

Beat: Health

Spanish concern about COVID-19 decreases

They believe the pandemic will last

Madrid, 15.04.2021, 13:15 Time

USPA NEWS - A study carried out by the Carlos III Health Institute of Madrid among 1,002 people residing in Spain, over 18 years of age, with a similar distribution by sex and in which 34% of those surveyed were between 45 and 60 years old; 32% had university studies and most of the participants (56%) reported that they were working, of which 22% indicated that they work in person in environments with a high risk of contagion, revealing that 29% of those surveyed indicated that their economic situation has worsened in the last 3 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Spanish concern about the coronavirus has decreased (52% indicated that the coronavirus / COVID-19 worries them very / very much, compared to 67% in the previous round), as well as the feeling that the virus is spreading fast (69% responded that the coronavirus spreads fast, compared to 92% in round 4), and the feeling of depression (44% of those surveyed said they felt depressed, compared to 50% in the previous round). The feeling of fear remains (41%) compared to the previous round. The degree of concern has also decreased for the different situations raised, except for "a new confinement" (average: 3.88 out of 5 points), "not being able to pay my bills" (3.53) and "losing my job" (3.16), which increase slightly. For the first time, half of those surveyed believe that the worst of the pandemic is over and only 23% still believe that the worst of the pandemic is yet to come.

The degree of knowledge drops slightly compared to the previous round, particularly in the questions: "the coronavirus is transmitted through the air" (82% of those surveyed answered correctly, compared to 85% in the previous round), "if I am a contact narrow I must isolate myself" (94% answer correctly, 96% in the previous round), and "you have to wash your hands before and after using the mask" (91% answer correctly, 96% in round 4). The percentage of respondents who incorrectly believe that they can lead a normal life if it is close contact goes from 6% in round 4 to 8% in round 5.

However, in this round the number of people who say they feel well informed about coronavirus tests increases (54% to 56%), but the number of people who show correct knowledge about the tests decreases. While the number of people who have undergone PCR or antigen tests decreases (28 to 21%).

Risk perception and self-efficacy

The perception of the severity of the disease is also lower than in the previous rounds: only 35% of the participants consider that the disease would be serious or very serious if infected. The perception of probability of contagion in general is also the lowest of all the rounds, with only 25% of those surveyed believing that they have a high probability of being infected. The perception of the probability of contagion in specific situations decreases for all situations, particularly in relation to crowded places in closed places, which goes from an average of 4.35 out of 5 in the previous round to 4.17 in the current round, and in meetings with friends and family (from 3.97 to 3.81). Self-efficacy increases to values similar to the first round, with 29% of respondents believing that it is easy to avoid getting infected.

A slight decrease is observed in the frequency of compliance with all preventive measures, except in the use of hydroalcoholic gel (it is maintained) and ventilating closed spaces (it increases slightly). Using masks is still the most used measure (average: 4.7). The use of FFP2 masks increased from 37 to 46% and that of surgical masks decreased from 44% to 35%. The proportion of people who indicate that they pay attention to whether the masks comply with the regulations when buying them remains at 75%.

Health literacy increases in the following aspects: understanding what to do when in close contact (mean: 3.18 in a range of 1, very difficult, to 4 very easy), when it is suspected that you have coronavirus (3.17), assess when you need to go to the doctor (2.76), understand the restrictions that the authorities give (2.65), find information about vaccines (2.62), and find out if the information from the media in general (2.31) and on vaccines (2.32) is reliable. However, it is low in terms of: deciding if I should get vaccinated (3.09), understanding the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated (2.93) and finding information about the coronavirus (2.93).

The frequency of searching for information progressively decreases, and only 27% of those surveyed indicate that they consult the

information on coronavirus several times a day (38% in the previous round). Confidence in sources of information about the coronavirus drops for almost all sources. However, trust in the Ministry of Health, press conferences and social networks rises compared to the previous round. The three sources of information that generate the most trust continue to be health professionals (average: 3.95 out of 5), WHO (3.15) and the Ministry of Health (3.12).

Trust in institutions

Confidence rises for almost all institutions, except for scientists, although they remain the ones that generate the most trust (average: 3.84 out of 5) and in the press, which drops to an average of 2.35. The proportion of people who consider that the decisions that have been taken in Spain have not been adequate have decreased (from 56% in round 4 to 45% in round 5). There is an increase in people who consider that the decisions taken have been exaggerated in relation to the previous round (from 8% to 15%), reaching similar figures to round 1 (July 2020).

Regarding specific measures, the degree of agreement has dropped for the mandatory use of a mask (average: 4.46 out of 5), although it is still the measure that generates the most agreement. The agreement with the night curfew has also decreased (3.76), and limit movement between provinces (3.42). The degree of agreement with the opening of educational centers has increased and that it is the Spanish regions that determine the regulations.

It was asked for the first time about the perception of compliance with the rules by Spanish society in general and 60% of the respondents believe that the majority of the Spanish population complies with the regulations, although 75% of the respondents believe that Most Spaniards remove their masks at family gatherings and 63% believe that the majority of Spaniards meet with non-partners in closed places.

Vaccine

A 8% of those surveyed have already received some dose of the vaccine. Of those who have not received the vaccine, the percentage of people who say they would get it increases (74% compared to 72% in the previous round). The most frequently mentioned reasons for those who say they do not want to be vaccinated are: lack of information (57% indicate it) and that it may have health risks (52%). The reasons for wanting to be vaccinated are to protect their own health (81% indicate it) and that of others (73%).

In the event of another outbreak, the measures with the most agreement are to unify the regulations at the national level (average: 3.92 out of 5, with an increase in agreement compared to the average of the previous round), to prohibit meetings with non-partners (3.61), and confine the most affected areas (3.53, with an increase in agreement compared to the previous round).

Pandemic fatigue increases slightly for all statements, with the increase being greater in "I am losing the will to fight COVID-19"^[7]. The most frequently mentioned statements continue to be "I am tired of the debates about COVID-19" and "I am sick of hearing about COVID-19".

The proportion of people who have spent more than 15 minutes inside a bar or restaurant has increased (24% to 27%). Of those who have gone to bars / restaurants, 81% believe that the recommendations for capacity and distance between tables and diners were met.

Social participation in community networks has decreased compared to the previous round, with 76% of people indicating that they have not participated (73% in round 4). Respondents indicating that they have not needed community support for health or social needs due to the pandemic has increased from 77% to 79%.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-18533/spanish-concern-about-covid-19-decreases.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com