Agenda

Wellbeing in Times of COVID-19
N. Probst-Hensch & M. Imboden, COVCO Study, Swiss TPH, Basel

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown on the Psychosocial and Mental Wellbeing of Palestinian Adolescents: A National Study
H. Allabadi, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine

Quality of Life of Swiss and Adolescents before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The SOPHYA Study
B. Bringolf, SOPHYA Study, Swiss TPH, Basel

Positive Psychology: A Low Cost – High Impact Intervention For All,
T S. Jabi Masri, Tomorrow’s Youth Organization, Palestine
What is subjective well-being (happiness)

Science on subjective well-being

- factors that lead people to subjectively experience their lives as worthwhile and rewarding
- philosophers and religious leaders sought to prescribe what the good life entails
- behavioural scientists observe the factors that lead people to think and experience their lives in positive versus negative ways, labelled ‘subjective well-being’ (SWB).

Prof. Dr. Edward Diener, a psychological scientist whose seminal research examined the factors that influence people’s life satisfaction and happiness, died April 27

With 400 publications and a citation count exceeding 250,000 he was one of the most highly cited scientists in the world

Diener E et al. Advances in subjective well-being research. Nat Hum Behav 2018;2:253
the country where people live can make a huge difference - factors such as economic development, trust and respect, and health matter a great deal for well-being, and so we must be concerned about societal policies, not just making individuals happier

coming out of poverty is important for happiness, but going from well-off to rich does not boost it that much

although income and money matter for life satisfaction, for enjoying life social relationships are a key, regardless of whether one is rich or poor
Happiness can be raised

• Genetic factors explain 30-40% of variability in happiness
• Basic physical (food) and psychological needs must be met
• Individuals level: intervention programs designed to teach people skills that will improve their happiness and quality of life
• Societal level: policies that are adopted – for example, in creating more green space in cities, reducing air pollution, and in reducing commuting.

Happiness is not a luxury

• People high in well-being have better (mental) health and longevity
  - people high in SWB tend to experience better health and live longer on average
  - reason include healthier behavior; better social life; cardiovascular, immune and endocrine systems affected by a person’s psychological well-being

• Happy people are more likely to get involved with activities that may help solve the problems, and they tend to be better citizens and more productive workers

Research gaps on the outcomes of happiness

- most of the research has been conducted in highly economically developed Western nations - we do not how findings apply in Africa, South America or Asia

- there may be threshold effects — more and more SWB might not be beneficial after people reach a certain point
Wellbeing in Times of COVID-19
World Happiness Reports

• 2011 UN General Assembly passed the Bhutanese Resolution that invited national governments to “give more importance to happiness and well-being in determining how to achieve and measure social and economic development.”
• 2012 UN High-Level Meeting ‘Well-Being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm’
• First World Happiness Report prepared in support of the meeting
• The pandemic’s worst effect has been the 2 million deaths from COVID-19 in 2020. A rise of nearly 4% in the annual number of deaths worldwide represents a serious social welfare loss.

• For the living there has been greater economic insecurity, anxiety, disruption of every aspect of life, and, for many people, stress and challenges to mental and physical health.
Ranking of happiness 2018-2020

Switzerland – Life Satisfaction
7.508 in 2020 vs 7.560 in 2018/19
The impact of COVID-19 on life satisfaction and emotions

• Surprising resilience in how people rate their lives overall – but most vulnerable groups hard to reach!
• Change from 2017-2019 to 2020 varied among countries – but rankings remained largely the same
• Negative emotions (worry, anger, sadness) changed more than did life satisfaction (Cantril ladder) during the first year of COVID-19:
  - worsening more during lockdown
  - recovering faster

Trust has been the key common factor linking happiness and COVID-19 control.
Happiness in times of COVID-19 – the two perspectives

**Negative emotions**
- Infection related worries/anxiety
- Economic loss
- Social isolation
- Crowded/poor living conditions
- Poor mental health
- Stress due to home schooling
- Unhealthy behaviour
- Increase in social inequity

**Positive emotions**
- Time for family/friends, hobbies
- Physical activity
- Time in nature
- Less commuting
- Home office
The integrated view on interrelated pandemics – a future vision
COVID pandemic pointing to pandemic of mental disorders

- The global burden of disease attributable to mental disorders has risen in all countries before the pandemic – in the context of major demographic, environmental, and socio-political transitions.
- The pandemic accelerated the increase – particularly among the poor and the young.
- All countries can be thought of as developing countries in the context of mental health (stigmatization; inadequate investment into mental health care).

The rising burden of mental and substance use disorders, Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, and suicide (self-harm) by SDI groups.
COVID-19 pandemic accelerating social inequality globally

poverty not among GBD risk factors
Poverty – a main driver of the pandemic

• Poverty:
  - Less home office
  - Crowded living space
  - Lower adherence to containments (hygiene; quarantine)
  - Poor environmental conditions

• Poor neighborhoods for targeted lockdowns
The vicious circle of poor mental health and poverty

**Determinants of poor mental health**
- Social disadvantage
  - Poverty
  - Childhood adversity
  - Violence
- Environmental threats
- Political conflicts
- Poor social support
- Delayed intervention

**Consequences of poor mental health**
- Loss of income
  - Poor educational attainment
  - Reduced employment opportunities
  - Reduced productivity
  - Intergenerational transmission of poverty
- Higher risk of substance abuse
- Poor social network
- Unhealthy lifestyle
- Increased cardiovascular disease risk
- Poor residential conditions
- Different health seeking behaviour and treatment compliance

Israel ranking 12th vs. Palestinian Territories ranking 125th in World Happiness Report 2021
Mental health issues among the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic: a meta-analysis

January 2020 to June 2020:
- 28% depression
- 27% anxiety
- 24% post-traumatic stress symptoms
- 37% stress
- 50% psychological distress
- 28% sleep problems

high compared to pre-pandemic different by prevalence of other stressors long-term course and consequences?
The growth trajectories of depression and anxiety symptoms scores: non-representative longitudinal study in UK

Fancourt et al. Lancet Psychiatry 2021; 8:141
Research and evidence need

- Population-based long-term studies

- Long-term individual mental health trajectories as a result of the pandemic

- Learning on determinants of resilience (personal; structural)
COVCO Basel –
the pandemic impact on mental wellbeing
COVCO Basel – a public health perspective on the pandemic impact

Impact of SARS-CoV-2

Impact of containment measures
Baseline Participation in COVCO-Basel

**House Hold Size**

- 1: 20%
- 2: 13%
- 3: 16%
- 4: 4%
- 5: 1%
- 6: 0%
- 7: 0%
- 8: 0%

*(n=11'277 *)

*All participants, index & family members

**PARTICIPANTS**

- **Women**
  - Mean age: 54%
  - Mean age: 55.0
  - Range: 18-94

- **Men**
  - Mean age: 56%
  - Mean age: 58.0
  - Range: 18-96

*(n=11'277 *)
Lifesatisfaction during COVID-19 pandemic in Basel region by age and gender

Adjusted for age, sex, income level, region, pre-pandemic lifesatisfaction.
Stress symptoms during COVID-19 pandemic in Basel region by age and gender

Stress symptoms

Blue = female

Pink = male

Adjused for age, sex, income level, region, prepandemic stress according to DASS-21
Depression symptoms during COVID-19 pandemic in Basel region by age and gender

Adjusted for age, sex, income level, region, prepandemic depression according to DASS-21
Lifesatisfaction during COVID-19 pandemic in Basel region
by level of financial worries
adjusted for age, sex, region, and pre-pandemic lifesatisfaction
Stress symptoms during COVID-19 pandemic in Basel region, by level of financial worries, adjusted for age, sex, region, and pre-pandemic stress symptoms according to DASS-21 scale.
Depression symptoms during COVID-19 pandemic in Basel region, by level of financial worries, adjusted for age, sex, region, and pre-pandemic depression symptoms according to DASS-21.
### Care-seeking among persons in need of psychological support

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1274</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>2816</td>
<td>3494</td>
<td>3913</td>
<td>4366</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not seeking psychological care out of fear of infection</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>3.31%</td>
<td>8.84%</td>
<td>7.98%</td>
<td>9.62%</td>
<td>12.22%</td>
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Change in unhealthy lifestyle during pandemic

Increase in mean daily sitting hours 5.94 to 6.72

Change in body weight (+/- > 3kg) since start of pandemic: ~12%

Unhealthy eating behaviour: 15-20%, tendency for increase among 18-49 yrs

Increase in self-reported unhealthy media consumption: from 15% to 21% among 18-49 yrs

Increase in self-reported unhealthy alcohol consumption: from 5% to 10% among 49-65 yrs
Temporal changes in lifestyle and addictive behaviour

- Less physical activity
- Longer sitting hours
- Weight change
- Unhealthy eating behaviour
- Media use
- Alcohol consumption

Policy/Trust

Depression
Wellbeing
COVCO Basel - Happiness in Urban Exposome Context

Healthy and Happy Living in Basel – Shaping Policy to Impact
Swiss TPH

COVCO Basel – stories & worries shared by COVCO participants
Citizen involvement in COVCO-Basel

- Input in frequency, channels, and quality beyond our expectations

- Depending on sex, 63-85% provided input
Online questionnaires containing open text fields
- Baseline questionnaire
- Monthly follow-up questionnaires
- Topic-oriented follow-up questionnaires [one type of open feedback text field]

What is your message …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Researchers</th>
<th>To Government(s)</th>
<th>To others living through this pandemic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• topics important to be investigated</td>
<td>• Cantonal</td>
<td>• What to do, focus on</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National</td>
<td>• What to drop, let go</td>
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Tips to others living through this pandemic

“Solidarity in (following the) measures to improve the societal situation.”
Man, BS, 80 years

“Don’t neglect your friendships.” Woman, BL, 23 years

“Intensifying friendships, using digital opportunities, finding creative solutions, not retreating, accepting corona and complexity (no culprit), supporting others/weaker ones.” Woman, BL, 45 years

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Outdoors</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Internal Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just enjoy</td>
<td>Take responsibility</td>
<td>Accept fully</td>
<td>Adhere to measures</td>
<td>Healthy lifestyle</td>
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<td>Accept fully</td>
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<td>Build on trust</td>
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<td>Be patient</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep calm and relax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep calm and relax</td>
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<td>Feel the joy</td>
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<td>Feel the joy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate</td>
<td>A bowl of fresh air</td>
<td>Be with your family</td>
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<td>Be with your family</td>
<td></td>
<td>Connect with friends</td>
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<td>Connect with friends</td>
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<td>Social added value</td>
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<td>Create things</td>
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<td>Do sports, music</td>
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Wellbeing in times of COVID – Individual resources matters

Homeschooling

Social contacts
Neighbourhood
Multiple generations

Family members` Life balance
Stress level

“It was nice that they could sleep a little longer in the morning, the common start at the breakfast table was at 8:00h. The youngest loved to work in the garden, sometimes all three were at the same table and supported each other. Those were true moments of happiness.”
Woman, BL, 44 years, partner, household size 5.

“During the lockdown we schooled our grandchildren, Sunday to Thursday two 8 and 10 - year olds, from Thursday to Sunday the two kindergardeners. My wife and I each supervised a grandchild with the tasks, I did all the computer dialog [downloading tasks, uploading results].”
Man, BL, 67 years, partner, household size 2.

“Homeschooling was mainly stress for the mother, who no longer had time for herself. If the mother is not in her center, this has an impact on everyone else.”
Man, BL, 53 years, partner, household size 4.
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<th>Housing</th>
<th>School support</th>
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<td>Appartment</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green space</td>
<td>Job</td>
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"Where teachers are well organized and committed, home schooling works very well; where this is not the case, home schooling leads to an excessive burden on working parents."
Man, BS, 49 years, partner, household size 5.

"For us, this period was very stressful, because we parents and our son had to do home schooling and home office at the same time and live in an apartment that is too small for that—this constant "sitting on top of each other" and not having our own free space anymore was the biggest stress!"
Woman, BS, 54 years, partner, household size 3.

"One of the problems for my daughter was finding a trial apprenticeship last year [and this year] because of the lockdown. (She was 13 at the time of homeschooling)."
Woman, BL, 55 years, single, household size 3.
“I wish for a Basel (and of course a Switzerland and a world) that creatively and proactively addresses the great challenges of our time.”

COVCO- Basel, Man, BS, 61 years, partner, household size 3.
Acknowledgement

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