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Gender Differences in Fear and Risk Perception During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Provisionally accepted

The final, formatted

version of the article will be published soon. [Notify me \(\)](#)[Abdelaziz Alsharawy \(https://loop.frontiersin.org/people/1286171/overview\)](https://loop.frontiersin.org/people/1286171/overview)¹,

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led many people to suffer from emotional distress. Previous studies suggest that women process and express affective experiences, such as fear, with a greater intensity compared to men. We administered an online survey to a sample of participants in the United States that measures fear of COVID-19, perceptions about health and financial risks, and preventative measures taken. Despite the empirical fact that men are more likely to experience adverse health consequences from COVID-19, women report greater fear and more negative expectations about health-related consequences of COVID-19 than men. However, women are more optimistic than men regarding the financial consequences of the pandemic. Women also report more negative emotional experiences generally during the pandemic, particularly in situations where other people or the government take actions that make matters worse. Though women report taking more preventative measures than men in response to the pandemic, gender differences in behavior are reduced after controlling for fear. These results shed light on how differences in emotional experiences of the pandemic may inform policy interventions.

Keywords: gender differences, COVID-19, Fear, Health Behavior, beliefs, Risk Perception, affect heuristic**Received:** 31 Mar 2021; **Accepted:** 30 Jun 2021.**Copyright:** © 2021 Alsharawy, Spoon, Smith and Ball. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY)** (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.*** Correspondence:** Dr. Sheryl Ball, College of Science, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, 24061, Virginia, United States, sball@vt.edu**Disclaimer:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article or claim that may be made by its manufacturer is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

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