When looking at the data, it is important to note that there is no difference between genders.

The t-tests show that pre-COVID individuals showed greater self-esteem than post-COVID individuals while post-COVID individuals showed greater anxiety than pre-COVID individuals.

Anxiety became more prevalent as COVID ran its course while self-esteem was lowered between the two groups due to many factors brought on by the pandemic.

Anxiety likely became more prevalent over the course of the pandemic due to the unknowns of the future and fear of becoming ill. Self-esteem likely was categorically lower between the two groups due to gaining weight, having a changed lifestyle, and losing income due to job changes.

In conclusion, more research should be performed to further delve into the true causes of anxiety and self-esteem fluctuations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a fluctuation in anxiety and self-esteem (Matias et al., 2020).

Anxiety is conceptualized as an emotional state that includes worry, nervousness, and apprehension while self-esteem is one’s evaluation of self-worth (Mattias et al., 2020).

Past studies show ill-effects on mental health, such as raised anxiety rates, tend to increase in a population in which there is widespread state of panic (Jungmann & Witthoft, 2020).

Mental Health America reported completion rate of their online anxiety self-screening tests increased by almost 20% since the beginning of February, showing people grew increasingly anxious amid the pandemic (Sakai et al., 2020).

Stockpiling food, panic buying, and consuming food rapidly, along with stressors such as a loss of income and feelings of instability, led to a general decrease in self-esteem during the pandemic (Chen et al., 2020).

These studies suggested that anxiety levels would be greater in post-COVID individuals than pre-COVID, and self-esteem levels would be greater in pre-COVID than post-COVID individuals.

Current Study

Amazon Mechanical Turk was used to collect data from participants (n=190) through a survey about dieting and body image.

Participants: 190 individuals in the United States.

Two groups: pre-COVID (n = 97, 55.7% male) & post-COVID (n = 93, 57.0% male).

Materials

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (GAD): used to measure anxiety level of participants (Spitzer et al., 2006).

Rosenburg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE): used to measure self-esteem of participants (Rosenburg, 1979).

Different groups did not differ significantly on demographic variables.

Figure 1: Differing Anxiety and Self-Esteem by Group

Post-COVID individuals showed greater anxiety (M = 8.10 (4.43) compared to pre-COVID individuals M = 6.58 (5.17); (t(190) = -2.14, p = .034)

Pre-COVID individuals had better self-esteem M = 24.02 (4.51) compared to post-COVID individuals (M = 22.05 (6.59); (t(190) = -2.41, p = .018)

There were no differences in gender.

Discussion

• When looking at the data, it is important to note that there is no difference between genders.

• The t-tests show that pre-COVID individuals showed greater self-esteem than post-COVID individuals while post-COVID individuals showed greater anxiety than pre-COVID individuals.

• Anxiety became more prevalent as COVID ran its course while self-esteem was lowered between the two groups due to many factors brought on by the pandemic.

• Anxiety likely became more prevalent over the course of the pandemic due to the unknowns of the future and fear of becoming ill. Self-esteem likely was categorically lower between the two groups due to gaining weight, having a changed lifestyle, and losing income due to job changes.

• In conclusion, more research should be performed to further delve into the true causes of anxiety and self-esteem fluctuations during the COVID-19 pandemic.