

The Optimise Study:

Optimising Isolation,
Quarantine and
Distancing for
COVID-19

Report 1 | November 2020



SUMMARY

The Optimise Study is a partnership between the Burnet Institute and the Doherty Institute, and collaborators. The study aims to assess the level of community adherence to government COVID-19 directions, measure the effectiveness of government restrictions, research any unintended consequences of the restrictions, measure transmission dynamics and identify and test the acceptability and feasibility of new interventions to reduce transmission and increase adherence.

Each month we will release findings from the study to provide real-time and rapid advice to government policy-makers and the broader community.

Report 1 | November 2020

This first report draws on the findings from 106 participants who completed the Optimise baseline survey between 14 September and 29 October 2020. None of the participants had COVID-19 at the time of recruitment, however one person had previously been diagnosed with COVID-19.

106
PARTICIPANTS

SURVEY
14 SEPTEMBER
- 29 OCTOBER

Given the relatively small sample size of the study at this stage, we have selected indicators which we have the greatest confidence in to be informative, including:

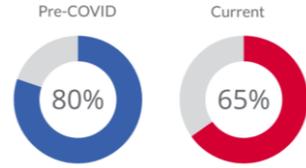
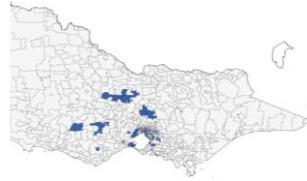
- Demographic characteristics.
- Acceptability of government responses.
- Top concerns relating to COVID-19.
- Willingness to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Key sources people use to obtain information about COVID-19.
- Adoption of risk reduction behaviours.

As the study grows, we will present the findings from a broader set of indicators. These will be available in subsequent reports.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Participants are on average **42 years old**.



The percentage of participants who were **employed declined by 19%** compared to pre-COVID levels.



1 in 2 households are **homeowners**



The average **household size** is 3 people.



1 in 4 people have received a **postgraduate education**.

ACCEPTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Metro Melbourne



Strongly agreed or **agreed** with the **Victorian Government** response

Regional Victoria



Strongly agreed or **agreed** with the **Victorian Government** response

▼ 52%



Strongly agreed or **agreed** with the **Federal Government** response

▼ 54%



Strongly agreed or **agreed** with the **Federal Government** response

CONCERNS RELATING TO COVID-19



VACCINE PREPAREDNESS

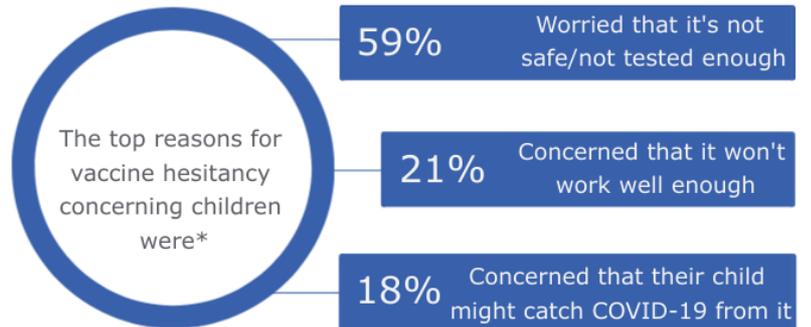
The percentage of people who "would **definitely** get a COVID-19 vaccine":



Self



Children



*Of those who reported anything other than "definitely yes" to getting the COVID vaccine

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The top 6 sources that people prefer to receive information are:



News media
24%



Daily govt press conferences
23%



Health authorities
19%



Social media
13%



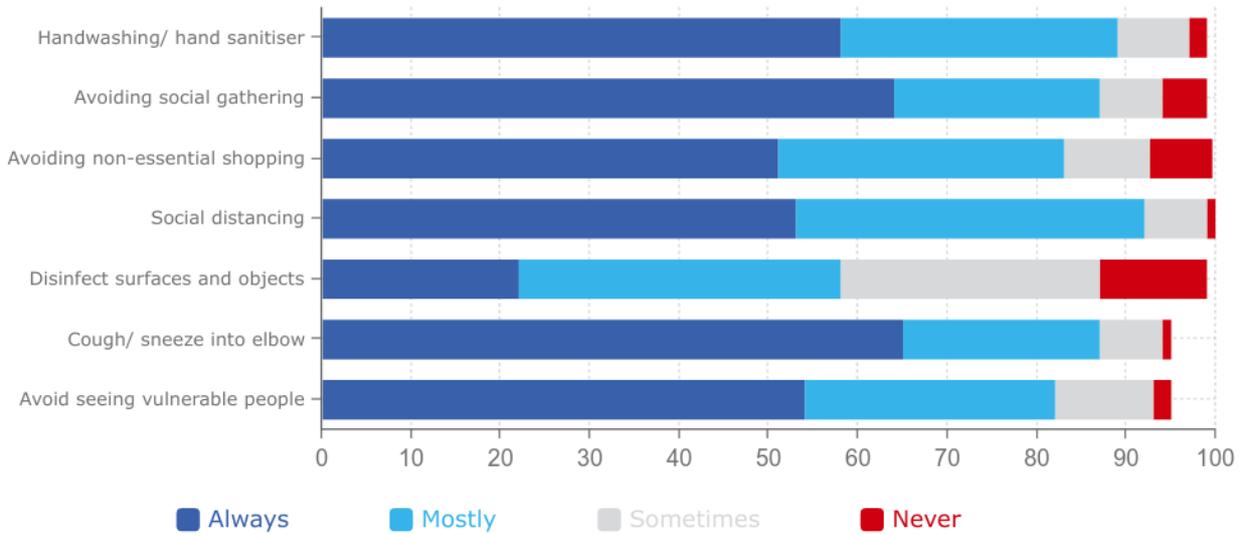
Friends and family
13%



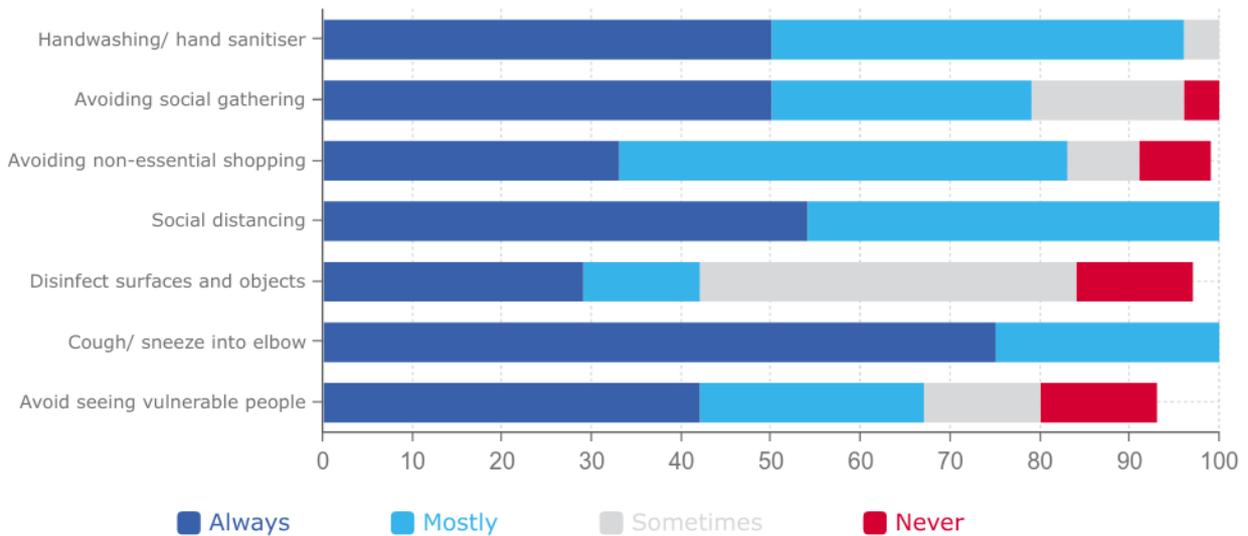
Workplace
7%

ADOPTION OF RISK REDUCTION BEHAVIOURS

Metro Melbourne



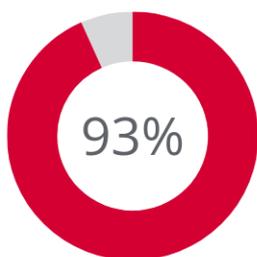
Regional Victoria



MASK WEARING

The percentage of participants who reported **always** wearing a face covering.

Metro Melbourne



Regional Victoria



USE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Less than 1 in 2 participants reported accessing financial support. The top sources of financial support included:



Centrelink
16%



Jobkeeper
11%



Early super
6%



Rent reduction
7%



Mortgage pause
2%



Other
7%

THE OPTIMISE STUDY

Optimise is a longitudinal cohort study that will follow approximately 1000 participants for a 12-month period.

As a social network study, we will recruit individuals from select cohorts as well as their close friends and family, and broader social networks. This will help to characterise people's social networks and assess certain populations or individuals are at higher risk of COVID-19 infection.

Participants are adults living in Victoria and include the following cohorts:

- COVID-19 cases and close contacts
- Healthcare workers
- Aged care workers
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- People living in regional town centres
- People with pre-existing chronic illness
- Young people
- Factory/warehouse/distribution/meat processing workers

KEY OUTCOMES

Transmission Dynamics

- Estimates of social contacts and mixing
- Time from symptom onset to testing
- Daily activities and locations

Unintended consequences

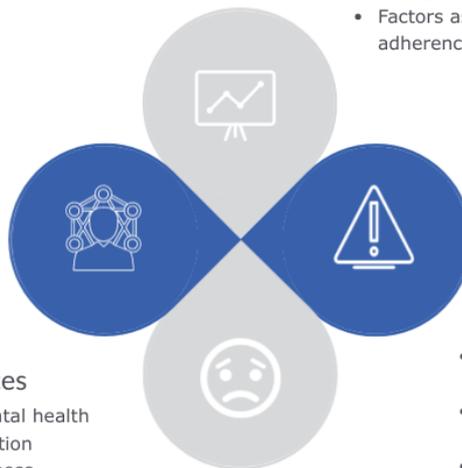
- Impacts on physical and mental health
- Changes in healthcare utilisation
- Changes in social connectedness, household structure
- Changes in economic circumstances
- Challenges experienced while in isolation or quarantine

Adherence

- Adherence to government directions
- Change in adherence over time
- Factors associated with adherence/non-adherence

Effectiveness of government interventions

- Knowledge and understanding of government restrictions
- Uptake of COVID19 testing and reasons for non-testing
- Adoption of risk reduction behaviours
- Acceptability of government interventions
- Changes over time



FUTURE REPORT

The next Optimise reports are due for release in **December 2020**. It is anticipated that these reports will assess:

- masks and risk perception
- participants knowledge and adherence to the restrictions as Victoria has transitioned through the various 'Steps' out of lockdown.

We welcome requests for the inclusion of specific indicators and outcomes of interest in future reports. Please email C19.Optimise@burnet.edu.au to make such requests.

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