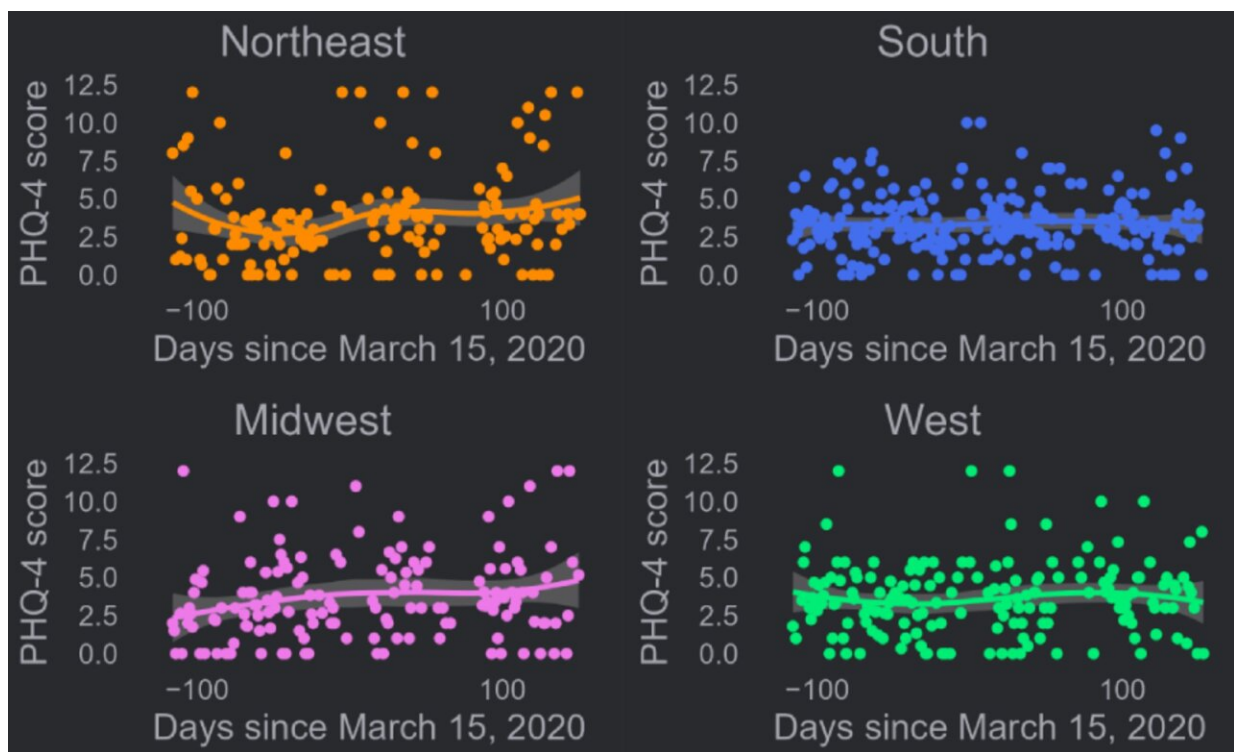


# Mental health among LGBTQ individuals during pandemic varied by region, study finds

February 12 2024



US census region–stratified trends in PHQ-4 scores over time before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic of a prospective US national cohort study of primarily cisgender gay and bisexual men in 2020. PHQ-4: Patient Health Questionnaire-4. Credit: *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* (2024). DOI: 10.2196/47048

Symptoms of anxiety and depression among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals increased only in certain regions of the U.S. during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new [study](#) published in *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* and led by CUNY SPH researchers.

Doctoral grad Chloe Mirzayi, Professor Christian Grov, and colleagues found that symptoms among this population increased in the Northeast and Midwest regions, which were most impacted by the onset of the pandemic, but not in the South and West regions.

Previous studies suggest the pandemic and the measures taken to slow the spread led to a significant increase in depression and [anxiety](#) among U.S. adults, especially LGBTQ individuals. As part of Together 5000, an ongoing prospective cohort study, Mirzayi and team conducted a [time series analysis](#) stratified by U.S. geographic region to examine symptoms of depression and anxiety among a sample of primarily cisgender gay and bisexual men before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

They found significant positive trends for the Northeast and Midwest regions in the 2020 assessment, indicating that symptoms of anxiety and depression were increasing in the sample in these regions immediately prior to and during the onset of the pandemic. A similar increase was not observed in the South and West regions, suggesting that these trends were driven by the burden of the pandemic and policies that varied from region to region.

"Few aspects of daily life were left undisrupted by COVID-19 and the policies put in place to mitigate the spread," says Dr. Mirzayi. "However, the [pandemic](#) did not affect all areas of the U.S. at the same time, which may explain the [regional variation](#) in [depressive symptoms](#) among LGBTQ individuals we see in this study."

Further research should consider how the impact of COVID-19 varied by geographic region and explore how this could influence the mental health of LGBTQ individuals.

**More information:** Chloe Mirzayi et al, Depression and Anxiety Symptoms Among Cisgender Gay and Bisexual Men During the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Time Series Analysis of a US National Cohort Study, *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* (2024). [DOI: 10.2196/47048](https://doi.org/10.2196/47048)

Provided by The City University of New York

Citation: Mental health among LGBTQ individuals during pandemic varied by region, study finds (2024, February 12) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-mental-health-lgbtq-individuals-pandemic.html>

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