Suicide and Physical Activity: A case for the North

In light of recent Tier 3 restrictions placed upon the Liverpool City Region, we believe it is important to provide the evidence specific to the region regarding suicide rates. Just today, neighbouring regions that have been placed into Tier 3 have managed to maintain functioning gymnasium and leisure facilities. The following evidence supports the importance of access to leisure facilities within the Liverpool City Region. The black line in the diagrams displays the National average.

**Liverpool City Region Rates of Suicide and Mental Health Issues**



 

**Wider Impacts of COVID-19 on Health**

The following data is directly from the Public Health England data Base. You will notice that the North West is highlighted red for many of the markers and typically more than other regions. Many of these markers can be treated through physical activity and access to leisure facilities.

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**The Links Between Physical Activity and Mental Health**

In addition to preventing a range of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, several studies have demonstrated the positive effects of physical exercise on mental health problems, especially depression. Global Burden of Disease studies have highlighted mental problems as one of the leading causes of disability globally, and depression is now considered the most disabling disorder worldwide measured in years lived with disability. In addition to the immediate individual consequences of functional disability caused by depression (incl. Risk of poverty and social marginalization/ isolation), the economic ramifications are devastating. The economic costs of suicide, which most often occurs in the context of mental health problems, are also vast. For example, in Western Europe, each death by suicide costs at least 1.3 million EUR. Due to these large negative consequences for both the individual and the society, national authorities have listed mental health problems as a top public health priority in the coming years.

Of further concern is a recent paper looking specifically at UK public and “ the relationship between physical activity and mental health in a sample of the UK public: A cross-sectional study during the implementation of COVID-19 social distancing measures”.

The sample of the UK public social distancing owing to COVID-19 there was a negative association between moderate-to- vigorous physical activity per day in hours and poor mental health, after controlling for several important covariates. Moreover, similar findings were found for depression and anxiety symptoms as well as poor mental wellbeing. Taken together the present findings suggest that participating in higher levels of physical activity during COVID-19 self-isolation is associated with better total mental health status, FACT!!! Yes, there were limitations in this study, but when we combine it with the statistics and trends we provide from PHE, it is obvious that not letting our gyms and leisure facilities open is a ticking time bomb!

**Supporting Papers**

[**https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7164166/pdf/12888\_2020\_Article\_2583.pdf**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7164166/pdf/12888_2020_Article_2583.pdf)

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