

Science and Digital Briefs

By Shopper Editor Dave Bunting

Mar. 16, 2022



We can help Ukrainians with charitable donations:

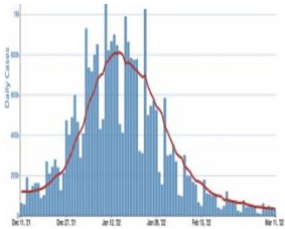
Food, medical, etc. help:

Ukraine Red Cross:
shpr.fyi/ukraineredcross

Samaritans Purse:
shpr.fyi/samaritanpurse

Mercy Corps:
mercycorps.org/donate

Military help:
war.ukraine.ua/donate/



Hey, remember COVID?

The U.S. is averaging fewer than 40,000 new cases per day over the past two weeks. Back in mid January, that figure was above 800,000 new cases per day.

Info: shpr.fyi/coviddaily

Lockdown injured thousands

Anxiety and depression rose to over six times their pre-pandemic level during the first lockdown.

Reported by researchers at the University of Bath who conducted a meta-analysis of 14 studies including 46,154 patients with anxiety and 46,158 with depression.

Info: shpr.fyi/lockdowners



Isolation causes injury

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, social isolation was a growing epidemic. Not only is loneliness bad for mental health, but also research has proven that it negatively impacts physical health. Nursing students at the University of Washington Bothell share how to recognize

signs of social isolation — and ideas and resources to mitigate symptoms.

“Social isolation can lead to decreased cognitive functioning, muscle atrophy and, at worst, failure to thrive — a syndrome of weight loss, decreased appetite, poor nutrition and inactivity, often accompanied by depressive symptoms,” says Greta Marconi, a student in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at UW Bothell.

Info: shpr.fyi/isolationinjury



Cognitive decline is common after COVID

In new findings that provide much-needed information on the long-term dynamic trajectory of cognitive changes after COVID-19 shutdowns, cognitive decline is common.

Alzheimer's Disease and dementia are forms of cognitive decline.

“We found that COVID-19, especially severe COVID-19, was associated with an increased risk of post-infection cognitive impairment and a faster speed of longitudinal cognitive decline,” Yan-Jiang Wang, MD, PhD, professor and director, Department of Neurology and Center for Clinical Neuroscience, Daping Hospital, Chongqing, China told *Medscape Medical News*.

What’s “most concerning,” said Wang, is that COVID-19 would “significantly increase the worldwide dementia burden in the post-COVID-19 era.”

The study was published online March 8 in *JAMA Neurology*.

Info: shpr.fyi/covidcognitive



Isolation and mental health

In the time of COVID-19, physically distancing including school shutdowns were necessary to limit virus transmission and to keep everyone as safe as we possibly can. However, social isolation can have serious effects on mental health for everyone.

Social isolation is the absence of relationships and interactions with one another

and is linked to mental health issues like depression and anxiety.

Consider seeking help if you experience symptoms such as marked changes in personality, difficulty coping with daily activities, prolonged sadness, or excessive worry.

Strategies to maintain good health while physically distancing include daily structure, reaching out to others, good diet/hydration, and regular exercise.

You may want to reach out to a professional if you experience any of the following symptoms that result from COVID isolation:

- Marked changes in mood, eating or sleeping patterns
- Excessive anxiety
- Prolonged sadness, depression, or apathy (disinterest)
- Thoughts or statements about hurting yourself, harming others, or suicide
- Increased substance use or using substances in ways that could be harmful
- Excessive anger, irritability, hostility, or violent behavior

Info: shpr.fyi/covidisolation



Smiles are essential to our lives and happiness

A major problem with masks is that they hide our smiles which are the primary way we communicate happiness, trust, respect and friendliness.

Research finds that observers rely mostly on the eye and mouth regions to recognize emotions successfully. Different emotions are most easily detected in different areas of the face. Happiness is more reliably detected by concentrating on the mouth area. These two parts of the face can work in isolation or complex coordination.

Info: shpr.fyi/masksmile

Check out this week's Bible Readings on page 6 which includes God summoning the exiles to return: “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” Isaiah 55:1 NIV

Dave Bunting, Mar. 14, 2022
References in links below items.
See these columns on my blog daverant.com