



CONCERNS AND EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG ADOLESCENTS IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

RESULTS FROM THE 2020 GLOBAL EARLY ADOLESCENT STUDY IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

Key Findings

- Both knowledge of COVID and knowledge of prevention were high due to effective communication from the government and health authorities
- Gender differences in COVID experiences
 - Girls felt more threatened about the pandemic worried more about their school performance while boys were more concerned about the economic consequences of COVID-19
 - Boys general health improved while it remained unchanged for girls. Girls experienced a rise in anxiety during COVID which was not the case for boys.
- Little impact of COVID on health outcomes
 - Adolescents reported better overall health and less depression
 - Sleep patterns improved during remote learning

People's Republic of China



Quantitative Data collection:

Dates: June 11 - 12, 2020

Sample size: 715 (621 was included in the final analysis)

Methodology: In-person CASI (computer assisted self-interview)

Qualitative Data collection:

Dates: July 6 - 13, 2020

Sample: Focus Group Discussions (2 with girls and 2 with boys)

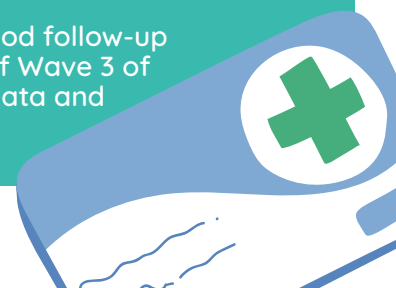
The state of COVID-19 in Shanghai

In China, the first confirmed human case of COVID-19 was reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City. As the first epicenter of COVID-19, Wuhan City was locked down on January 23, 2020 to prevent further spread of the disease. Shanghai launched its highest-level emergency response against COVID-19 on January 24, 2020, including closing schools and offering on-line courses starting in March. Other public health policies included stay at home orders or restrictions on mobility between February and May. These measures greatly curbed case numbers and led to the lifting of travel restrictions on April 8, 2020. Shanghai schools reopened starting April 27 and all the school aged children returned to schools by June 2, 2020. As of April 20, 2021, 1949 cases (imported:1578; local:371) have been reported in Shanghai and 7 people (imported:0; local:7) have died from the pandemic.

Methods

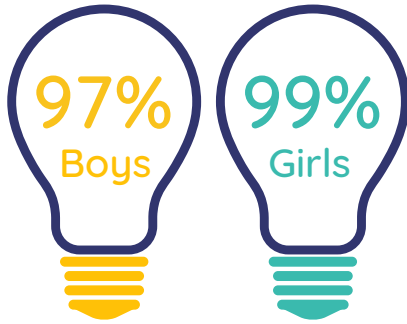
The present data were collected between June and July, at a time when young people were back in school, and restrictions on social movement were still in effect.

The COVID Module in Shanghai is a qualitative and quantitative combined mixed method follow-up study. It covered a subsample of adolescents aged 13 to 16 years embedded as part of Wave 3 of the GEAS. 715 adolescents completed the COVID module, after excluding the missing data and linking to the Wave 2 data, the analytical sample comprised 621 adolescents.



Knowledge and Behavior

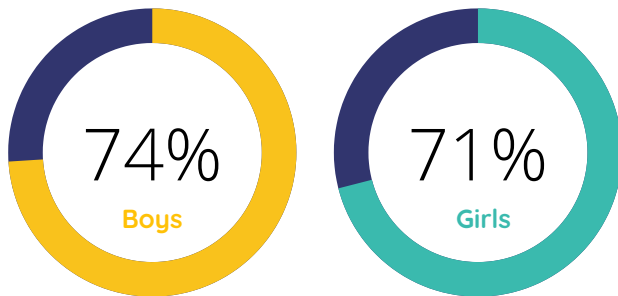
Young people knew quite a lot about COVID, especially girls. They generally know how to prevent COVID-19 and comply with preventive practices.



% of boys and girls that felt they were well informed about COVID*



Its transmission methods include air transmission, person-to-person contact, aerosol transmission, and fecal-oral transmission. (Boy)



% of boys and girls that actually practiced preventative measures**



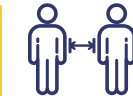
Don't go out, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, and avoid staying in crowded places... (Girl)



Participants were asked: Which of the following actions can reduce the risk of catching the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?



Handwashing and sanitizing 94%



no close contact 95%



hot drinks 14%



staying home 93%



wearing a mask 96%



Prayer 2%



using herbs 34%

Items in green are not scientifically proven to prevent COVID-19



The community will take the temperature for us. Besides, the community are locked, only these who have a pass can enter. One family only have two passports. (Boy)



Key Takeaway

- Knowledge about viral prevention was generally high among all age groups. Knowledge generally translated into high levels of compliance with COVID-19 preventive practices, although this was more the case for girls than boys.



Economic Impact



32% of boys

25% of girls

Report **income reduction** within the family



It was very inconvenient to go out and buy things during the epidemic, and the shelves of many supermarkets were empty. (Boy)



8% of boys and girls report **food insecurity** in the household



I was worried that my parents will be infected and then be send to the hospital, and they will not be able to come back. (Girl)



Key Takeaway

- Nearly one third of boys and a quarter of girls perceived income reduction within the family and about 8 percent of adolescents felt food insecurity during the COVID quarantine time.

Education



46% of boys

61% of girls

Think they **had difficulties completing their current grade** due to COVID



I worried about my study. I would lose my consciousness on Internet classes during the period of epidemic and I started to make up my lessons after school started. (Girl)



Key Takeaways

- Both girls and boys believed there were positive aspects of on-line learning, mainly ease and flexibility.
- COVID-19 is affecting both boys and girls grade completion, though girls expressed more concerns than boys.
- Distraction and self-discipline during remote learning was the biggest challenge for all groups.
 - Older boys mentioned missing going to school;
 - Younger girls noted the varying impacts by existing capacities of students.



Health and Wellbeing

Overall health has increased during COVID for adolescents in Shanghai^{***}

91%



86%

Boys



83%



81%

Girls



I didn't have time to go out or exercise, and I became fat and unhealthy when I was at home every day. (Girl)



Girls had slightly higher anxiety rates than boys^{****}

34%



33%

Boys



41%



35%

Girls



We had more free time than before, and we could do things we like, such as playing games, chasing drama and so on. (Boy)



Boys and girls got more sleep during remote learning than after returning to in-person learning

8.9 hours



7.5 hours

Boys



8.8 hours



7.2 hours

Girls



[Remote school] can make our study really easy and we can get up later in the morning. (Girl)



Adolescents in Shanghai had low levels of physical activity during lockdown



1.4 hours/day

Boys

0.9 hours/day

Girls



There is no time or field for us to exercise when studying at home, which lead us to gain weight easily. (Boy)



Key Takeaways

- Boys general health improved while it remained unchanged for girls.
- Girls experienced a rise in general anxiety during COVID.
- Boys seem to benefit from remote learning and quarantine than girls. Daily activity is less frequent in Shanghai with girls significantly lower than boys (1.4 h/d vs. 0.9 h/d). Both boys and girls slept more during remote learning than when they returned for in-person school.

