

Research shows link between child emotional difficulties and family strain during coronavirus lockdowns

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UK families were more likely to report difficulties living together during the coronavirus lockdowns than those in Turkey, a new study shows.

The research, published in *Psychological Reports*, shows the impact of the pandemic on parents and [children](#) at the times they were required to stay at home. Caregivers in Turkey were more concerned about contracting coronavirus.

The study was carried out by Evren Morgül and Cecilia A. Essau from the University of Roehampton and Angeliki Kallitsoglou from the University of Exeter.

A total of 1,849 caregivers of children aged between five and 12 in the UK (995 people) and Turkey (854 people) completed an electronic survey between July and August 2020.

Dr. Kallitsoglou said, "Families in the UK were more likely to report family difficulties co-existing during lockdown, and their children had higher levels of emotional and [behavioral difficulties](#) than those in Turkey.

"In Turkey families who reported being worried about being infected were then more likely to have children who showed symptoms of poor mental health during the lockdown.

"In both countries higher levels of family difficulties were linked to children showing [mental health](#) and behavioral problems."

Those with access to outside space were less likely to have children with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

Dr. Kallitsoglou said, "Parents in Turkey were more worried over COVID-19 infection but experienced less difficulty with family co-existence, possibly because of their collectivist orientation that places closer value to interdependence with others and conforming to group norms.

"Families in Turkey were potentially more tolerant because they were used to closer and frequent relationships and might have perceived the confinement yet another prevention strategy to adhere to.

"Our study showed that the families in Turkey experienced significant levels of worry and suggests that in the face of public health crisis the government and [health authorities](#) should strive to reduce [social anxiety](#) and improve [public trust](#).

"Nevertheless, family co-existence difficulty uniquely predicted increased levels in internalizing and externalizing symptoms during the lockdown in both countries. The harmful impact of the forced and prolonged [family](#) co-existence on children's social and emotional outcomes during the lockdown may be independent of the cultural context."

More information: Evren Morgül et al, Caregiver Worry of Infection and Family Co-existence Difficulty and Association With Change in Children's Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms During the Initial COVID-19 Lockdown in the UK and Turkey, *Psychological Reports* (2023). [DOI: 10.1177/00332941221149183](https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941221149183)

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