Impact of COVID-19 on SDoH and SDoMH Revealed in National Study

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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society has more layers than the largest onion! A new national survey led by researchers from Northeastern, Harvard, Northwestern, and Rutgers universities sheds glaring light on the current impact to communities and concerns over health disparities, and validates concern for the general and mental health of at-risk persons and populations.

The report, State of the Nation: A 50-State COVID-19 Survey, is published through The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public’s Policy Preferences Across States. A total of 18,132 U.S. residents were surveyed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia between May 16 and May 31.

The results span concerns associated with the social determinants of health (SDoH) and social determinants of mental health (SDoMH):
Forty-two percent of people whose lives had been greatly disrupted by the virus reported moderate to severe depressive symptoms. Only 19 percent of those whose lives hadn’t been disrupted as much reported these symptoms.
Over 27 percent of U.S. residents surveyed presented with symptoms of moderate to severe depression, a rate more than three times higher than the 8 percent reported among the overall population in 2016.

The impact of the pandemic, as well as current state of racial injustice, are addressed by the report, with the survey taking place within days of the killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis.

Major concerns were expressed about the health, financial stability, job loss, and education by all survey participants, though the rate was significantly higher among non-white respondents. The proportion of respondents worried about getting the virus was a minimum of least 12 points higher for other racial groups than white U.S. residents.

Less than 31 percent of white respondents indicated that they were “somewhat” or “very” concerned about job loss, compared to 53 percent of Hispanic populations, 51 percent of Asian-Americans, and 43 percent of African-Americans.

The proportion of persons concerned about education and childcare were 13 and 21 points higher, respectively, among non-whites, as compared to whites.

Finally, inequities emerged in the dollars received through the stimulus package. Over 73 percent of white participants reported receiving their relief payments, compared to 57 percent of African-Americans, 55 percent of Asian-Americans, and 56 percent of Hispanic respondents.

An interactive version of the report is available online here.