

# Attitude towards the pandemic among the Russians who have recovered and have not been sick with COVID-19

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# Introduction



The problems of the COVID-19 pandemic seem to have faded into the background, but the threat of getting sick remains. In addition, the experience of studying the consequences of a pandemic in different periods of its course and in different groups is important.

There are few studies that pay attention to the psychological consequences of a previous coronavirus infection. Other authors also point to the deficiency of such works (for example, Xiao et al., 2022; Qamar et al., 2022; Maheshwari, et al., 2021).

**The objective of our paper** was to identify some aspects of the impact of the past COVID-19 illness on daily life and behavior in the COVID crisis period.

## *Organization of research*

The data was collected through the **Toloka.Yandex.ru** service for two weeks (The study was carried out in December 2020). The survey geography covered various regions of Russia.

## *Sample*

The sample consisted of **827** respondents (53.9% male, 46.1% female; aged 18 to 75 years) , among whom there were **230** recoveries (57,8% male, 42,2%).

## *Instruments*

1. A shortcut version of the questionnaire developed by T. Nestik to measure attitudes to the pandemic and assess trust in representatives of various social groups (Nestik, 2020);
2. Scale of temporal attitudes by J. Nutten (2004);
3. A questionnaire of eating behavior by A. Kumari (2020);
4. Social Media Addiction Scale (Karadag et al, 2015)
5. A short questionnaire to assess changes in lifestyle-related behaviour during COVID 19 pandemic,
6. The questionnaire of critical thinking (CTI, Epstein, 2001, adapted by Enikolopov and Lebedev, 2004).

# Results



Table 1. Comparative data analysis results

Statements or variables	Didn't get sick Covid-19 infection		Recovering from Covid-19 infection		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting my life so much.	2,49	0,79	<b>2,63</b>	0,83	0,009
It is very rare that I feel the symptoms of coronavirus	4,44	0,86	4,04	1,13	0,000
Trust in people you meet for the first time	1,76	0,86	1,89	0,87	0,041
Trusting people of other faiths	2,58	,97	2,74	,98	0,034
Trust in people of other nationalities	2,63	,97	2,79	,97	0,041

# Results



Table 1. Comparative data analysis results (continuation)

Statements or variables	Didn't get sick Covid-19 infection		Recovered from Covid-19 infection		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
In the event of an epidemic, most people will not report that they are sick, so as not to be quarantined.	3,52	0,98	<b>3,66</b>	1,06	0,023
Most Russians will not believe the official information about the number of cases and deaths during the epidemic.	3,76	1,00	<b>3,92</b>	0,95	0,023
The leadership of our country is making sufficient efforts to contain the pandemic.	<b>2,65</b>	1,22	2,37	1,21	0,003
In the event of a global epidemic, doctors will be able to create the necessary medicine.	<b>3,26</b>	1,12	3,11	1,02	0,022
If I get sick during an epidemic, I can only rely on myself and my loved ones.	3,61	1,12	<b>3,86</b>	1,11	0,002

# Trust



Those with experience of the COVID-19 disease showed more tolerance and ***trust in interpersonal communication***. They are somewhat more likely to trust people they meet for the first time, as well as people of a different religion and nationality. Apparently, the disease equalizes people (Table 1).

At the same time, they had ***lower indicators of social and political trust***: higher suspicion that most people would not report that they were ill for fear of quarantine; distrust of official statistics on the number of cases and deaths from COVID-19; disagreement that the country's leadership is making sufficient efforts to contain the pandemic; lower faith in the achievements of scientific medicine and more distrust of vaccination, the attitude to rely only on oneself and one's loved ones (social internality).



# Results



Table 2. Comparative data analysis results (continuation)

Variables	Didn't get sick Covid-19 infection		Recovered from Covid-19 infection		P
	M	SD	M	SD	
Consumption of immune boosting foods	2,21	0,68	<b>2,37</b>	0,76	0,002
Consumption of nutritional supplements that increase immunity	2,09	0,60	<b>2,25</b>	0,73	0,001
Interest in receiving advice on healthy eating from the media	2,09	0,60	2,10	0,64	0,030
Participation in aerobic exercise	2,00	0,56	<b>2,13</b>	0,76	0,005
Duration of being in front of the monitor screen (TV, computer)	2,44	0,76	<b>2,60</b>	0,84	0,004
Social media tolerance (loss of time control)	2,53	1,15	<b>2,74</b>	1,21	0,016
Maladjustment due to social networks	1,76	0,98	1,95	1,11	0,031
Preference to use social media rather than watch TV	3,35	1,33	<b>3, 62</b>	1,28	0,008
Stress and anxiety levels during the COVID-19 pandemic	2,46	0,75	<b>2,71</b>	0,72	0,000





The results of the study using the Nutten technique showed in both groups a more negative attitude towards the present (events during the pandemic) than before and after it ( $p = 0.001$ ). The pandemic has destroyed the linearity of time (Deyneka, Zabelina, 2021). In the perception of the individual, there is a separate “past/future” and a separate “present” that has moved to the “temporal roadside” away from the time continuum.

Those who recovered from COVID-19 turned out to have statistically significantly higher indicators for all descriptors of the positive past and positive future, and in the image of the present, the negative characteristic of its lack of freedom is higher. Thus, it can be argued that in the structure of subjective time, the disease deforms the present (deprives it of freedom), preserving the positive past and future.

## General constructive thinking scale (GCTI)



Those who had been ill turned out to have a higher level of behavioral coping ( $p < 0.05$ ) and lower emotional coping ( $p < 0.01$ ). At the same time, the indicator of the General constructive thinking scale is significantly higher among respondents who did not have coronavirus ( $p < 0.05$ ).

It was expected that among those who recovered from the coronavirus infection there would be more of those who would seek to be vaccinated against COVID-19. However, it turned out that those respondents who had COVID-19 were less likely to be vaccinated against coronavirus ( $p < 0.01$ ), since many of them believe that having been ill, they have already received the necessary protection in the future.

## Attitudes towards a pandemic and critical thinking ( $p < 0.001$ )



- News about epidemiological threats causes less anxiety in persons with high scores on the emotional coping scale and the general **constructive thinking scale** (GCTI).
- The higher the GCTI scores, the lower the adherence to conspiracy theories of the origin of the pandemic, suspicion, distrust of people around and social institutions, fear of distant threats and manifestations of misophobia.
- Persons with high indicators on the scales of **emotional and behavioral coping** for the iron discipline against the background of the pandemic spoke.
- The carriers of **esoteric thinking** believe that epidemics are a weapon used by some people against others.
- People with higher scores on the scales of **categorical and personal-superstitious thinking** turned out to have lower trust in the media and people around them.

## Pandemic Attitudes and Social Media Involvement



- Among those who prefer social networks to official information (television, radio, print), there are statistically significantly more respondents characterized by low social and institutional trust.
- More pronounced negative attitude towards the country's leadership
- Do not believe in the possibilities of domestic medicine
- Do not trust official information about the epidemic situation
- Do not trust their fellow citizens

Considering that among those who have recovered from COVID-19 there are more of those who are involved in social networks, it makes sense to consider them as a group of greater risk for the influence of infodemic and cyberchondria.

## Conclusions



- Those who have recovered from COVID-19 have more residual symptoms and /or manifestations of covid hypochondria.
- In the structure of subjective time, the transferred illness deformed the present (restrictions of freedom), preserving the positive past and future.
- Covid survivors have higher tolerance to humans, but lower political and public trust, which may be associated with unconscious resentment and claims by those who break the rules and control them.
- Among those citizens who derive information mainly from social networks, there were fewer people who trust both the authorities and their fellow citizens, as well as skepticism about medicine and vaccination.



## Recommendations



- Long-term follow-up studies on the psychological and behavioral problems of those who have recovered from COVID-19 are needed.
- Social structures should work to increase trust in society. First of all, this concerns the trust in domestic medicine and the vaccination campaign.
- Healthcare professionals must remain alert to the long-term effects of COVID-19 infection and strive to manage them appropriately to improve patients' quality of life. It is important to mobilize the attention of psychologists and psychotherapists to those who have had a coronavirus infection, in particular, to work with their chronotope.
- It is necessary to increase the readiness of those who have been ill for vaccination after the required period has elapsed.

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Thank you for your attention!

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