

Gender differences in couples' division of childcare, work and mental health during COVID-19 ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpt from abstract

The current COVID-19 crisis, with its associated school and daycare closures as well as social-distancing requirements, has the potential to magnify gender differences both in terms of childcare arrangements within the household and at work. We use data from a nationally representative sample of the United States from the Understanding Coronavirus in America tracking survey to understand gender differences within households on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. We study how fathers and mothers are coping with this crisis in terms of childcare provision, employment, working arrangements, and psychological distress levels. We find that women have carried a heavier load than men in the provision of childcare during the COVID-19 crisis, even while still working. Mothers' current working situations appear to have a limited influence on their provision of childcare. This division of childcare is, however, associated with a reduction in working hours and an increased probability of transitioning out of employment for working mothers. Finally, we observe a small but new gap in psychological distress that emerged between mothers and women without school-age children in the household in early April. This new gap appears to be driven by higher levels of psychological distress reported by mothers of elementary school-age and younger children.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: work/life balance ^[4]

mother's labour force participation ^[5]

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