

The COVID-19 lockdown in Andalusia: physical and mental consequences

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OBJETIVES

This study employs recent data on the Andalusian lockdown to analyse its consequences on the physical and mental health status of the Spanish population. We employ time fixed-effects to go beyond correlation and to answer the following question:

Which are the consequences on the physical and mental health status of the Andalusian population due to the COVID-19 lockdown?

METHODOLOGY

In the present study we employ a time fixed-effects methodology, which allows controlling by many unobservables. The base model is the following:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta LD_{it} + \gamma LD_{it} * X_{it} + \delta LDR_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where i is the individual; t is the time period ($t = 2$ for the time of the survey and $t = 1$ for one year before); Y_{it} are the outcome variables (physical and mental health status); α_i is the unobserved time-invariant individual effect; LD_{it} is the lockdown control; X_{it} are individual's socio-economic characteristics; LDR_{it} are lockdown-related variables (if the individual was diagnosed with COVID-19, if known people has COVID-19 and the number of members of the household living at home during the lockdown – by age group); ε_{it} is the idiosyncratic error term.

TABLE

Table 1. Influence of the lockdown on Andalusian population's physical and mental health status

| Variables | Physical health status | Mental health status |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Lockdown period: yes (Ref.: no) | -0.02 (0.13) | -0.38*** (0.13) |
| Interactions of socio-economic variables with lockdown | | |
| Female (Ref.: male) | 0.00 (0.03) | -0.10*** (0.03) |
| Age | -0.00 (0.00) | 0.00*** (0.00) |
| Nationality (Ref.: out of Europe) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Level of Education (Ref.: less than primary) | | |
| Primary | 0.02 (0.06) | 0.03 (0.06) |
| Secondary | -0.00 (0.06) | 0.08 (0.06) |
| High School and Medium Vocational Track | -0.00 (0.06) | 0.07 (0.06) |
| Postsecondary Not Superior Education | -0.46* (0.26) | -0.39 (0.59) |
| High Vocational Track | 0.04 (0.07) | 0.07 (0.07) |
| Diplomatic and Expert | 0.04 (0.07) | 0.16** (0.07) |
| Degree and Master | 0.03 (0.07) | 0.08 (0.07) |
| PhD | 0.27*** (0.11) | 0.28** (0.11) |
| Lockdown-related variables | | |
| Constant | 3.53*** (0.15) | 3.54*** (0.12) |
| Observations | 2,932 | 2,932 |

Notes: Standard errors in parenthesis. These estimations have been weighted using frequency weights to raise the sample to the population size and standard errors are robust. Estimation method: Time Fixed-Effects (FE).
Dependent variable: The physical and mental health status take the values 5 for "excellent", 4 for "very good", 3 for "good", 2 for "fair" and 1 for "bad". Coefficient: *** significant at 1%. ** significant at 5%. * significant at 10%. Source: Authors' own calculations.

RESULTS

Our results show that only mental health is negatively influenced by this lockdown, and that this negative influence may be more serious for women. Previous research studies for other countries have also found these same results (Elmer, Mephram, & Stadtfeld, 2020; Gualano, Lo Moro, Voglino, Bert, & Siliquini, 2020; among others). This might be due to the fact that women could have devoted more time to their homes during the lockdown, taking care of children and people with special needs, or doing household tasks. However, this lockdown does not seem to have influenced the physical health status of the Andalusian population.

CONCLUSIONS

The limitations of the lockdown in Spain seem to have affected the population behaviours and minds. Therefore, policies should try to subsidise psychological help for those individuals whose mental health was harmed during the lockdown. In addition, a new lockdown should be prevented, due to the mental health consequences that it could have on the Andalusian population, together with the economic consequences. The population should work together in the "new normal life" to avoid COVID-19 contagions and, thus, a second lockdown.

REFERENCES

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