

Study conducted during the pandemic reveals the perceived effectiveness of various protective measures

March 15 2024



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An article by Giuseppe Alessandro Veltri of the Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Trento, focused on the public health guidelines adopted during the pandemic. The article, titled "Assessing the perceived effect of non-pharmaceutical interventions on SARS-Cov-2 transmission risk: an experimental study in Europe," was [published](#) in *Scientific Reports*.

The research team assessed the effect perceived by the population on the risk of virus transmission through non-pharmacological interventions such as the use of masks, the location and duration of encounters, and interpersonal distance.

The study was conducted online in June 2021 on a sample of 6,567 unvaccinated persons. The experiments were carried out in Bulgaria (1,069), France (1,108), Poland (1,104), Italy (1,087), Spain (1,102) and Sweden (1,097). The aim was to analyze how effective the different measures were in people's perceptions.

The results showed that people perceived less risk of contagion when people were using a mask and when meetings were in the open instead of indoors. At the same time, there was little belief in the importance of maintaining a [physical distance](#) of one or two meters, preferring short meetings and limiting the number of participants.

Further insights were made into differences according to country, gender, age, cognitive style (reflective or intuitive) and participants' level of fear of COVID-19.

The authors conclude, "Our results highlight the importance of improving behavioral aspects of health policies and public health literacy regarding the design of non-pharmacological interventions and the risk

of transmission of SARS-Cov-2 and potential future viruses."

Scholars produced at least a hundred [scientific publications](#) as part of the project "Periscope—Pan-European Response to the ImpactS of COVID-19 and future Pandemics and Epidemics." The Periscope project, which involved 32 institutions from 15 European countries studying the pandemic's social, political and [economic impact](#), ended in recent months. With such a wide scope, the research project continues to bring insights into public health management.

More information: Giuseppe Alessandro Veltri et al, Assessing the perceived effect of non-pharmaceutical interventions on SARS-Cov-2 transmission risk: an experimental study in Europe, *Scientific Reports* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41598-024-55447-1](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-55447-1)

Provided by University of Trento

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