

Pregnancy postponement decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic associated with decreased well-being among women

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Credit: George Hodan/public domain

During the COVID-19 pandemic, every aspect of our lives changed, and decisions regarding pregnancy were no exception. Previous studies have shown that regret over the decision to delay childbearing at a young age is associated with lower subsequent well-being among women undergoing fertility treatment.

Based on these findings, the present study focused on the relationship between the decision to postpone [pregnancy](#) and [women's](#) well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper is [published](#) in the journal *BMC Public Health*.

This study used data from a nationwide online questionnaire survey conducted in 2020 and 2021, the Japan COVID-19 and Society Internet Survey. In total, 768 married women aged 18–50 years who wanted to become pregnant before the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed.

Using loneliness, severe psychological distress, and suicidal ideation as indicators of well-being, the researchers determined the association between pregnancy decisions and indicators of well-being and analyzed the data for each year separately.

The results showed that approximately 20% of the analyzed women who had planned their pregnancy postponed it due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that such a decision was strongly associated with severe psychological distress, [loneliness](#), and [suicidal ideation](#) after the pandemic. These associations were stronger in 2021 than in 2020.

Overall, these findings highlight the need for concern about the decline in women's well-being in times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for society as a whole to establish a mental health care system.

More information: Midori Matsushima et al, Married women's decision to delay childbearing, and loneliness, severe psychological distress, and suicidal ideation under crisis: online survey data analysis from 2020 to 2021, *BMC Public Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1186/s12889-023-16476-z](#)

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