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Predictors of adherence to public health behaviors for fighting COVID-19 derived from longitudinal data

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Abstract

The present paper examines longitudinally how subjective perceptions about COVID-19, one's community, and the government predict adherence to public health measures to reduce the spread of the virus. Using an international survey (N = 3040), we test how infection risk perception, trust in the governmental response and communications about COVID-19, conspiracy beliefs, social norms on distancing, tightness of culture, and community punishment predict various containment-related attitudes and behavior . Autoregressive analyses indicate that, at the personal level, personal hygiene behavior was predicted by personal infection risk perception. At social level, social distancing behaviors such as abstaining from face-to-face contact were predicted by perceived social norms. Support for behavioral mandates was predicted by confidence in the government and cultural tightness, whereas support for anti-lockdown protests was predicted by (lower) perceived clarity of communication about the virus. Results are discussed in light of policy implications and creating effective interventions. © 2022, The Author(s).

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