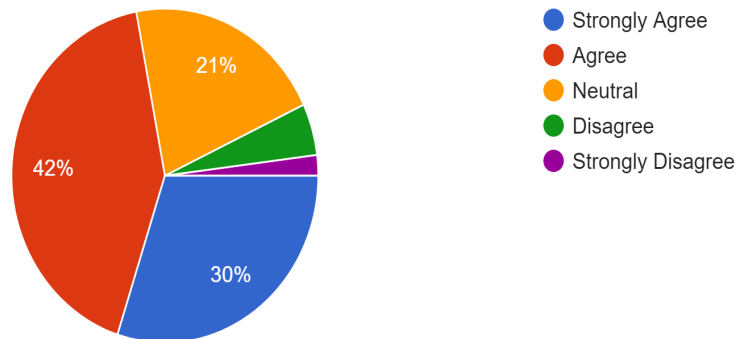
100 responses



From the above table, it has been identified that the COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the mental health of the Irish population due to the pandemic. At the same time, the people have also strongly agreed to the fact that COVID 19 is indeed a major fact that instigates the mental illness factor a striking number. Furthermore, there is no reason to conceptualise the fact that the new mental illness factors are coming from nowhere or coming out of irrational consequences as they were absent or at least were present at a considerable number in Ireland. Surprisingly the issue of COVID 19 has tragically been so traumatic to the people that the issues of mental illness which had not been so immense before are suddenly coming to light. On the other hand, the Irish people who agreed to the fact of COVID impact on mental illness, are also similar in proportion to the people who have strongly agreed. On the contrary, a very small number of people have given neutral responses.

5. Does the Irish population are suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

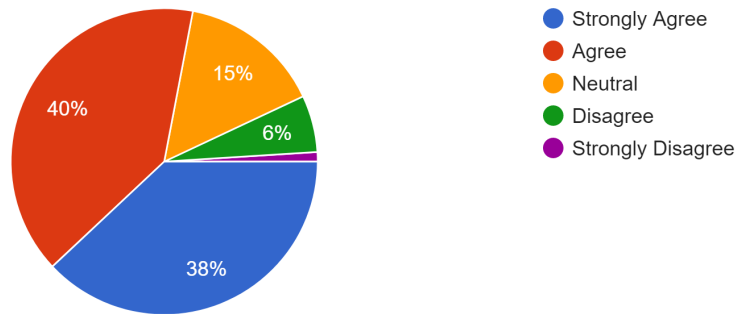
100 responses



The above graph is reviewed in the question of whether the people of Ireland have suffered by COVID 19 or not. As per the survey responses, it is quite visible that most of the people have agreed to the fact that they have been affected by the effects of COVID 19. Amongst the total participants of the survey, half of them have agreed to the fact that they are getting affected by the virus and thereby there are a considerable amount of people who can be categorised in the next category on a quantity basis who have strongly agreed to the fact that COVID 19 have seriously damaged their health and majorly strangled the economy of their household. The effects of the virus that instigates suffering among the people in Ireland are not even unusual in the present circumstances.

6. Does the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed the world to challenges leading to the downfall of the public healthcare system?

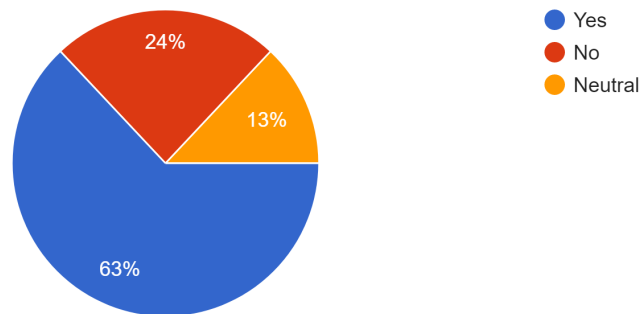
100 responses



In this particular graph, people were asked whether they acknowledge the fact that their healthcare services in the country have been seriously damaged by COVID 19 or not. As per the responses, most of the people from the total participants of 100, have acknowledged that they are agreed that their healthcare systems have been affected by the immense COVID cases. The patients who have been appointed are at such a high number that bed and other medical amenities are not evenly distributed to all of them leading to a consequence of complete downfall. On the other hand, half of the people from the survey responses have strongly agreed that their healthcare services are getting a lot of pressure due to the COVID case and its increasing number.

7. Does the strict lockdown measure have affected the mental health of the Irish people?

100 responses

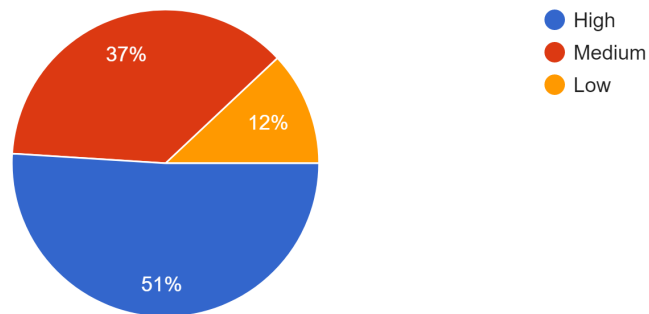


From the above graph, it is visible that the strict lockdown measures imposed by the Irish government have seriously damaged the conditions of their mental health. On the other hand, there is a very small number of people who have neglected the fact of the lockdown being one of the reasons why the mental conditions among the Irish community have deteriorated, On the contrary, the responses of a very small number of people were also very neutral about the fact of COVID 19 being a reasonable issue of mental illness in Ireland. At the same time, strict lockdown measures have not been so problematic to a very limited number of people. This criterion suggests that most of the people in Ireland have become very much consumed by fear, anxiety and mental illness in general due to the effects of COVID 19. Therefore, the people of Ireland, especially younger people are more likely to be consumed by such mental illnesses.



8. What is the impact of the COVID-19 on the Irish adults?

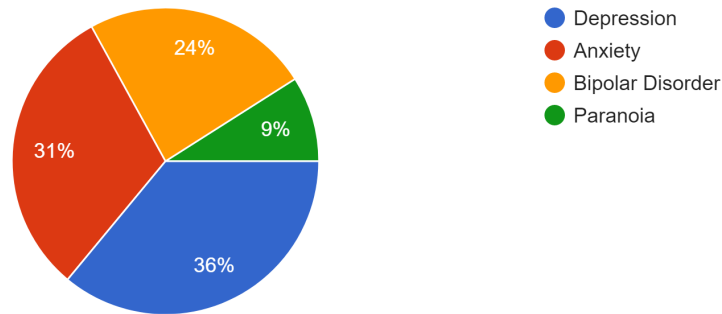
100 responses



From this graph, the aspects which are coming into existence are the facets of reality that have completely devastated the mental structure of Irish adults. The facets of reality that have been one of the key problems in generating mental illness among Irish adults are very high. The impact of COVID 19 has been very high among the adults and medium impacts that are extracted out of the survey are very little as compared to the highly affected adults. At the same time, a low percentage of adults have been found out through the survey who have accounted COVID 19 as a serious problem. This small number of ratios simply signifies how extreme results of mental illness have damaged the well being of Irish adults. The adult individuals of Ireland who have been seriously damaged by the effects of the virus are plenty while medium affected people are quite small in comparison with high responses. On the contrary, low responses are also gathered through mental illness as well which are quite banal in comparison to both medium affected adults responses and with highly affected adult results of responses.

9. What is the most common mental health disease observed between the Irish adults?

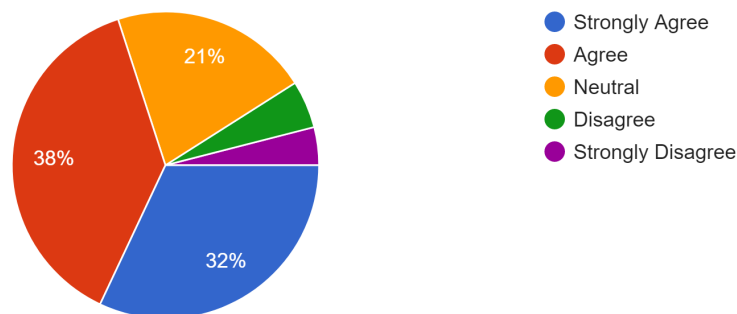
100 responses



From the above graph, which mental disease affects the Irish adults most are demonstrated. As per the graph results, it is clearly visible that amongst the categories of mental illness such as depression, anxiety, paranoia and bipolar disorder, depression has affected the Irish adults most. At the same time, after the high effects of depression, one mental illness that affects relatively similar is anxiety to the adults. The next most affected mental illness that triggers and deteriorates the wellbeing of Irish adults is bipolar disorder. The mental illness that has resulted in the least impactful diseases in the realm of psychological problems is paranoia.

10. To what extent do you consider that COVID-19 is the main cause of depression?

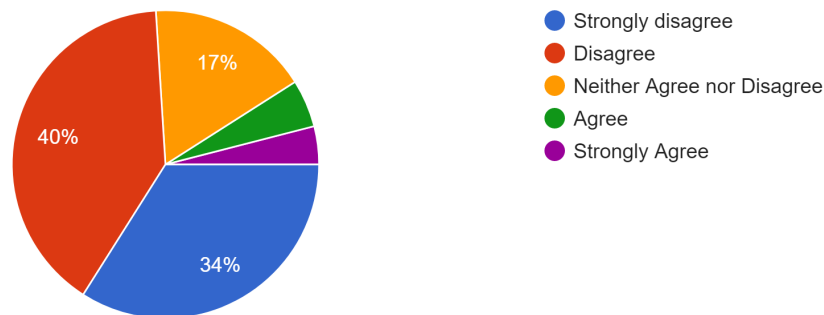
100 responses



It is evident from the above graphical analysis that the majority of the survey participants agreed to the fact that the COVID-19 is the major reason for depression in Ireland. It identifies that the work from the home situation and remote management has frustrated the employees of several organisations. The new work process and contactless system created a depression on the mental system of the employees. The employees faced huge amounts of turnover from the management of the organisations which created a significant depression among them. The loss of jobs across all sectors in Ireland faced a significant problem regarding depression. It created different mental health issues for the employees of different departments of the organisations in Ireland. The students also get frustrated due to the online system of education in Ireland. The reduction in contact has generated a significant depression among the citizens of Ireland during the pandemic situation.

12. To what extent do you believe that a pandemic situation generates a financial crisis that leads to depression in Ireland?

100 responses

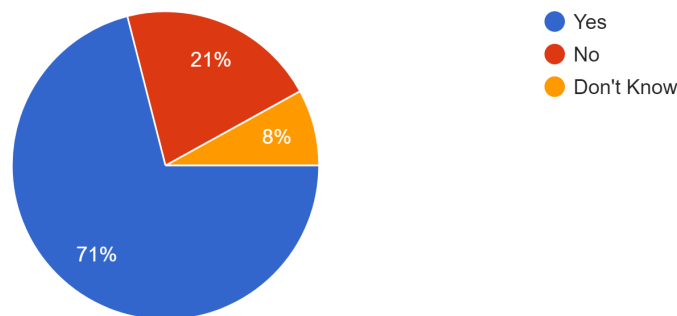


It is evident from the above graphical analysis that the majority of the survey participants do not agree that the pandemic situation generates a financial crisis that leads to depression. It is evident from the above analysis that the majority of the participants think that the financial stability of Ireland is very good which cannot be damaged during the pandemic situation. The participants also suggest that there are adequate numbers of small and medium scale opportunities in Ireland in every sector. The small and medium scale organisations are able to provide an adequate amount

of income opportunities for the citizens of Ireland which delivers strong financial stability for every household in the country. It is also evident from the statement of the survey participants that the government of Ireland is also providing sufficient financial support to different sectors to provide adequate job opportunities and income options. Therefore, the majority of the participants disagree with the fact that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has generated a financial crisis that is responsible for the depression among the citizens in Ireland.

13. Do you believe that Ireland has the adequate healthcare center for providing treatment for mental illness?

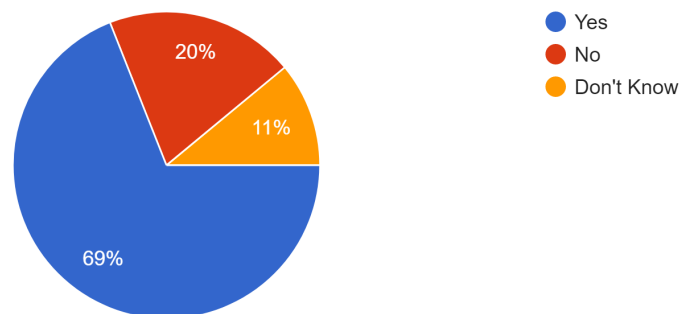
100 responses



It is evident from the above graphical analysis that the majority of the survey participants agree with the fact that Ireland has an adequate healthcare centre to provide treatment for mental illness. The ongoing pandemic situation and employee turnover have delivered a significant amount of financial pressure on the majority of the employees. It also increased the rise in mental illness patients across the country. However, according to B.D.Kelly (2021) the healthcare centre in Ireland is very much active to deal with the rising mental illness patients. The government has focused strongly, in this case, to support the mental health of the citizens of Ireland and employed quality medical personnel to deal with the issue. The medical staff are well equipped with advanced skills to take care of the mental patients and diagnose them effectively in this tough pandemic situation. The infrastructure is also advanced in the healthcare sector to deal with crucial issues of the mental health of the patients and cure them properly.

14. Do you think that the Irish government has helped in mitigating mental health issues?

100 responses



It is evident from the above graphical analysis that the majority of the survey participants agreed to the fact that the government of Ireland is helping the citizens to mitigate the mental health issues. According to (Dáil Éireann debate - Wednesday, 29 May 2019, 2021) the Irish government created significant allocation in the existing healthcare centres to deal with the mental health issues of the citizens. The government has also developed new health care centres for the country and employed quality medical staff for the healthcare organisations to effectively diagnose the mental health issues of the citizens of the country. The incorporation of skilful and experienced resources has helped medical organisations to successfully mitigate the issues of mental health. The government of Ireland also enhanced the infrastructure in the medical organisations of Ireland to provide adequate opportunities for the professionals and supervise and diagnose the mental health problems of the citizens.

### ***5.3 Summary***

The survey results indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated a financial burden on the adults of Ireland which ultimately resulted in several mental health issues. It was also noticed from the results that the Government has managed adequate resources and infrastructure in the healthcare sector to deal with the mental health issues of the citizens and cure them properly.

## Chapter 6. Findings and Discussion

### *6.1 Findings*

In the findings and data analysis section the survey results indicate that the majority of the respondents are within the age group of 21 to 23. Whereas, the people belonging to the age group of 27 to 31 are the least number of respondents in the survey. Furthermore, most of the respondents of the survey have been from the male population of the country which comprised 45% and the female respondents comprised 39% of the survey. The first question relating to the topic that is the impact of COVID 19 on the mental health of adults in Ireland have been asked to understand whether the government policies have been able to help the patients to recover from psychological diseases or not. In response to this, the majority of the survey population indicated that the government policies have been beneficial towards them in dealing with psychological diseases. In the second question relating to the topic which has been directed towards getting an opinion from the respondents on whether COVID 19 has been able to impact the mental health of the Irish population or not, it can be seen that a joint majority of respondents have agreed and strongly agreed.

The next question has been asked to understand if the population of Ireland is suffering from the COVID 19 crisis or not and in response to this majority of the respondents have agreed to this. This implies that COVID 19 has had a deep impact on the population of the country and primarily in a negative way. The following question has been asked to identify whether COVID 19 has been the reason behind the downfall of public healthcare or not. The response to this question suggests that it is the reason and it can be analysed from the response to which the majority of the participants agree. The following two questions of the survey have been asked to analyse whether the lockdown imposed by the Irish government has had an impact on the people or not and the amount of impact COVID 19 has had on the Irish adult. From the responses to these questions, it can be analysed that the majority of the respondents identify that lockdown has had an impact on the population. Furthermore, the responses also indicate that the impact of COVID 19 is high in Ireland. In the next question, the most common mental health disease has been identified and the responses of this question indicate that depression is the most common mental

health disease. The following question indicates that the majority of the survey respondents have agreed to the fact that the COVID 19 pandemic situation is the major reason behind depression.

In the following question majority of the respondents disagree with the fact that a pandemic situation generates a financial crisis that leads to depression. From the next question, it can be identified that Ireland has adequate healthcare centres providing mental illness treatment. This has been analysed from the responses collected from the respondents which indicate that the majority of the respondents support this fact. Finally, in the last question, it has been found that the Irish Government has been able to mitigate the mental health-related issues in Ireland. It is evident from the fact that the majority of the respondents have confirmed and agreed to this fact.

## ***6.2 Discussion***

In the third question where most of the people have agreed to the fact that COVID 19 have seriously damaged their mental health and created issues of mental illness. For example, HSE reports and their specialists have also acknowledged the fact that the illness is going to strike up after the pandemic as well. Therefore, a “tsunami of mental health” services will be needed in the upcoming days in Ireland also predicted. There are around 2,000 children in Ireland who are waiting for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (Freyne, 2021). On the other hand, primary care psychology therapy has also been asked for by around 10,000 people in Ireland as well (Freyne, 2021).

In the next question where it is asked to the people of Ireland whether they believe that COVID 19 has a significant impact on mental health or not. Most people have considered that COVID 19 has strongly devastated their mental structure to a very damaging extent. A research paper from the Northern Ireland Assembly has given evidence on how mental illness has been spread among the younger people in Ireland and suicidal tendencies can take place (BBC, 2021). One of the reasons that create this extreme level of illness among these younger people is reasons bereavement, job and income loss, depression and loneliness. On the other hand, the main participants who have been most affected by mental illness are the people who are front line workers in the hospitals, people who suffer from post infections of COVID and those people who do not have enough financial resources.

In the next question, government support was given to eliminate the effects of mental illness, where many people have acknowledged that the government has helped. Therefore, 13,348 referrals were created especially for children and adults which is named Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) service in the area of Northern Ireland (BBC, 2021). By the end of September, the result of the referral had risen to 1,508 (BBC, 2021).

On the other hand, it is also presented in the questions that mainly economic downfalls have accounted for such mental illness among the Irish people and most people have agreed to the fact. At the same time, where half of the economy is supported by consumer spending, devastated by more than 13 % in the third and second quarter in the year 2020 (Taylor, 2020). On the other hand, supply chain disruptions have also accounted for in Ireland which is also one of the main reasons behind such a downfall.



## **Chapter 7. Conclusion and recommendations**

### ***7.1 Conclusion***

The research study analysed the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health factors among the adults of Ireland. The background information identified that the ongoing pandemic situation has created several mental health issues all over the world and 93% of the mental health services have been stopped globally. The rise in employee turnover, prolonged lockdown and change in attitude and behaviour resulted in significant depression among the adults. It was found that almost 50% of the youth globally are depressed due to the pandemic situation. It was also identified that the problem is expected to rise due to several waves of COVID-19. It was noticed that the mental health issues lead to the feeling of loneliness and isolation in this period and almost 19% of the citizens face mental disorders due to the rise in pandemic situations. The research analysed the root causes for the mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the pandemic on the economic situation. The research study analysed relevant literature regarding the factors which are related to mental health issues due to the rise in COVID-19 cases.

The literature review identified the factors which are causing mental health issues, the global impact of COVID-19 on mental health, the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the job market and disruption in mental health services due to the global pandemic situation. The study also analysed the psychological impact of COVID-19 on the adult Irish citizens, mental health legislation in the country and the impact of mental illness in the distribution of the COVID-19 on the Irish population. The research mainly identified the impact of COVID-19 on the adults of Ireland, the psychological impact of COVID-19 on the adults and possible solutions to improve them. The research study is significant for the medical sector of Ireland and the government to improve the mental health condition during the tough situation. The study conducted a survey among 100 participants who were between 21-31 years old to find the mental health situation and the potential causes of the mental health problem among the citizens of Ireland. The survey results indicated that the COVID-19 has generated a financial burden on the adults of Ireland which ultimately resulted in several mental health issues. It was also identified that the Government has managed adequate resources and infrastructure in the healthcare sector of Ireland to deal with the mental health issues of the citizens and cure them properly.

## ***7.2 Recommendations***

The most popular clinical measure which is called Symptom Checklist 90 Revised Version (SCL-90-R) is used for patients who have interpersonal issues and psychological problems. It is recommended to use the therapy for mitigating problems of mental health problems of adults in Ireland. The satisfaction level among the people who have tried the therapy is quite high even though they had to pay for the therapy themselves. On the other hand, individuals who have experienced the mental illness factors in them must deal with them by seeking help not by hiding from them.

At the same time, they are advised to take help from the health care professionals and also from the relaxation and lifestyle modifications. Therefore, listening to music can be one of the ways by which patients can be recovered. Prayer, positive thinking, yoga and meditation, Indoor playing, online learning courses and through Aerobic exercises people at any age can be recovered from all the facets of depression, anxiety and loneliness. Since effectiveness and mobility have been lost due to unemployment, the mind tends to roam around every place it could thereby resulting in all the psychological problems. Hence, these problems can only be mitigated when a person will be focused on a given task and enjoy it thoroughly.

The present research study only focused on the primary quantitative data collection process to identify the factors related to the mental health issues of Irish citizens. However, there are not any interview processes regarding the topic which could have delivered a more detailed understanding of the causes and issues. The study can include the interview process among the medical health professionals across different medical care organisations to identify and analyse different factors related to the research topic. The interview process can include information regarding the practical issues related to employee turnover, financial burden or other causes which are increasing mental health problems and suicidal activities. The interview among the healthcare staff could have presented in detail analysis of the contribution of the government to provide information regarding the improvement of infrastructure and quality resources to deal with the mental health problems among the adults in Ireland. The interview section can further add the information regarding the possible solution proposed by the medical professionals which can enhance the mental health treatment process for the citizens of Ireland. The incorporation of the

interview process therefore can add practical and real-life information regarding the mental health issues of the citizens and deliver advanced solutions to improve the treatment processes.

### ***7.3 Limitation of the study***

The limitations of this study have been felt during the data collection portion while conducting the research work. The research work included primary data collection with the help of an online survey which initially became a hindrance to the study. It has been difficult to get hold of the survey respondents for the survey given the time of the COVID 19 pandemic. Moreover, the survey respondents have been initially reluctant to take part in the research work because not everyone had been willing to discuss mental health issues. Apart from this limitation had also been faced while choosing the sample size as due to the time constraint the number of participants has been limited to 100. Initially, it had been difficult for the researcher to conduct the research work remotely and there had been issues with the authenticity of the data during the initial stages. Furthermore, there had been technological constraints also and due to the limited budget allotted for the study it had been difficult for the researcher to collect and analyse the results of the data efficiently. Despite all these limitations, the research has been conducted successfully by keeping in mind all the guidelines of the University.

### ***7.4 Future scope of the study***

The successful completion of the research work comes with a lot of future scope of the study and in the following points it has been demonstrated,

- The study holds immense scope for future researchers researching mental health issues in Ireland. Apart from this, the study will also benefit in understanding the mental health situation of the public during a pandemic situation
- Future researchers can also use the information generated from this research and further develop the topic in order to get more in-depth knowledge.
- The study will also benefit the government organisations that are willing to generate and formulate strategies in order to mitigate mental health-related issues in the country.

- Since the study has been conducted focusing on Ireland the officials and researchers of other countries can also use this research to understand and develop new hypotheses regarding mental health issues during a pandemic.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: Survey questions*

1. What is your Age?

- 21-23 years
- 24-26 years
- 27-31 years

2. What is your Gender?

- Male
- Female
- Others
- Prefer not to say

3. Do you think that the government policies have helped the patients in recovering from psychological diseases?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

4. Do you think that the COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the mental health of the Irish population?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. Does the Irish population are suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. Does the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed the world to challenges leading to the downfall of the public healthcare system?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. Does the strict lockdown measure have affected the mental health of the Irish people?

- Yes
- Neutral
- No

8. What is the impact of the COVID-19 on the Irish adults?

- High
- Medium
- Low

9. What is the most common mental health disease observed among Irish adults?

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Bipolar Disorder
- Paranoia

10. To what extent do you consider that COVID-19 is the main cause of depression?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



12. To what extent do you believe that a pandemic situation generates a financial crisis that leads to depression in Ireland?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

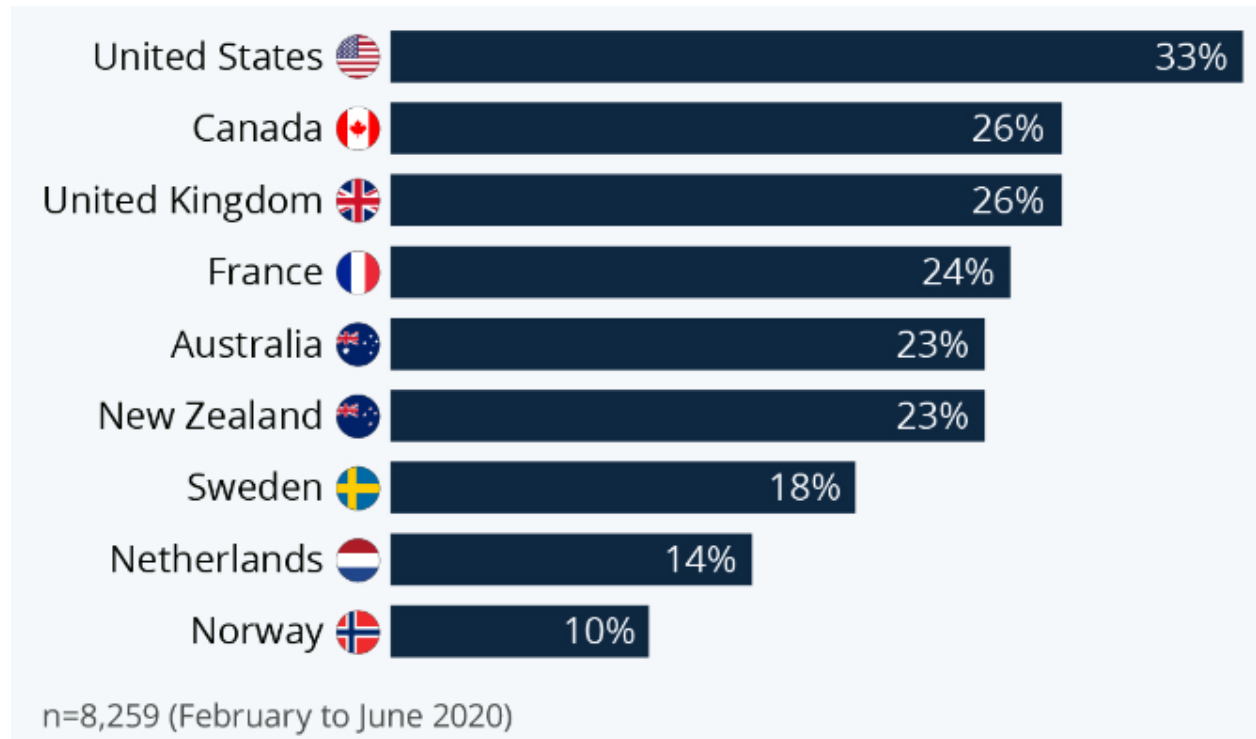
13. Do you believe that Ireland has an adequate healthcare centre for providing treatment for mental illness?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

14. Do you think that the Irish government has helped in mitigating mental health issues?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

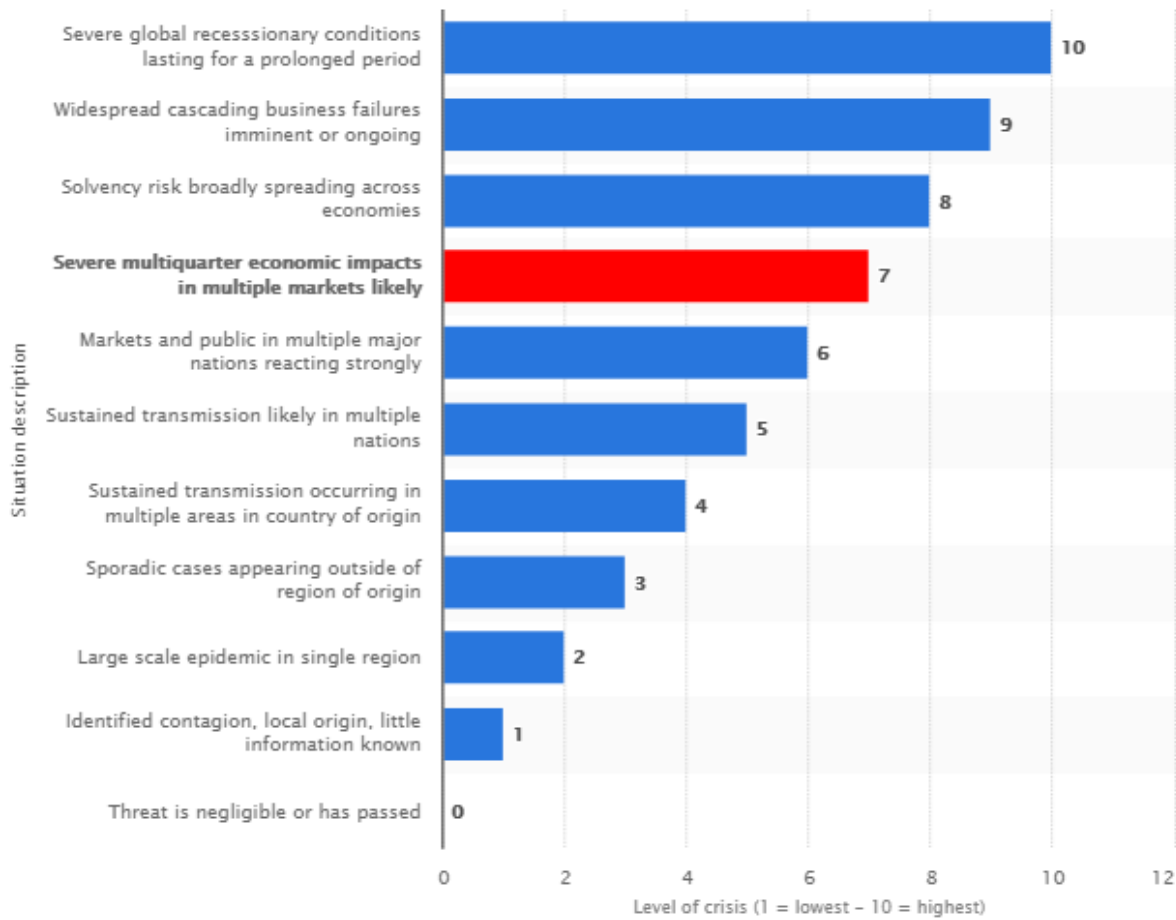
*Appendix 2: Covid-19's Widespread Impact On Mental Health*



*Figure 10: Covid-19's Widespread Impact on Mental Health*

(Source: McCarthy, 2020)

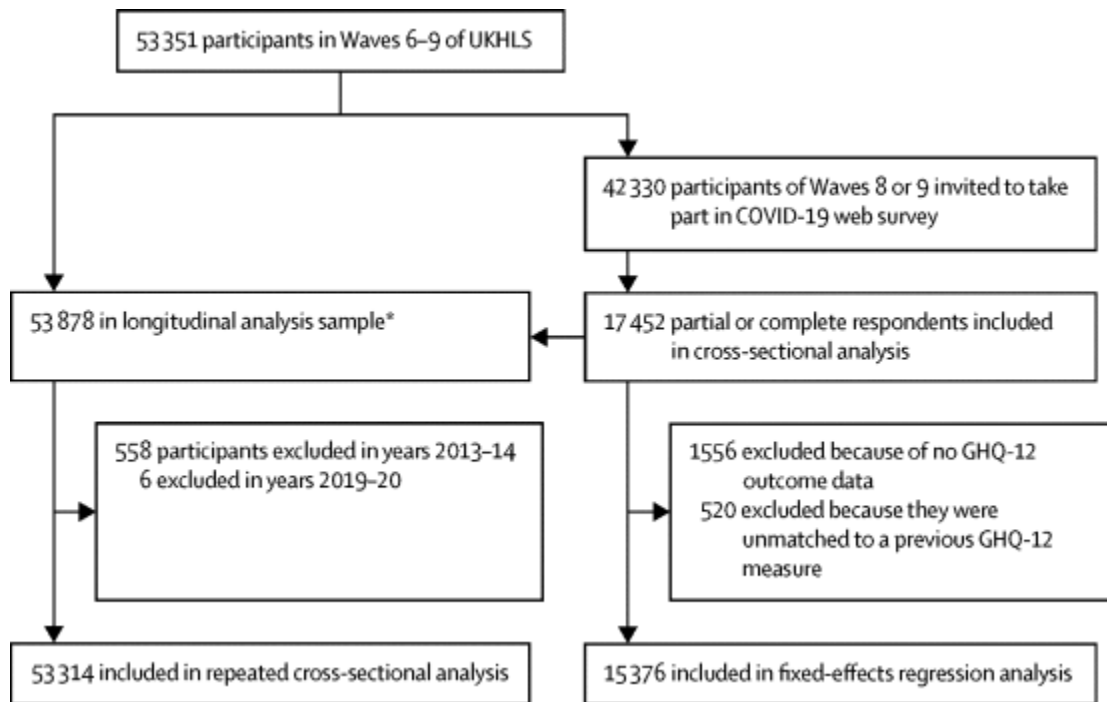
*Appendix 3: Global COVID-19 crisis index June 2020*



*Figure 11: Global COVID-19 crisis index June 2020*

(Source: Szmigiera, 2021)

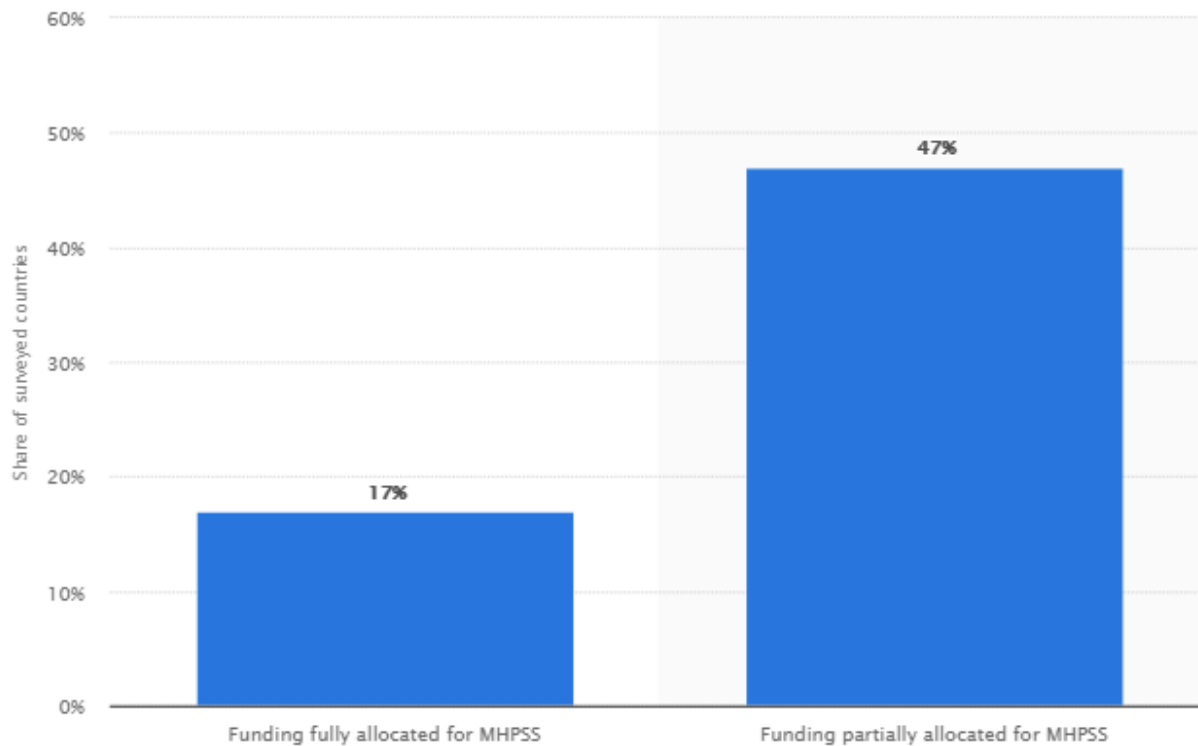
*Appendix 4: Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic among UK population*



*Figure 12: Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic among UK population*

(Source: Pierce et al., 2020)

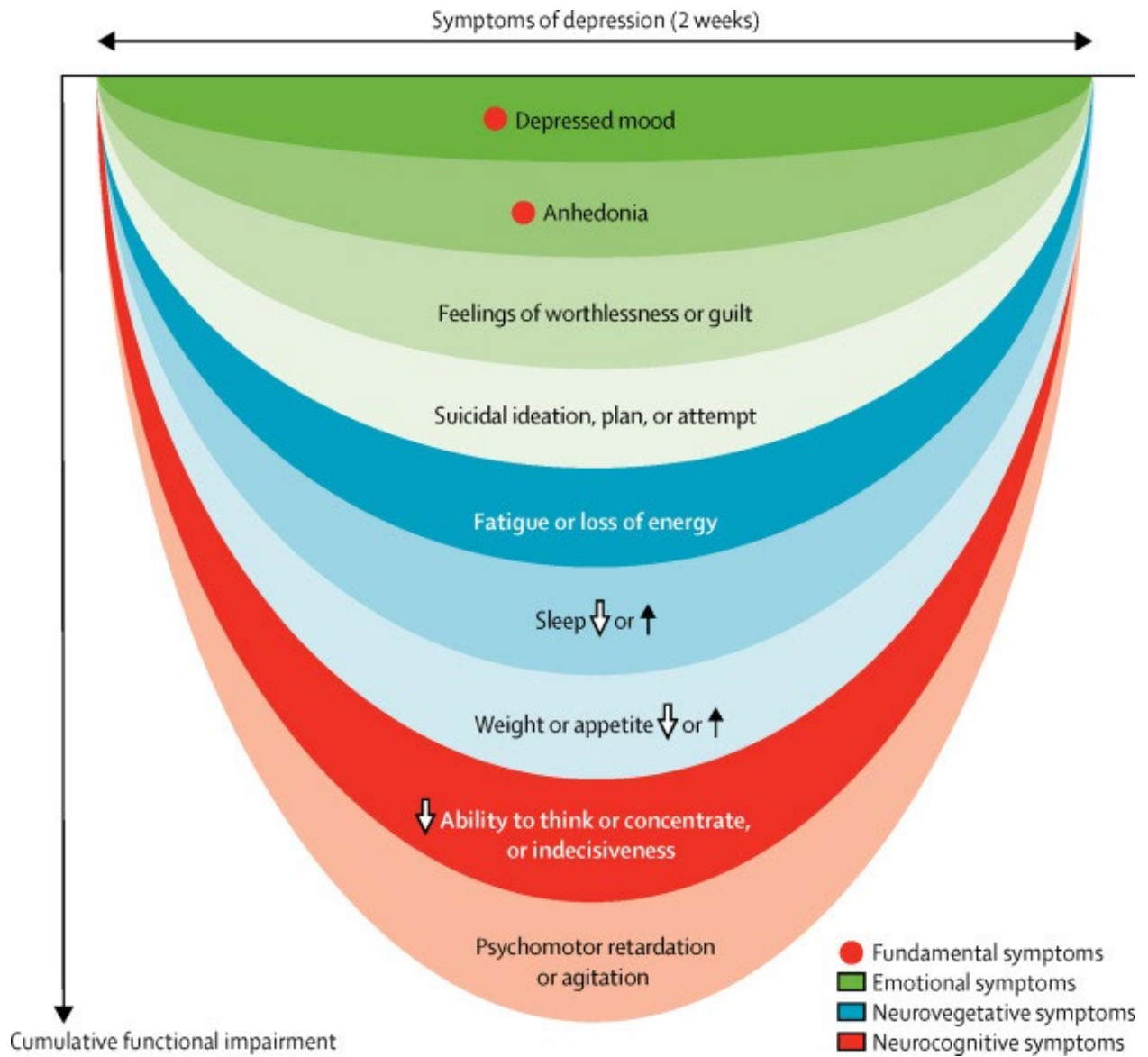
*Appendix 5: Share of countries with mental health as part of COVID-19 response funding Aug 2020*



*Figure 13: Share of countries with mental health as part of COVID-19 response funding Aug 2020*

(Source: Elflein, 2020)

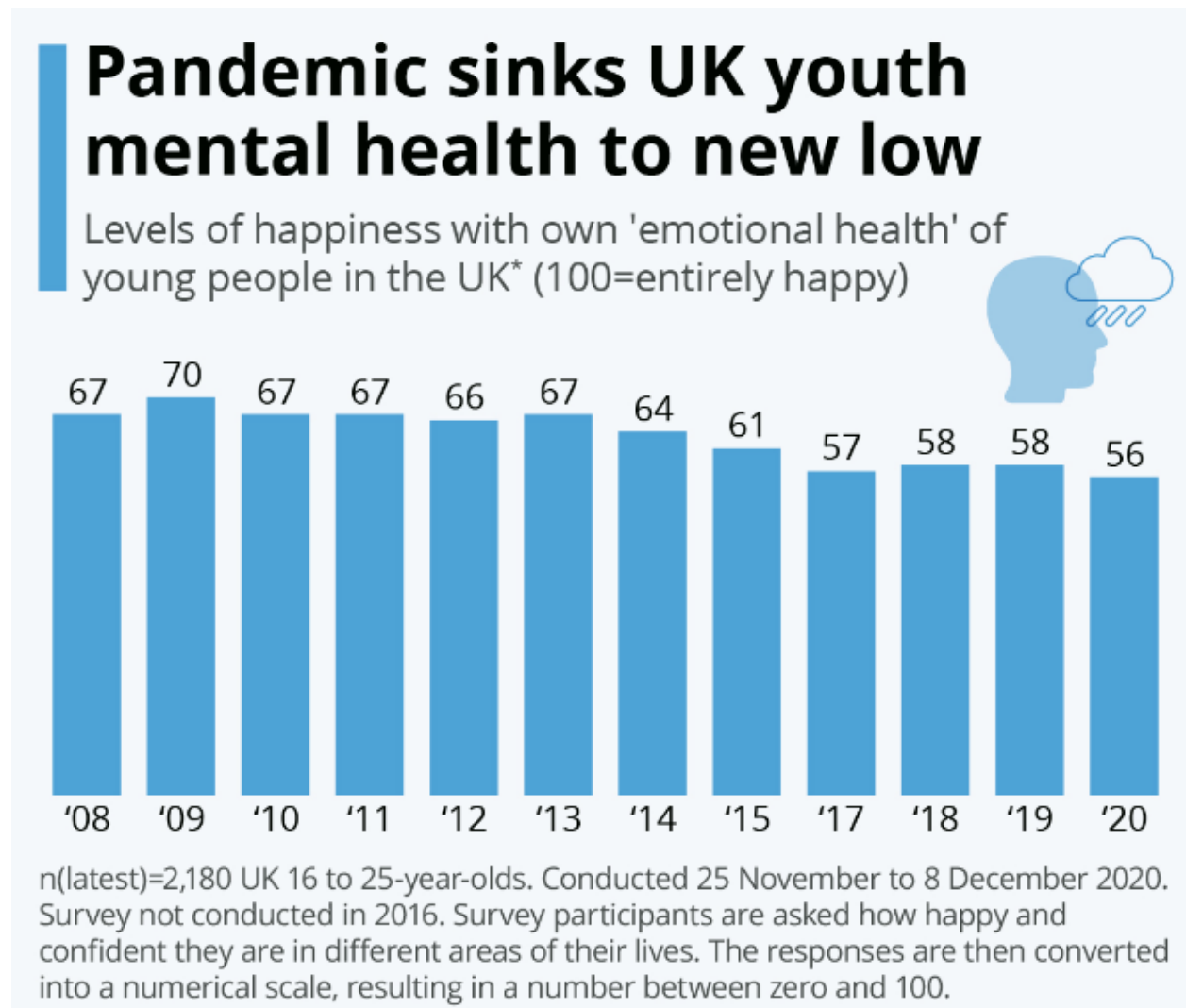
*Appendix 6: Symptoms of Depression*



*Figure 14: Symptoms of Depression*

(Source: Malhi & Mann, 2018)

*Appendix 7: Pandemic sinks UK youth mental health to new low*



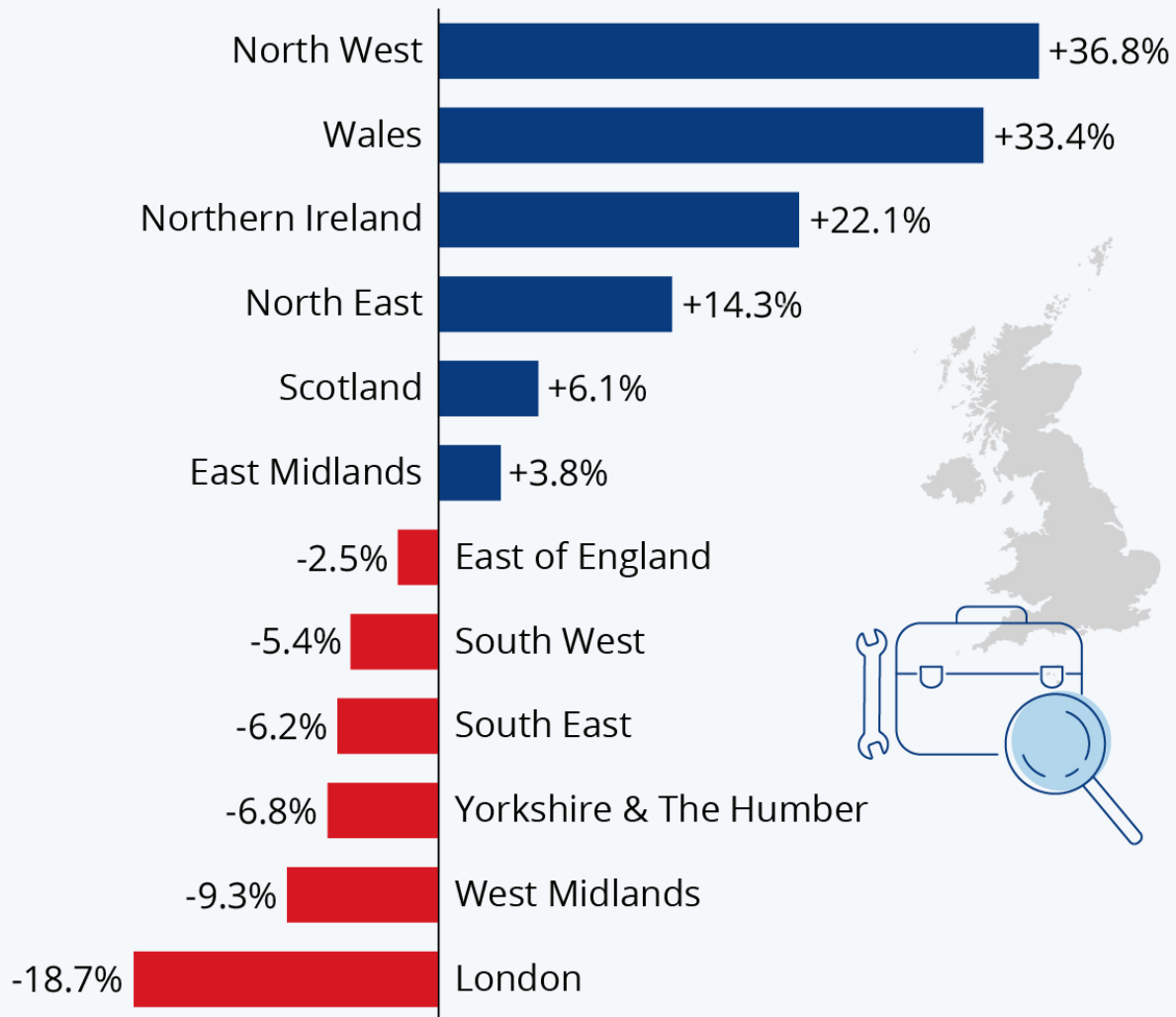
*Figure 15: Pandemic sinks UK youth mental health to new low*

(Source: Armstrong, 2021)

*Appendix 8: The UK's uneven jobs recovery*

## The UK's uneven jobs recovery

Change in active job postings in the UK from March to October 2020, by country/region

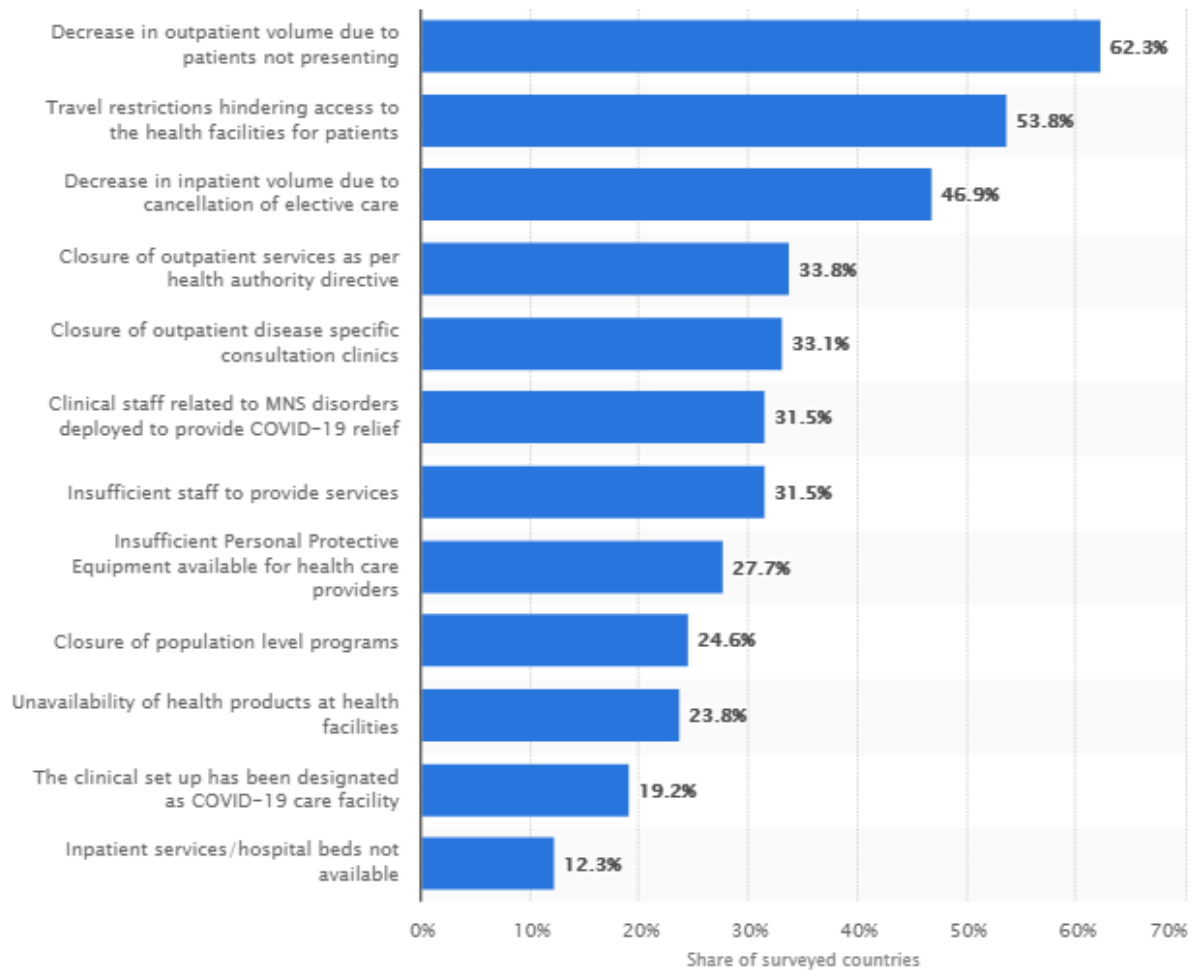


*Figure 16: The UK's uneven jobs recovery*

(Source: Armstrong, 2020)



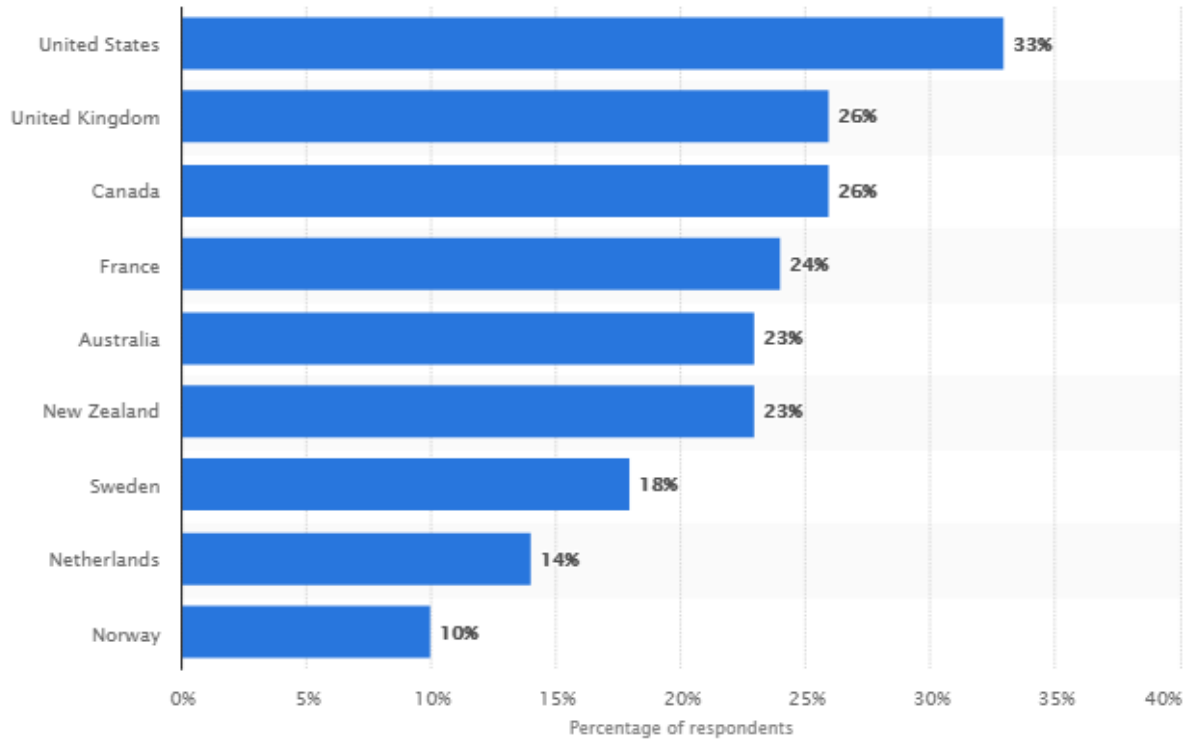
*Appendix 9: Share of countries with disruptions to mental health and substance abuse support 2020*



*Figure 17: Share of countries with disruptions to mental health and substance abuse support 2020*

(Source: Statista Mental Health Services Disruption, 2020)

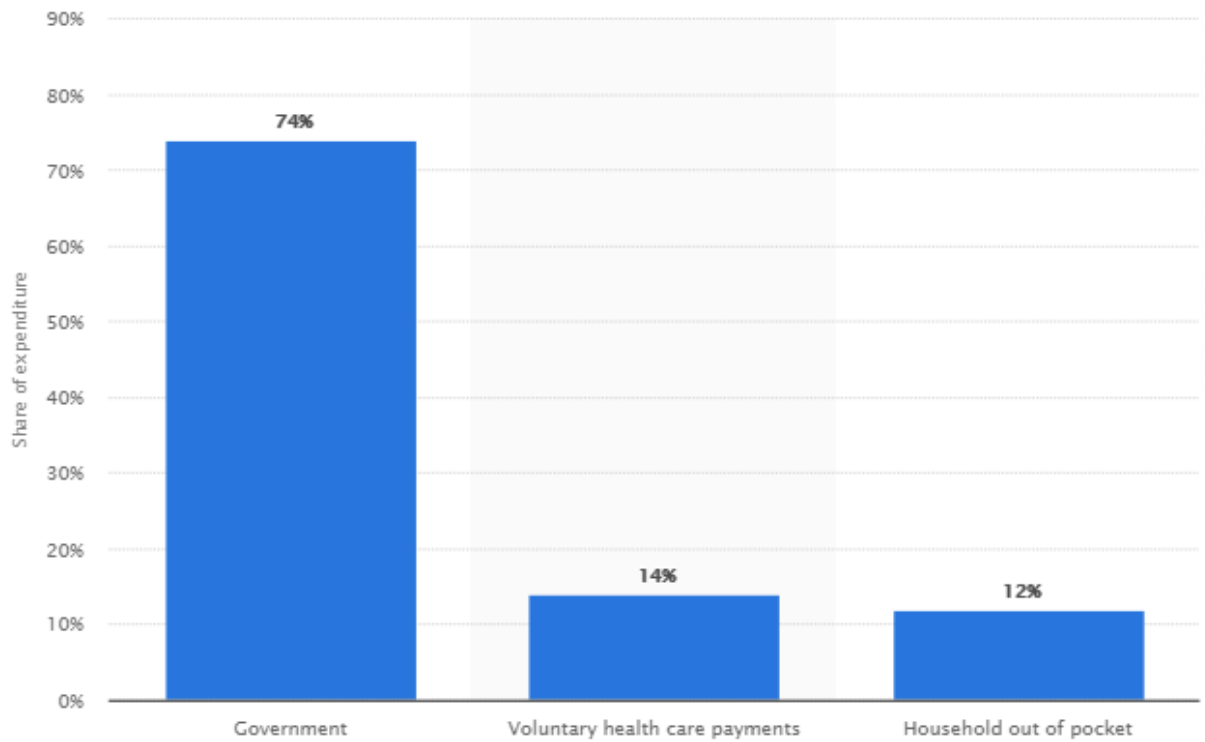
*Appendix 10: Share of adults with mental health concerns during COVID-19 by country 2020*



*Figure 18: Share of adults with mental health concerns during COVID-19 by country 2020*

(Source: Statista Mental Health Report, 2020)

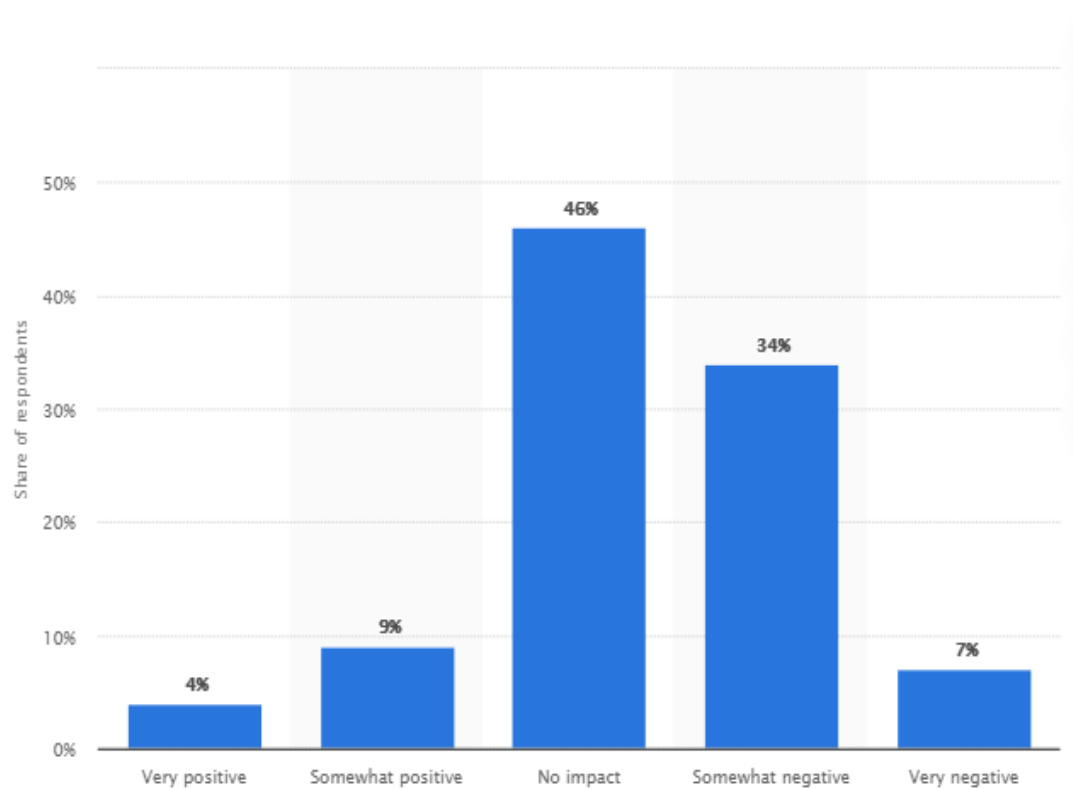
*Appendix 11: Health care expenditure in Ireland in 2018 by financing scheme*



*Figure 19: Health care expenditure in Ireland in 2018 by financing scheme*

(Source: Ireland Healthcare Scheme Statista, 2020)

*Appendix 12: Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health in the UK as of May 2020*



*Figure 20: Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health in the UK as of May 2020*

(Source: Stewart, 2020)