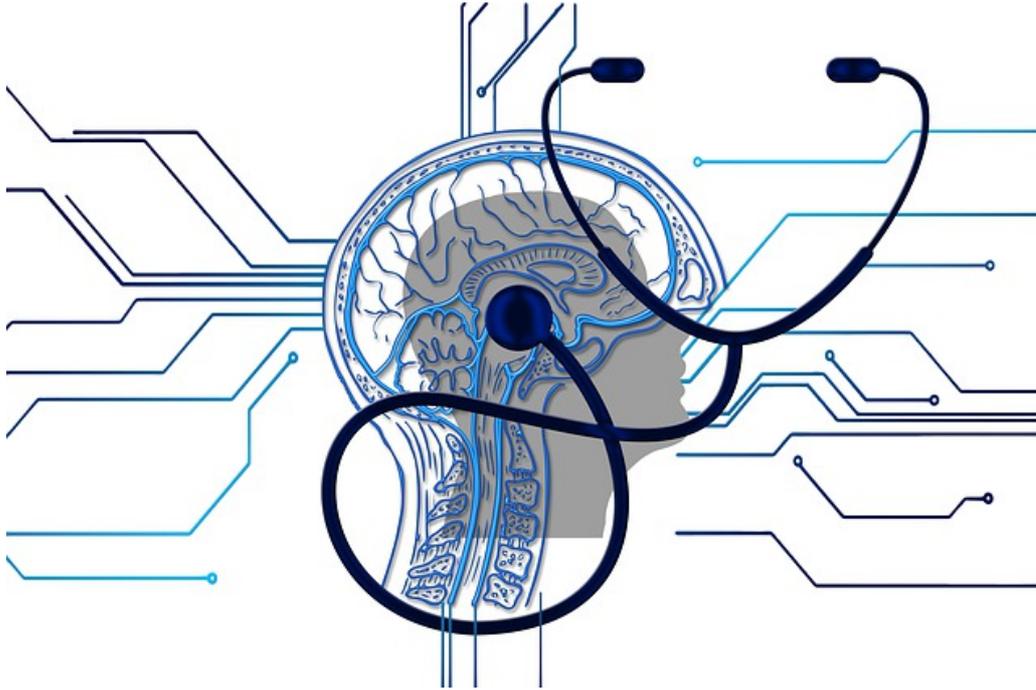




Mental health in the pandemic

What the surveys say



In this number...

The pandemic's effect on mental health
Prevalence and severity of depressions. Changes compared to 2014
Medical consultations and use of the Internet for health issues
Deaths from external causes: suicide, homicide and drug abuse

The last European Health Survey in Spain was conducted between July 2019 and July 2020. Using this time reference, we observed an increase during the first months of the pandemic in the percentage of the population that experienced a sense of being down or depressed, had trouble sleeping, and felt little interest or joy in doing things. At the same time, the percentage of the population that indicated feeling tired, bad about oneself or having trouble concentrating fell.

Compared to 2014, the prevalence of depressive symptoms in the Spanish population fell by two points (7.4% in 2014 compared to 5.4% in 2020). Almost a million people have major depressive symptoms and just over a million have less severe depressive symptoms. The frequency women is almost double that of men. In both cases, the most affected are those who are unable to work.

Medical consultations experienced a sharp decline during the pandemic, especially among the elderly, and 20.5% of the population between 16 and 74 years old accessed online health services in the last 3 months.

Between January and May 2020, deaths from suicide, assault and drug abuse decreased compared to the same period in previous years.

Sources: INE (European Health Survey in Spain, Survey of equipment and use of information and communication technologies in households, Death statistics according to cause of death).

More depressed but less tired

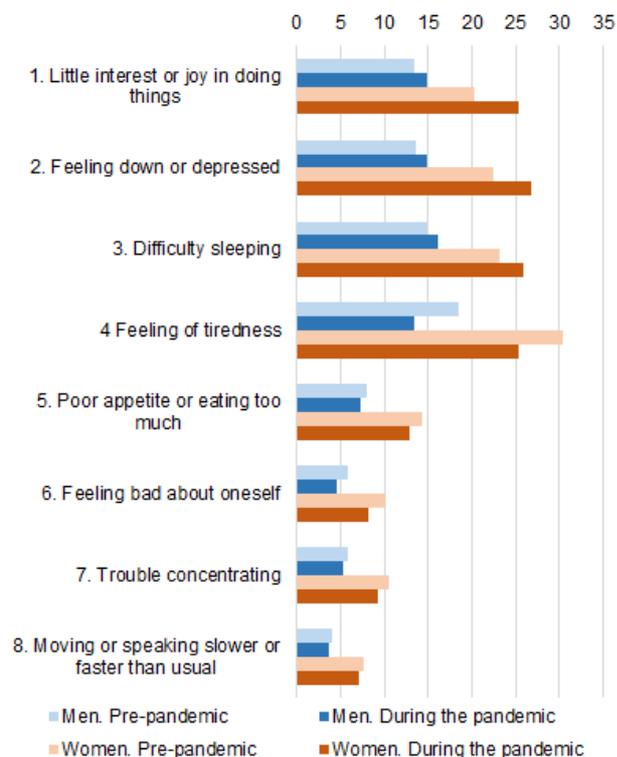
The emergence of the covid-19 pandemic and changes in social life affected the population's mental health.

According to the recent European Health Survey in Spain, during the pandemic there was an increase of 3.3 percentage points in those who reported little interest or joy in doing things; of 2.8 points in those who reported feeling of down or depressed and of 2 points in problems sleeping. On the other hand, feelings of tiredness fell by 5.1 points, and feeling bad about oneself by 1.7 points.

The changes in these indicators through July 2020 were more pronounced among women than men; these higher values were seen prior to the pandemic.



Mental health indicators before and during the pandemic * in men and women. 2019-2020
(% population 15 and above)

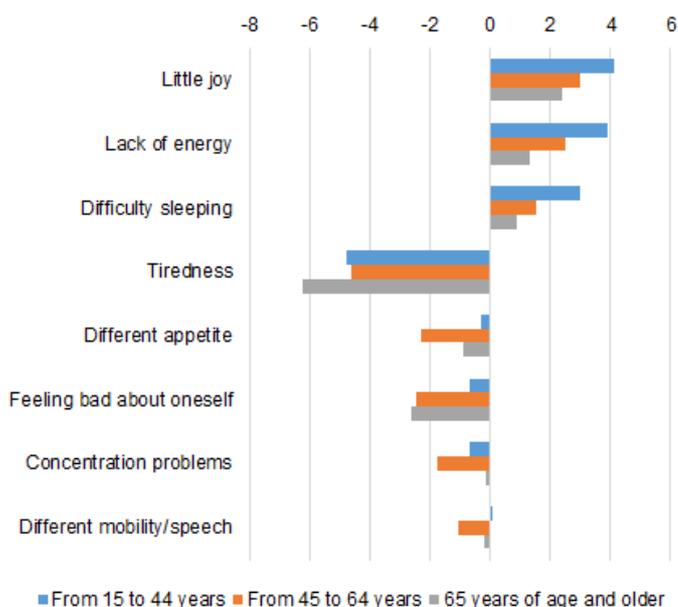


* Until July 2020.

It affects all ages, although not in the same way

The tendency for the first three indicators to increase at the beginning of the pandemic was observed in all age groups, although the change was more notable in the 15-44 age group. In the remaining mental health indicators, the change is greater among older individuals. Thus, for example, the feeling of fatigue decreased 6.2 points among those aged 65 and over.

Variation in mental health indicators according to age group during the pandemic*
(percentage points)



* Until July 2020.

The paradox of good health in a pandemic

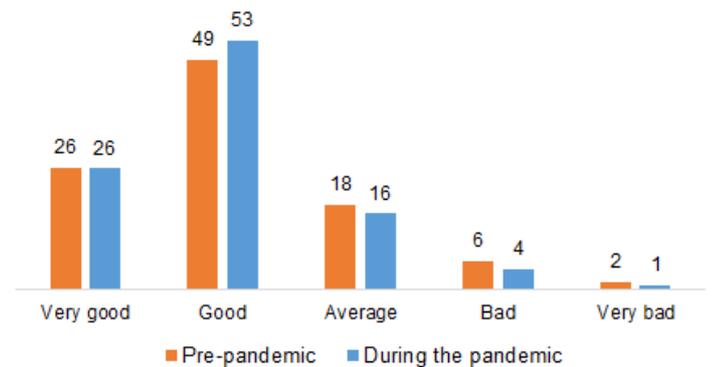
In the pandemic period for which the European Health Survey in Spain collected information (until July 2020), the proportion of the population with regular, bad or very bad self-perceived health decreased and the weight of the population with good general health (physical and mental) increased by four points compared to the previous period.

At the same time, excess mortality at the beginning of the pandemic was primarily associated with advanced ages and prior health problems (comorbidities). The Death Statistics show that, by cause of death, during the first five months of the year, 87.1% of those who died from the identified covid-19 virus, identified, were 70 years or older, and 89.2% were from covid-19, virus suspected, were 75 or over.

On the other hand, the primary comorbidity of individuals who died from covid-19 - as reported by doctors in the medical death certificate - was hypertensive disease (13.7% in deaths from identified covid-19 virus and 21, 0% in suspected covid-19). For its part, kidney failure was the second leading comorbidity in deaths from covid-19, virus identified (8.7%), and dementia in deaths from covid-19, virus suspected (13.0%).



Self-perceived health prior to and during the pandemic* (% population 15 and over)

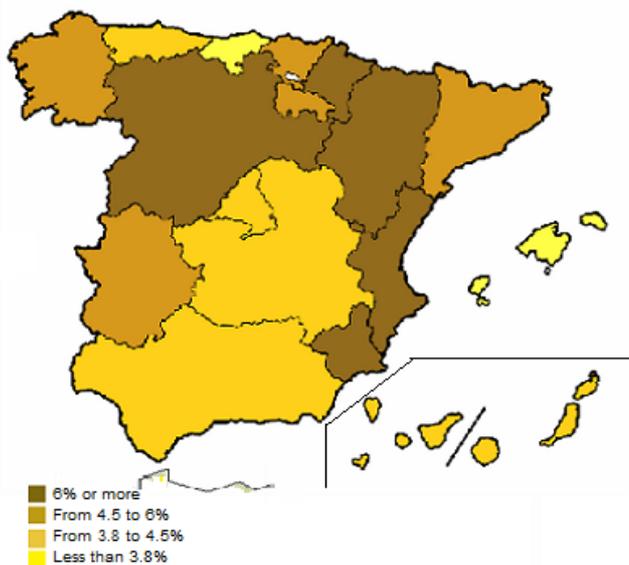


* Until July 2020.

Prevalence and severity of depressions. Changes compared to 2014

Prevalence of active depressive symptoms*. 2020

% Population aged 15 and over



* This includes major depressive pictures and other depressive pictures.

Castilla y León had the highest rate

Within the autonomous communities, Castilla y León (10%), Comunitat Valenciana (9.8%) and Comunidad Foral de Navarra (6.7%) had the highest figures in terms of the prevalence of depressive conditions; while Cantabria and Illes Balears have the lowest figures (3.6% and 3.7%, respectively), together with the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla (both below 2.5%).

Major depression affected 230,000 people

The European Health Survey investigated the prevalence of depressive symptoms among the population aged 15 and over and the severity of depressive symptoms. In 2020, the population with some type of depressive condition was estimated at 5.4%, or 2.1 million people. Considering the severity of the symptoms, 230,000 are considered serious.

Despite everything, there were fewer cases than in 2014

Compared to 2014, the percentage of people with depressive symptoms fell by two points (7.4% compared to 5.4%) and the percentage of depressions considered serious also decreased: from 1.06% in 2014 to 0.58% in 2020.

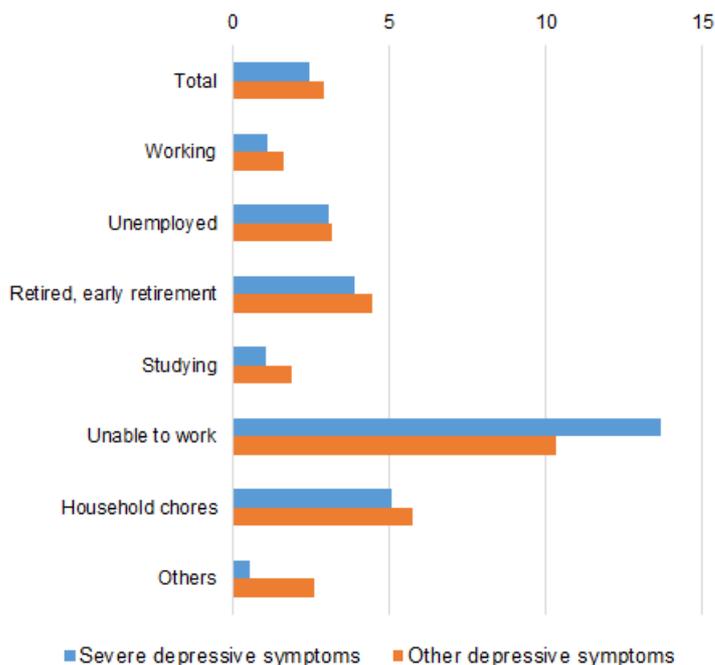
Affects women twice as much

The prevalence of depression in women is double that of men (7.1% versus 3.5%), and severe cases in women are more than triple those in men: for every severe case in men, there are 3.5 women with severe cases.

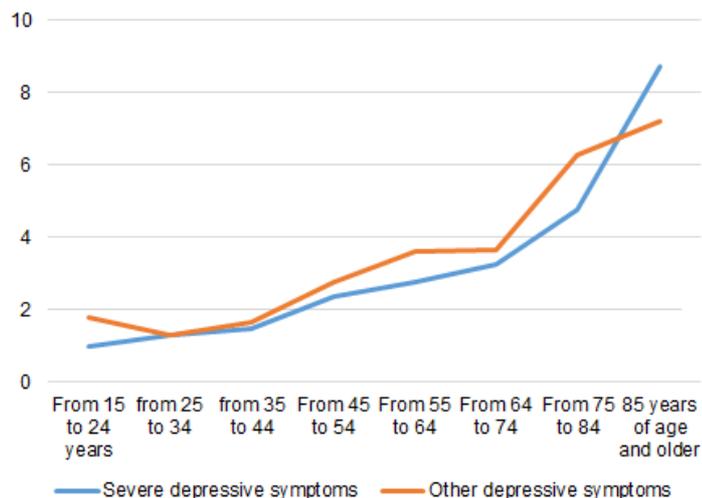
Inability to find employment is the primary risk

Depressive symptoms increase according to age group, and reach their highest value among those aged 85 and over, where it affects a full 16.0%. Due to its relationship with employment, the incidence is higher among people who are unable to work: 24.4% in men and 23.4% in women, between severe and other types of depressive conditions. Studying or working is associated with fewer cases.

Prevalence of active depressive symptoms according to current employment status. 2020
(% population aged 15 and above)

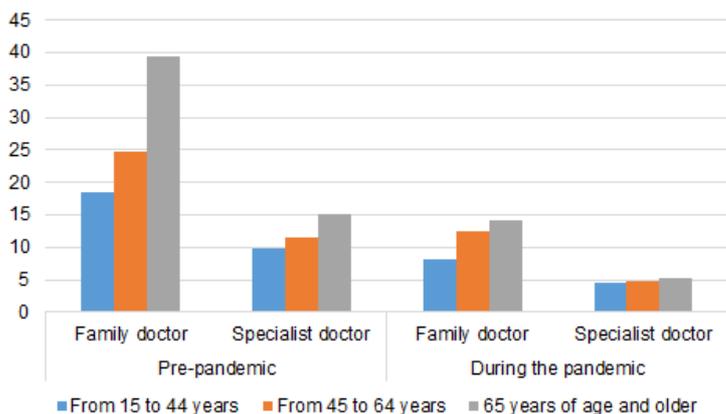


Prevalence of depressive symptoms in the population according to age. 2020 (%)



Medical consultations and use of the Internet for health issues

Medical consultations before and during the pandemic according to age group. 2019-2020
(% of each age group who visited in the 4 weeks prior to the interview)



The pandemic emptied waiting rooms

One of the effects of the pandemic, as recorded by the European Health Survey in 2020, was related to healthcare (in person or by phone).

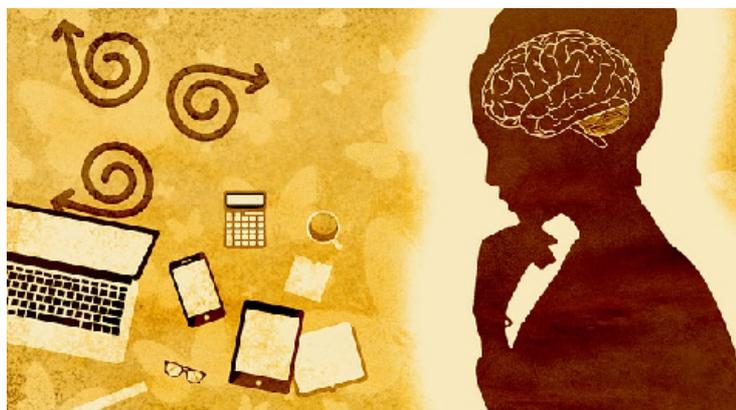
During the first five months of the pandemic, 9.3% of men and 12.4% of women aged 15 and over received care from their family doctor in the four weeks prior to the interview, while in the months prior to the start of the pandemic, the percentages were 21.1% and 29.2%, respectively.

On the other hand, 3.9% of men and 5.5% of women aged 15 and over consulted a specialist doctor in the four weeks prior to the interview during the first five months of the pandemic; while in the previous months the percentages were 9.5% and 13.6%, respectively.

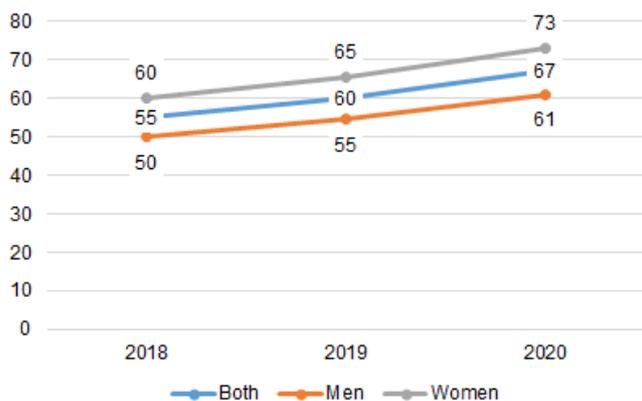
The decrease in consultations was observed across all age groups. It was more pronounced among those 65 years and over, with decreases of 25 points for family doctor visits and 10 points for specialist doctors.

Interest in health grows on the Internet

During 2020, 67.1% of people between 16 and 74 years old used the network for searches related to health issues in the last 3 months. This was seven points more than the previous year, according to the Technology Survey on information and communication in homes.



Searching for information on health topics in the past 3 months (% individuals from 16-74 years)



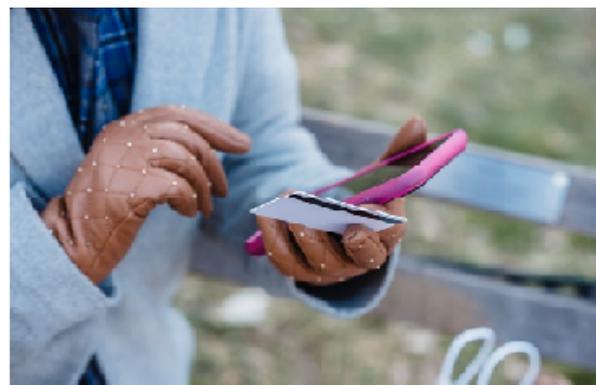
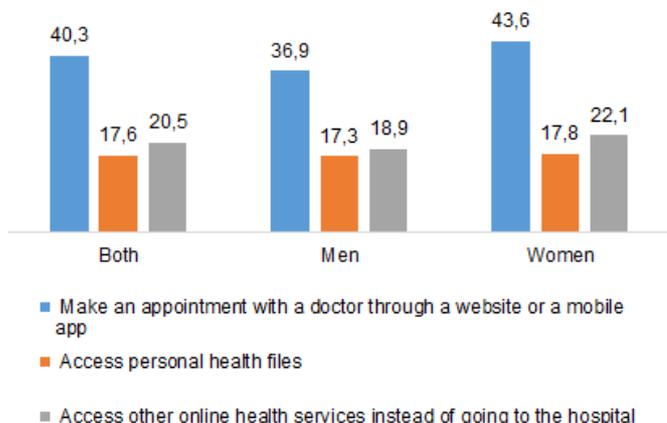
One in five people accessed online health services

In 2020, other health-related Internet activities were investigated, in addition to the search for information.

The next most widespread health-related activity was making a medical appointment through a website or a mobile application (40.3%). 20.5% accessed other online health services instead of going to the hospital and 17.6% accessed personal health files..

In all these activities, the proportion of people who used the network for these purposes was higher among women than in men. Thus, 73.0% of the women carried out Internet searches related to health issues, 43.6% made an appointment with a doctor through a website or a mobile application, 22.1% accessed other services online instead of going to the hospital and 17.8% accessed personal health files.

Health-related Internet activities in the last 3 months. 2020 (% individuals from 16-74 years)



Deaths from external causes: suicide, homicide and drug abuse

Suicide was the leading external cause of death

According to the Death Statistics, during the first five months of 2020 there were 5,850 deaths from external causes. This represented a decrease of 11.4% compared to the same period of the previous year.

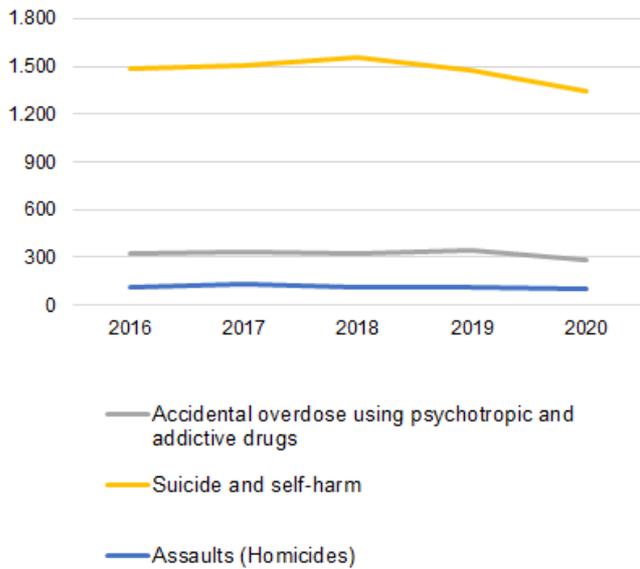
Suicide and self-inflicted injuries accounted for the highest number (1,343), but this was still 9.3% less than in the same period of 2019.

The greatest decrease due to external causes during these months was recorded in deaths from medical and surgical complications (63 deaths, -50%) and from traffic accidents (432 deaths, -41.4%).

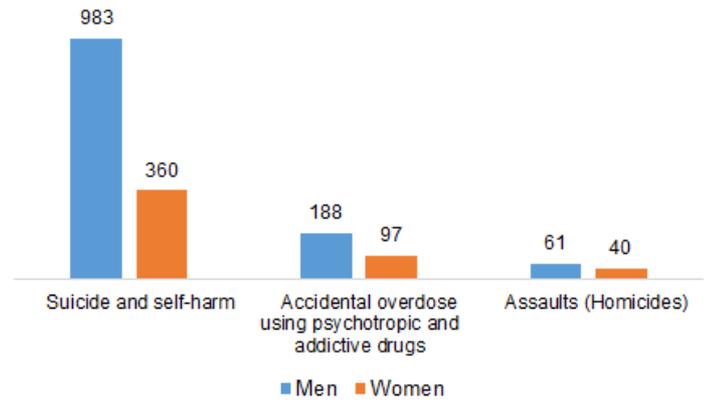
On the other hand, the number of deaths caused by accidental poisoning due to psychotropic and addictive drugs stood at 285. This was 17.4% less than in the same months of the previous year. The number resulting from assaults (homicides) came to 101, for a decrease of 13.7%.



Deaths due to certain external causes of mortality January-May of each year



Deaths due to certain external causes of mortality, by sex January to May 2020



More men died than women

For all causes of death, more men died than women. The difference was greater in the case of suicides, with almost 3 men for every woman.