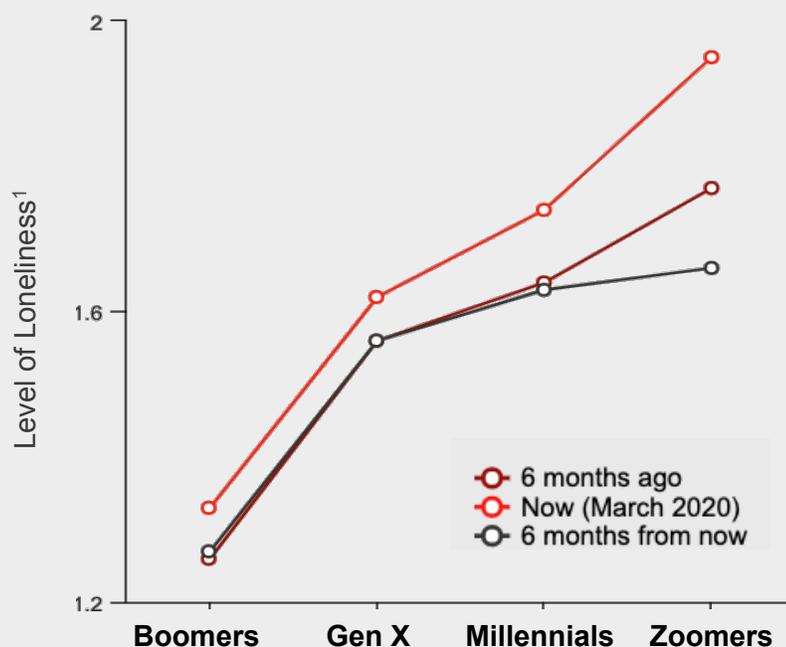


Impacts of COVID-19: Social Connectedness

Over the past several years, loneliness has emerged as an issue of concern at both ends of the age spectrum. Loneliness is not just about the number of social contacts people have, but their perception of the state of their social life. COVID-19 has abruptly changed the social lives of many Americans. How has the pandemic impacted different generations' feelings of loneliness? And how, in turn, do feelings of loneliness impact peoples' worries and attitudes about COVID-19?

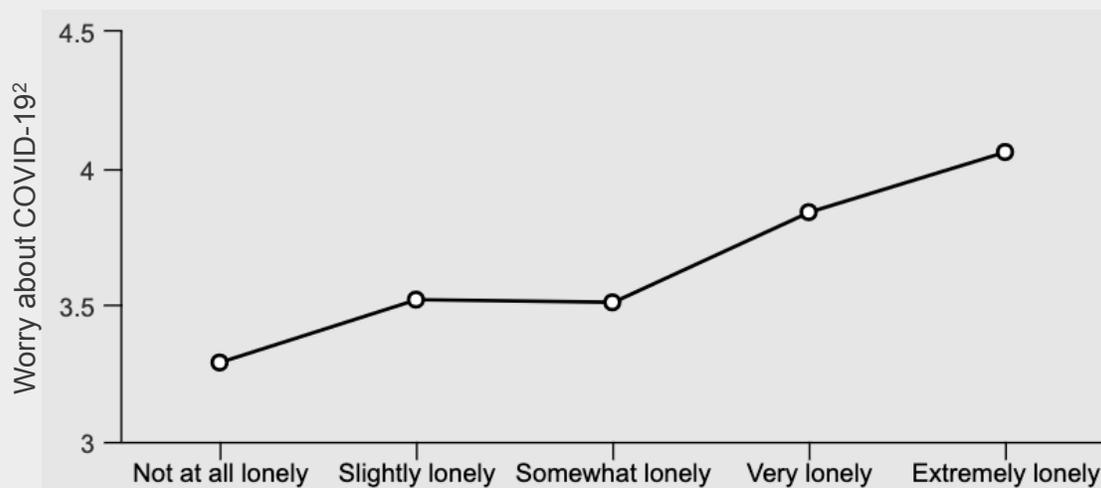
Loneliness, generations, and time

Approximately 60% of survey respondents reported currently feeling “not at all” or “slightly” lonely, while the rest (~40%) reported feeling “somewhat,” “very,” or “extremely” lonely. **Across generations, perceptions of loneliness following the COVID-19 outbreak jumped in comparison to six months ago.** Younger generations were more likely to report higher levels of loneliness than older generations across all time periods. All generations reported they expected to return to their previous levels of loneliness in 6 months—except Zoomers, the loneliest generation, who expected to be less lonely in 6 months than they were 6 months ago.



¹ Loneliness was assessed with the following options: 1 = not at all lonely, 2 = slightly lonely, 3 = somewhat lonely, 4 = very lonely, and 5 = extremely lonely.

How worried are you in general about COVID-19?



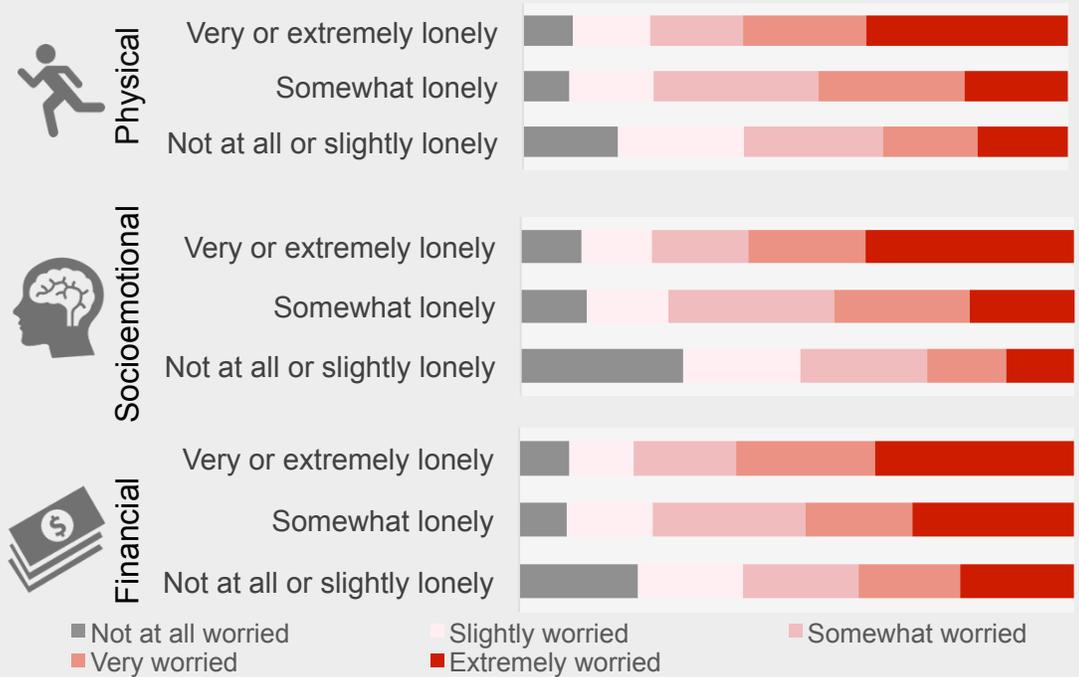
Loneliness corresponded with worries about COVID-19. **People who were very or extremely lonely were more worried about COVID-19 in general than people who were less lonely.** Note: Results reflect controls for household income. Generation effects are not significant.

² Worry was assessed with the following options: 1 = not at all worried, 2 = slightly worried, 3 = somewhat worried, 4 = very worried, and 5 = extremely worried.

Impact of generation, loneliness, & COVID-19 on other worries

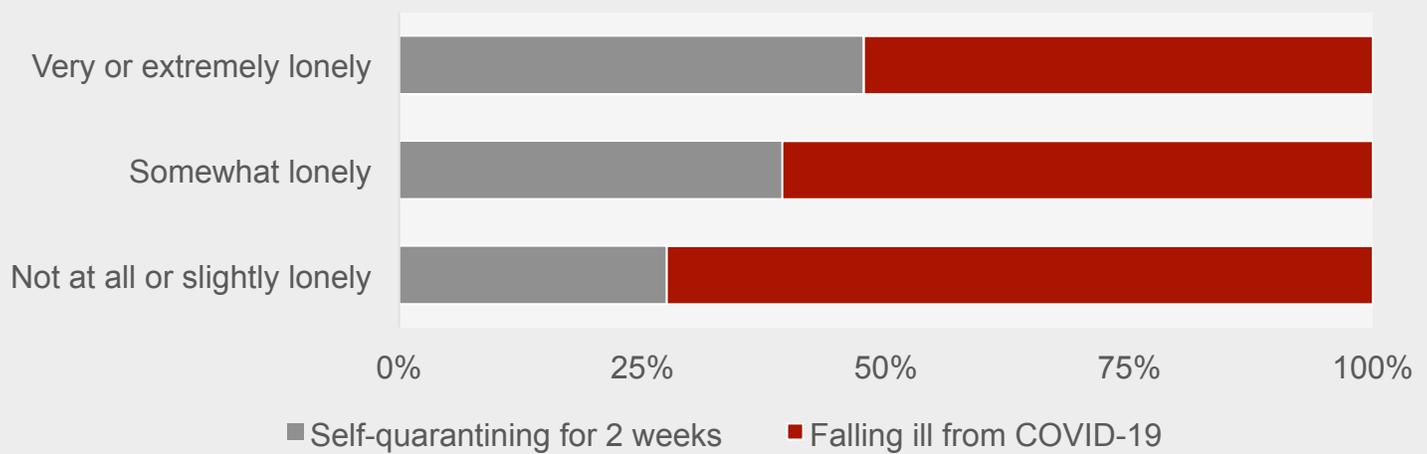
People who were lonelier were more worried about the impact of COVID-19 on different aspects of their lives.

Gen Xers and Millennials were more likely to worry about impacts on their physical health. **Boomers were less likely to worry** about the effects of COVID-19 on their socioemotional health or on their current or near-term finances.



COVID-19 or self-quarantine for 2 weeks?

People who were lonelier were nearly evenly split on what they thought would be worse: self-quarantining for 14 days or falling ill from COVID-19. People who were less lonely were more likely to say that they thought falling ill from COVID-19 would be worse.



These results represent a snapshot of perceptions in the time window in which data were collected: March 17-19. Sample collected from Qualtrics Panels. Number of cases for analysis ranged from 1070 to 1237. Ages in 2020: Baby Boomers, 56-74; Gen X, 40-55; Millennials, 24-39; and Zoomers, 18-23. Age groups older than Baby Boomers were also sampled, but there were too few responses in this round to report significant findings. The MIT AgeLab continues to monitor how different generations' attitudes and perceptions shift over time. The source for all data and graphics can be noted as (MIT AgeLab, 2020).

What is known about COVID-19 changes daily. For more information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping yourself and your family safe, visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov.



Life Tomorrow

agelab.mit.edu
agelabinfo@mit.edu