Increased Risk of Poor Mental Health and Severe Mental Health-Related Impairment Among California Adults Impacted by COVID-19

Economic losses from the COVID-19 lockdown made it harder for many Californians to afford housing and basic necessities or obtain child care. This increased the risk of poor mental health and ability to function, according to a UCLA Center for Health Policy Research study.

**COVID-19 Economic Disruption**

**Percentage of adults with pandemic-related economic disruption in 2020** (highest and lowest shown):

- Job loss by race and ethnicity:
  - 15% Latinx
  - 11% White

- Difficulty paying rent/mortgage by race:
  - 16% Black
  - 5% White

- Difficulty paying for basic necessities by race:
  - 15% Black
  - 6% White

- Difficulty paying for basic necessities by FPL*:
  - 18% <100% FPL
  - 5% ≥300% FPL

**Effect of COVID-Related Economic Stressors on Mental Health and Functioning**

- Percentage of adults with SPD or MPD†:
  - 23%

- Percentage of adults with SPD or MPD with pandemic-related...
  - 34% Job loss
  - 38% Difficulty paying for housing
  - 39% Child care difficulties
  - 41% Difficulty affording basic necessities

†SPD = Severe Psychological Distress, MPD = Moderate Psychological Distress

Adults with SPD or MPD with COVID-19-related child care disruption had an additional risk of functional impairment compared to all adults with SPD or MPD†

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults with SPD or MPD</th>
<th>Personal relationship impairment</th>
<th>Household chore impairment</th>
<th>Social life impairment</th>
<th>Work/school impairment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>With COVID-related child care difficulties</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†The study measured additional risk of SPD or MPD based on 3 stressors: difficulty with child care, difficulty paying for housing, and difficulty paying for basic necessities. Only child care data are shown.

Source: 2020 California Health Interview Survey
Read the policy brief: [https://ucla.in/3SU8qHK](https://ucla.in/3SU8qHK)