# PHI | Public Health Institute
LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

# Public Health Institute

# Journal

"Celebrating academic work
by PHI students"

# Welcome

**Welcome to the third issue of the PHI journal. Our first guest editorial comes from Professor Zara Quigg who started her academic journey by completing the BSc Public Health degree here at Liverpool John Moores University. Zara is now a Professor in Behavioural Epidemiology, and the Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Violence Prevention.**

Conducting a dissertation can be one of the most daunting, challenging and exciting parts of a student's journey. In the world of public health, there is a never ending list of topics to focus a dissertation on – often the most difficult part is just picking one! We often advise students to choose something that sparks their interest, that can help them learn something new, or build on their existing interests or work. That was certainly the advice I was given many years ago for my BSc Public Health dissertation at LJMU, and I stand by it to this day. My undergraduate focused on my main hobby as a student – nightlife! Something I knew well, and through my personal and public health studies could recognise the imperative to develop healthier nightlife spaces, for nightlife users and workers alike. My study focused on the role of door supervisors in promoting healthier nightlife, and I have had the privilege to have continued my work on developing healthier nightlife settings through my role at the Public Health Institute. Without this opportunity however, my dissertation would have simply sat on a shelf (these were the days when electronic catalogues were rare). This journal offers students a fantastic opportunity to promote and celebrate their work that is accessible to all.

Dissertations provide students with an opportunity to develop and demonstrate a range of skills covering research and data analyses, problem solving, communication, and project and time management amongst others. It aims to enable students to demonstrate their independent research skills. As can be seen in this journal, students at the Public Health Institute are engaging in research that is of relevance to the ever changing challenges to public health. They are identifying critical questions to explore via their dissertation, adopting a range of methodologies, and identifying key learning that can help shape their own thinking, and the wider field. Exploring these abstracts will provide the reader with a fantastic overview of some of the key public health challenges we face today. I am continually enthused by the passion of our students when embarking on their dissertation and congratulate them on their work. As they embark on their future journey, I am sure that the excellent work they have produced, and the knowledge and skills they have obtained will help shape their public health journey, and the influence they can have on promoting the public's health.

*Professor Zara Quigg*

# Lois Akaadom

A Quantitative study exploring people's perception of the Black Lives Matter Campaign

**Abstract**

Racism is defined as prejudice, unfairness, or animosity directed toward someone of a different race on the basis of the belief that one race is better or superior to the other. In this study, data was collected in the form of an online survey, with multiple choice questions and even open ones, to obtain as much data as possible and to reveal individuals' perspectives regarding Black Lives Matter through Instagram. This questionnaire was administered anonymously, giving users the option of participating or not. The survey was completed by 53 individuals. This was a limitation because the researcher expected more participants to participate. The study will discuss how racism has affected people's health, how social media has elevated the Black Lives Matter movement to an international level, and what the participants believe about the movement.

# Hend Al-Mardai

A quantitative study to explore UK students experiences of purchasing food from virtual kitchens

**Abstract**

Foodborne disease is a common illness in the UK. Previous research has estimated that yearly there are 566,000 cases, 74,000 general practitioner presentations and 7,600 hospital admissions related to foodborne disease from 13 known pathogens in UK. Campylobacter and norovirus are the most common foodborne pathogens in the UK. Food safety is important as it helps to protect consumers from the risk of food borne illnesses. It also helps to prevent consumers from risks of health related conditions such as allergy and death. During the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual kitchens obtained vital social and industrial currency. This came at a time when many restaurants were either unproductive due to limitations on public dining or reduced significantly as very low numbers of customers were permitted to be served on premises even as the situation recovered. Conversely, demand for home delivery of food expanded as people were required to stay at home during lockdown. This study explores the experiences of UK students in purchasing food from virtual kitchens. For this research study, a quantitative methodology has been selected using an online questionnaire for students over 18, to explore their experiences of using virtual kitchens on social media sites. The findings from this study show that 32% of the participants bought from virtual kitchens once, while 68% had bought from two to ten times, indicating that they like or enjoy the foods that they purchase. Participants usually order the food themselves, and usually buy food from virtual kitchens for special occasions, such as birthdays or as a treat for themselves or someone else. Around a quarter (26) purchased because they want to support a local business, with 10% purchasing food as part of their regular shop. Most of the participants purchase birthday cakes, meals and desserts with some purchasing sweets, other types of cakes, savoury products such as meat pies and other types of food. Close to three in ten (28%) of participants state they purchase from virtual kitchens for the variety of food and 18% for the cost of the food. Customers prefer to have a variety of options but also affordable food. Most participants were either very satisfied or satisfied when purchasing food from social media sites. The rest were neutral and only 10% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their purchases. Some of the participants in this study indicated that they were aware that food sold on social media sites is not the same quality as that sold in virtual kitchens. However, some participants were uncertain if the food was the same quality as in the past, indicating a lack of knowledge about where they are purchasing from. Participants also claim that virtual kitchens do not provide enough information about ingredients and allergens associated with the foods they sell. However, they prefer to purchase from virtual kitchens due to the variety of food options to choose from, as well as being much cheaper than high street kitchens.

**Keywords:**

Virtual Kitchens, Cloud Kitchens, Foodborne Illnesses, Food Safety, Food Standard Agency, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

# Millie Bligh

Exploring gender differences between UK construction workers with respect to Health and Safety in the workplace and how this can be a barrier for women entering the construction industry.

## Abstract

Males have long dominated the UK construction industry stemming from generations of conventional attitudes and these discrepancies across various construction sectors, genders, and ages are investigated in this study. Encouraging female construction workers may lead to larger economic benefits and change current attitudes and preconceptions, while increasing public awareness of gender inequity in construction may affect public health. This study aims to investigate gender differences in workplace health and safety among UK construction workers and how this may act as a barrier to women entering the industry. Data was acquired through an anonymous online questionnaire with 91 respondents (85 male and 6 female). The data collected from respondents was analysed to explore similarities and differences between genders in terms of legislation, experiences, attitudes, and opinions regarding this matter. The findings showed that males believed the most common reason for the lack of females in the industry was due to a physical disadvantage, whereas females believed it was due to a lack of respect for women and malicious banter within the industry. Male and female attitudes differed in terms of attitudes toward health and safety. Males displayed more negative attitudes towards their experiences working with health and safety while females displayed more rational choices, and awareness around health and safety legislation. These differences could act as a barrier for women entering the industry as their more rational attitudes to health and safety are not seen as complying with the norm. Males generally dominate higher-risk jobs due to cultural standards, which research suggests could be related to the physical and mental strain of the professions which place males at a biological advantage. However, females' typical tendency to express more reasonable and sympathetic attitudes towards health and safety in this study might imply that they are more invested in not making mistakes than men which could be a benefit in lowering risk in health and safety-related occupations. Furthermore, encouraging women to work in these industries could provide role models for future generations - opening greater career opportunities for the next generation of women whilst helping to meet the construction industry's continued demand for labour. The study findings suggest a clear need for employees in the UK construction industry, as well as the general public, to be educated regarding gender inequalities in the industry and how they can affect women's career prospects. Overall, this would result in better workplace health and safety for men and women in construction careers and more women pursuing their preferred vocations.

# Michael Cooper

A Quantitative Study of Students' Covid - 19 Health Risk Perceptions When Visiting Free-Standing Hospitality Businesses (FSHB) Post Restrictions

## Abstract

COVID-19 emerged in China in late 2019 and spread both rapidly and globally, resulting in a pandemic which started in March 2020 and is currently ongoing. Over 5.5 million deaths have been registered globally with 174,233 of those in the United Kingdom (UK). Risk is not the same for everyone with regards to infection and outcomes, nevertheless the UK government enforced three national lockdowns to limit the spread and impact. Furthermore, restrictions were imposed on the general public and the hospitality industry e.g., social distancing and seated table service, to name a few. Lockdowns and restrictions did reduce the spread and protected health services, although wider economic impacts are evident. Between April 2020 and March 2021, the UK hospitality industry lost £126.8 billion. In June 2021, all restrictions were lifted in England. However, COVID-19 is still prevalent and continues to have a substantial impact on student risk perceptions and how hospitality businesses operate. The goal of this project was to explore students' perceptions of COVID-19 risk when deciding to visit free-standing hospitality businesses (FSHB) post COVID-19 restrictions. A key objective was to provide FSHB with information as to what restrictions and additional hygiene measures could help reduce student risk perceptions and thus achieve a balance between gaining their trust and loyalty, without impacting economic sustainability of their business. Convenience sampling was used to collect 114 data samples from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) students using both open and closed questions via an online survey. Less than half (43%) of the sample said that restrictions would help ease their risk perceptions, with 19.7 % of those supporting sectioning off seating, and 31.8% supporting the controlling of customer numbers, although 57% felt that the aforementioned or any other restrictions would not ease their perceptions of risk. The population sample has an imbalance of age, gender, and ethnicity. Thus, additional studies are needed, which provide a more representative demographic participation sample and which consider the new variants of COVID-19, vaccinations, and booster vaccinations. Restrictions will help establish the trust and loyalty of a large proportion of students; nevertheless, applying those restrictions could result in a decrease in customer turnover, which long-term is not economically sustainable, particularly for small FSHB.

## Keywords:

Free Standing Hospitality Businesses (FSHB), Hygiene Measures, Pandemic, Pre and Post COVID – 19, Restrictions, Risk Perceptions, Students

# Pádraig Cormican

A survey study of LJMU students' Attitudes towards Fast Fashion and its Impacts on Humans and the Environment

**Abstract**

The fast fashion industry has a number of effects on both humans and the environment, affecting climate change and impacting garment workers operating in both low to middle income countries and the United Kingdom. While the fast fashion industry provides affordable and accessible clothing to everyone, this comes at a price and despite this, the industry is thriving in today's economy. The fast fashion industry is prevalent all across the world and thus, ultimately affects the globe, due to waste, pollution and social injustices. The aims for this study were  to identify younger students' attitudes towards the fast fashion industry and its impacts on both humans and the environment and to understand how environmental and humanitarian concerns impact on students' fashion purchases. In order to complete the study, an anonymous online survey was completed by 43 students of Liverpool John Moores University. The students who participated in the study were aged 18-25, these students answered a number of questions surrounding their awareness of the fast fashion industry, its impacts and their shopping habits. The information provided by participants of the study was then analysed through the use of Microsoft Excel and SPSS in order to produce results. The results from the study have shown that while the participants of the study were aware of the fast fashion industry, its impacts and ethical and sustainable alternatives to their purchasing habits, they were still likely to consider the use of fast fashion retailers to purchase items of clothing for a number of reasons, mainly the affordability and accessibility of fast fashion. The lack of affordability and accessibility is clear when considering ethical and sustainable alternatives to fast fashion, especially when we consider that students have less of a disposable income when compared with those who are in full time employment. Recommendations include more education surrounding the topic to be readily available to everyone and for fast fashion retailers to become more sustainable and to consider the affects their businesses have on both humans and the environment.

**Keywords:**

Students, Attitudes, Environment, Fast Fashion, Humans.

# Fay Downey

A Survey Study Investigating Loneliness and its Association with Social Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic among UK University Students.

**Abstract**

Whilst a number of studies have explored the impact of social media on mental health (such as levels of anxiety and depression), very little have explored the impact on loneliness. Furthermore, University students experience high levels of loneliness whilst also being prevalent social media users. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate loneliness and its relationship with social media in UK university students, with a particular emphasis on loneliness levels during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to a lack of knowledge about loneliness amongst younger generations, students were chosen as the target audience. The study used a quantitative approach, with data collected via an online anonymous questionnaire. The study recruited 101 participants, and found relationships between social media use, levels of loneliness, and other mental health issues, such as anxiety. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, social media also helped with loneliness, as it acted as a medium for contact and kept students entertained during this isolating time. The data also found that image-centric social media applications such as Facebook and Instagram had a huge impact on self-image when coming out of lockdown causing social anxiety and self-image problems. Gaps in knowledge about social media and loneliness were discovered during Covid-19, and it is recommended that more could be done to educate students about these risks particularly post pandemic. Some recommendations include the need for campaigns in student unions or universities to address the issue of student loneliness, as well as more research on loneliness in university students due to social media.

**Keywords:**
Loneliness, Social media, Covid-19, Students, Anxiety, Connect.

# Rosalyn Harrison

A quantitative study to establish whether the first COVID-19 lockdown restrictions influenced the (binge) drinking patterns of LJMU students.

**WINNER**

Commendation for Significant Achievement

## Abstract

Student alcohol consumption and binge drinking are largely normalised within university communities. Despite evidence highlighting that physical,social, emotional and cognitive impacts of consuming alcohol at binge levels, students continue to consume alcohol and binge drink. This study sought to explore the reasons why students drink alcohol and binge drink in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, examining if the first COVID-19 lockdown influenced students drinking patterns, and if so, why. A quantitative methodology was adopted, with an anonymous online questionnaire consisting of a variety of questions used to explore changes in LJMU students (aged 18 years and above) alcohol use and binge drinking patterns during and after the first COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. A total of 50 participants aged between 18-54 completed the questionnaire. The data found that the majority of students reported binge drinking on weekly basis during the COVID-19 lockdown with a small increase in the number of students reporting binge drinking since the easing of the lockdown. The study also identified a new trend of drinking virtually via online platforms with friends during lockdown, but this trend did not last beyond the ease of restrictions. The reasons for drinking during the first COVID-19 lockdown, were mainly cited as being due to boredom whilst catching up with their friends and making up for lost time were the predominant reasons after these restrictions were eased. Binge drinking is concerningly still a common behaviour among LJMU students, with more participants reporting getting unintentionally drunk since the ease of lockdown. The re-opening of participants' preferred places to drink (i.e., drinking venues such as pubs and bars) influenced them to drink higher volumes of alcohol when compared to levels of drinking they reported in their homes during the lock-down. This shows that for students, drinking is a communal and social experience, and as their interaction was restricted during lockdown, they were prevented from drinking in their desired way, which is with other students in public drinking spaces.

**Keywords:**
Lockdown, Restrictions, Alcohol, Drinking, Binge drinking, Students, COVID-19, Pandemic.

# Amal Ibrahim

A cross-sectional survey study exploring knowledge, attitudes and food safety practices of UK mothers in the domestic environment.

**Abstract**

Food safety is a public health concern. Domestic environments are the first site where foodborne infections emerge as a result of inadequate personal and/or environmental cleanliness, resulting in an elevated risk of infection. The aim of this study is to explore the knowledge attitudes and food safety practices of UK mothers in the domestic environment. The topic domestic food safety is often neglected, there is limited literature about it and if domestic food safety is discussed then usually it covers foodborne illness and their types and not regarding the knowledge, attitude and food safety practice of food handlers at homes which are usually mothers.  A survey design was adopted using anonymous questionnaire administrated online. Questionnaire was designed using JISC.  Fifty-five participants responded to a link posted on Mumsnet, the largest parent network in the UK. The questionnaire was divided into three sections including food safety knowledge, attitudes and practice. Results were analysed and interpreted using Microsoft Excel using graphs and tables also, an online calculator was used to run Chi Squared test for comparison.  Results showed that participants of this study had a good knowledge regarding food safety with total average of 4.96 out of 6, while showing no link between level of education and average of knowledge. Adding to that, participants also had a good level of food safety attitudes but with some  limitations. Food  safety  practice  is what  participants  lacked  the  most  as  most responses where to unsafe practices that could  result  in  foodborne  illnesses. According to the Chi Squared test done on one of the practices sections the result was not statistically significant as the chi-square statistic was 3.39. Food safety is a global public health issue that can have an impact on people around the world which needs to be addressed. A large percentage of it being caused by behaviours in the home kitchen. Food safety is a burden in the UK and has a direct effect on economy. There is no law to be applied for domestic food safety  however,  there  is some  advice  out  there  by  international  organizations  that  can reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses at home by ensuring food is safe. Also, more domestic food safety research should be conducted and especially in the UK to fill the gap and to try to understand mother's domestic food safety handling to be able to plan a proper awareness plan and interventions.

**Keywords:**

Food safety, Domestic, Mothers, Foodborne illness, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice.

# Mary Johnson

## What Support is in Place for Hoarding Behaviour and is it Working?

**Abstract**

This dissertation explores how interventions and support that are put in place for people with hoarding behaviours are working to reduce this. A literature review presents the theories around hoarding and highlight the effects it can have on the individual and others around them. It also presents the different types of hoarding behaviours and the stages of this disorder. Furthermore, it presents evidence of the process of being diagnosed and how it is treated. Such a study is important due to the public health concerns that hoarding behaviours can have on the individual and the public. In addition, reducing hoarding behaviours through interventions can prevent further government costs and health risks. The method used within this study has been secondary data research through internet searching. This is supported by an evaluation of the research methods used and a reflection of the limitations that were unforeseeable within the research. This is followed  by a presentation of the findings and discussion  of this research, giving particular focus to the interventions that are in place.

# Mike Johnson

Hospitality Workers & Covid-19: A small-scale qualitative study exploring the impact of Covid-19 on hospitality workers in Liverpool

**WINNER**

Environmental Health Dissertation Prize Winner

## Abstract

As the Covid-19 pandemic spread across the world, the UK government was forced to act with numerous policies and interventions intending to promote safety and limit the spread of the virus. Hospitality has been perhaps the most vulnerable industry during this time, as their businesses were repeatedly closed through lockdowns and limited by restrictions on gatherings, movement, and business practices. Whilst many studies have been published about the economic state of the hospitality industry, very little attention has been given to the workers in UK hospitality venues. Given the tumultuous events since the pandemic began, and the dramatic impacts to the industry, this study aims to understand the impact of Covid-19 and related safety measures on the lives of hospitality workers in Liverpool, focussing on the perceptions and effects of policy. Understanding the impact of the pandemic and corresponding policies and practices on hospitality workers can help to identify which measures were perceived to be effective, and to explore any unintended outcomes. This is a qualitative interview study, using semi-structured interviews conducted online via Microsoft Teams. Seven participants were interviewed in total before data saturation was attained. All participants were over 18 years old and worked in hospitality businesses in Liverpool during August 2020. Participants were recruited through non-probability convenience and snowball sampling methods. Once gathered, data was coded and interpreted through a process of thematic analysis. Findings from this study showed that there were substantial difficulties for hospitality employees working during the pandemic, from implementing and enforcing a variety of safety measures, to struggling with emotional and physical exhaustion and burnout. All participants had experienced notable instances of customer resistance to Covid-19 safety measures, and many indicated that inconsistencies in both government policies and the implementation of safety measures between businesses exacerbated these issues. As many co-workers were often unavailable to work, either because they had to isolate, shield, or had simply left the industry, those workers who remained regularly experienced greater workloads, increased working hours, and additional stress. This in turn had negative impacts on the mental health of employees affecting their ability to maintain personal relationships outside of work. Participants also demonstrated an awareness of many in the industry who struggled financially during lockdowns, bringing the effectiveness of the governments furlough scheme into question. Recommendations from this study include utilising Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and licensing authorities who have existing relationships with hospitality businesses to enforce restrictions and provide advice to businesses, improving communication and understanding of relevant safety measures and policies, and increasing consistency between venues. This study also recommends the inclusion of tipped income in furlough payment calculations to prevent hospitality workers from suffering excessive income loss. ,

**Keywords:**
Covid-19, Pandemic, Hospitality, Employees, United Kingdom, Experiences, Qualitative, Occupational Health.

# Ben Kingston

A survey study to investigate food handler's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards food safety and food practices in restaurants in Liverpool.

**Abstract**

Food establishments are on the rise in the United Kingdom, producing a wide variety of cuisine to cater for a variety of tastes in a global market. A large majority of the population will experience a foodborne disease at some point in their lives, and in 2018 alone there were estimated to be 2.4 million FBD-related cases in the UK resulting in 180 deaths per year. Local Authorities monitor and inspect these establishments periodically, however recent constraints have seen a decline in resources (staff, money, time) that aid the delivery of food safety controls. In order to develop the most effective methods for improving food safety practices, it is important to examine where the risks are coming from. The aim of this research study was to explore food handlers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour towards food safety and food handling practices in restaurants within Liverpool. This quantitative study used an online multiple-choice questionnaire to gather data from the target population of food handlers and to identify any common themes between participants. Convenience and snowballing sampling methods were used to gain responses from 52 participants. The data gathered from the survey was analysed using a combination of Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 28. Participant's demographics were also gathered to determine similarities or differences between education, training and work experience. The results of the questionnaire are presented in the form of pie charts, bar graphs and scatter plots. Statistical tests were also performed using One way ANOVA tests to determine any statistical significance of results. The results of the study reveal that food handlers in Liverpool food businesses have a generally satisfactory level of food safety knowledge. Their attitudes expressed in the questionnaire demonstrated a strong positive approach with overall minimal risky behaviours towards food safety and hygiene practices. The majority of participants believe food safety is important to them and one of their main responsibilities within the workplace. However, the results show that certain areas of knowledge surrounding harmful pathogens (bacteria) were lacking. A significant amount were unaware how to best control bacterial growth on food, and how difficult it can be to identify contaminated foods. Even though the results show a protective behaviour towards food safety, some aspects of behaviour like coming to work when sick and using their phone in food handling areas need to be emphasised. In determining food handlers' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards food safety, several recommendations can be made. These include the development of a more effective training regime where theory is combined with practice and risk-based approach; and the necessary systems and resources are in place to correctly implement food safety. To improve food handlers' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards food safety the researcher recommends that food establishments focus on a combination of processes such as behavioural change ideas and offering support, motivation and positive reinforcement. This, combined with the positive attitudes and behaviours of senior managers can encourage a food safety culture within food establishments.

**Keywords:**

Food safety, Foodborne illness, Food business, Food handler, Food hygiene, Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour, Practices, Organisational culture

# Hillary Kotoroka

A Survey Study To Explore Liverpool John Moores University Students' Attitudes Towards The Covid-19 Vaccine

## Abstract

The World Health Organization announced COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020, after the virus that caused COVID-19, which was detected in December 2019 in Wuhan, China had spread globally (WHO, 2020). Our way of living changed drastically; non-essential stores, schools, and offices were closed with the intention to prevent and minimise the transmission of the virus and protect the public. In December 2020, the COVID-19 vaccine (BioNtech/ Pfizer) was approved for use in the UK, since then different COVID-19 vaccines have been developed and approved for use in the UK (Sasse, 2020). With the availability of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters there is not sufficient data available on student's acceptance and their perceptions towards the willingness of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine in the UK. Acceptance of COVID-19 vaccines will be an important step in combating and reducing COVID-19 but achieving high uptake may be difficult. The purpose of the study was to explore and investigate Liverpool John Moores University students' attitude towards the COVID-19 vaccine and factors that influence their decision on receiving or not receiving the vaccine. The study used a quantitative method and used an online questionnaire to obtain the data. Convenience sampling was the method used by the researcher. The questionnaire was completed by 32 students studying at Liverpool John Moores University. The researcher analysed and obtained data from the questionnaire by using Jisc online survey and Microsoft Excel, which allowed the researcher to produce bar charts, tables and pie charts. Majority of students had a positive attitude towards both the COVID-19 vaccine and vaccination in general. The main findings of the research showed that overall knowledge and COVID-19 vaccine uptake was good but not with everyone. Findings showed that student's attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccination are influenced by information obtained from family, friends, health professionals and social media, which have a significant impact on individual's perceptions and decision making towards the COVID-19 vaccine. Respondents that refused or were hesitant towards the COVID-19 vaccine stated that their main reasons for not receiving the vaccine was not believing the vaccine is safe or effective, side effects, and concerns about the ingredients used. Therefore, in the researcher viewpoint more research and targeted interventions are needed to understand student's attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine. Studies and focused interventions to engage students in health campaigns in their universities, communities and social spaces and make vaccination available on campuses to increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake. A multidisciplinary approach should be considered in attempting to reduce negative attitudes, lack of trust, misunderstanding about the COVID-19 vaccines to help gain trust, decrease misunderstanding and provide sufficient and accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccine in order to minimise vaccine hesitancy.

**Keywords:**
Coronavirus, COVID-19, COVID-19 Vaccine, Vaccination, Vaccine hesitancy, Students, Attitude, Herd immunity, Perceptions, Vaccine refusal

# Jennifer Ledger

A study of tenants' experiences living in social housing during the Covid 19 pandemic in the Liverpool City region.

**Abstract**

Housing and health have a strong relationship. The conditions in which someone calls home can determine their overall health and wellbeing, physically and mentally. Homes have standards to meet for them to be habitable, a home also needs to be affordable and provide a stable and secure base. In this research, social housing will be studied. Homes provided by housing associations (non-profit organisations that own, let, and manage rented housing) or local governments are referred to as social housing. It is designed to be affordable and easily available to those who are unable to access ownership of a home. The aim of the research was to explore tenants' experiences of living in social housing during the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Liverpool City Region, focusing particularly on the third national lockdown dating January to July 2021. The study found few housing organisations contacted their tenants during the pandemic lockdown to offer advice or help during the isolated period. However, if necessary, household repairs were made, which is a requirement for housing organisations to keep their properties in good working order. The data from the questionnaire was analysed and provided thorough feedback from the tenants on their experiences of living in social housing during this time. Tenants did suffer with multiple problems such as overcrowding, rent arrears and job loss, however this period was also a time for them to relax, spend more time with family and friends, more community spirit was felt and there was less crime in the area. Recommendations to put forth guidelines for housing associations and the government in the case of a pandemic would be essential.

# Shane Loughran

A quantitative study to assess Liverpool John Moores University students' attitudes towards littering and their perceptions of different types of litter

**Abstract**

Litter is a worldwide problem that can cause harm to human and animal health as well as the environment. Littering also has a heavy financial impact on governments and taxpayers. Many people are unaware of the problems associated with litter and are unaware of what littering actually is or what types of items constitute litter. This is a quantitative study which used online questionnaires as a method of gathering relevant data in order to answer the study questions which are "What are the attitudes amongst Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) students towards littering, and what are their perceptions of different types of litter?". The target population was LJMU students aged eighteen or over and used convenience sampling to recruit. Using their dissertation supervisors as gatekeepers to distribute the questionnaire amongst the students, the researcher recruited forty-five participants for the study. Almost all the participants thought that littering was unacceptable, was a worldwide problem, were concerned about litter in the environment and almost all believed that it was a potential hazard to humans. Participants displayed a lack of knowledge when asked what the most commonly littered items are and overall, they were inaccurate when asked to estimate the biodegradability of some commonly littered items. Cigarette butts were found to be the most common type of litter and were found at 77% of sites surveyed by the LEQSE in 2017, however these were not recognised as litter by 28% of smokers in the survey. The study shows that smokers and ex-smokers and people who chew gum, litter their respective items in a variety of ways whilst those who engage in neither of these activities deemed these littering behaviours to be unacceptable. Broken windows theory is a major factor in littering and this theory is strengthened by the fact that almost all the participants believe that apathy is a reason why people litter. Nudge theory can be used to help reduce littering. This can be implemented in a variety of ways such as advertising and educational programmes, improved 'binfrastructure' and the watching eyes effect being printed on packaging. Recommendations to help reducing littering include keeping areas clean and reclassifying trampled chewing gum as litter so that local authorities have a duty to clean it. This will stop broken windows theory coming into effect. More education is needed in schools to raise awareness and to reduce apathy and to promote littering as an anti-social behaviour. More prosecution with more severe penalties should occur and all money raised should go into anti-littering initiatives. Enforcement on smoking related littering should be rigorously implemented. More bins should be placed in appropriate places and cleaned regularly. Nudge theory is key to litter reduction and should be implemented into any anti-littering initiatives wherever possible.

# Niall Magee

An interview study into patterns of gaming throughout the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown periods and its importance in maintaining social relationships

## Abstract

Throughout the last 2 years, the coronavirus pandemic has caused havoc on our daily lives, no more so than in our social lives. Multiple periods of lockdown, self-isolation and furlough have interrupted many people's social interactions. During this time some people have begun to turn towards video games to help with the isolation. The main aim of this study was to ask people if they think video games were a help to them to maintain social relationships during the coronavirus lockdown periods. The study had 4 main objectives: 1. To assess potential changes in gaming habits throughout lockdown periods 2. To explore the negative impact of gaming on mental health 3. To explore the concept of the social dimension of gaming 4. Investigate the positive and negative impact of gaming on health and well-being throughout the coronavirus national lockdowns This was achieved through six interviews with colleagues from GAME, my lecturer and a few friends who all fell into my inclusion criteria for the study. From analysis of the interviews, I found that despite being from different backgrounds, participants all had similar experiences when it came to playing video games over the lockdown periods in the United Kingdom. Despite the vast size of the gaming community in the UK in terms of both content and players, this research has proven just how together the community is as a whole. Gaming is, as stated by the tagline of PlayStation "For the Players".

**Keywords:**
Gaming, Social relationships, Lockdown, Isolation, Health

# Clare McEwen

A Survey Study into The Experiences of Facebook Users Who Purchase Food from Home Food Kitchens

## Abstract

It is estimated that 600 million people around the world become ill after eating unsafe food. In the UK there are around 2.4 million foodborne cases per year, the burden of foodborne illness is costing the UK approximately £9 billion per year. Research highlights that a significant number of foodborne illnesses happen due to poor food handling practices from food handlers. Eating habits, behaviours and the food environment is changing all the time, there is the expanse of the out-of-home sector which is any outlet which provides food or drink that has been prepared and is ready for immediate consumption. In the UK apps for online food sales have risen, these online food sales are using established food apps as well as social media sites. The aim of this research was to study an individual's experiences of purchasing food from home kitchens via Facebook. This research was a quantitative study using questionnaires which were distributed on various Facebook sites. The study investigated the reasons why Facebook users purchase food from home kitchens and assessed their knowledge in terms of food safety, exploring their attitudes towards home food kitchen services. This research identified that there is a lack of awareness of information regarding food safety and hygiene. Over half of the participants were unaware of: if the food business was registered, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, allergen information, food hygiene training and insurance. This study discovered that the Facebook users were confident in making food choices based on recommendations, likes and pictures. This is concerning for public health; consumers are potentially putting themselves at a greater risk. A lack in awareness could result in unregistered businesses continuing to supply food. Recommendations from this study are that there needs to be more awareness. The consumer needs to be aware that food businesses must be registered, which entails an inspection and a Food Hygiene Rating. This research recommends a campaign in partnership where local authorities and the Food Standards Agency work together to develop information which will be widely available for the public, this campaign could include adverts which could pop up on Facebook when people search for food related posts, these adverts could highlight liked pictures and comments of food but then show a filthy kitchen and food handler, this may help in making consumers think about where they are getting the food from, especially when the products are delivered. Part of the campaign would include a food hygiene rating sticker on the food packaging, this could give the consumer more knowledge and help them to make informed choices the same as they would do when buying food from the high street.

# Simone McKenna

Assessing the impacts of Instagram body image ideals on the health & well-being of adolescent girls and young women

**WINNER**

Public Health Dissertation Prize Winner

## Abstract

Identified by the Royal Society for Public Health (2017) as the most harmful of all main social media platform for young people's mental health, Instagram has 1 billion followers worldwide and hosts posted content that promotes idealised and manipulated body images, while posters compete for followers in response to the images. The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee's findings for 2019/2021 indicate 95% of young people in the UK use Instagram, with 65% of girls under 18 believing there is an 'ideal body type' and only 5% of that age group saying they would not change any feature of their appearance. Meanwhile, Instagram's own internal findings highlight the increased rates of anxiety and depression in 32% of teenage girls as a result of its externalized body image ideals (Raychoudhury, 2019). This literature review explores the idealisations of unrealistic and unhealthy female body image via the social media platform Instagram. It examines the issue of Female Body Image from a Public Health perspective through a broader, socioecological lens incorporating it with psychological standpoints, and in the contexts of history and sociocultural pressures as exacerbated by the mass reach, and visual and comparative features, of social media. The review analyses and quantifies the impact of Instagram body image ideals on the physical, emotional and mental health and well-being of adolescent girls and young women and exposes this as a major public health concern (Instagram, 2019; Frier, 2021; Heger 2020). It furthermore assesses various public health responses, concludes that the effectiveness of these is uneven and the need remains to address these issues from a well-informed, authentic public health perspective that can equip girls and young women to recognize the harmful and inauthentic nature of the Instagram body image. The review recommends improvements including: campaigns to promote more positive and diverse health-related internal traits and combat self-objectification; the inclusion of primary age children in educational health initiatives; collaboration between medical professionals, legislators, and the body positive movements; and further regulation of media images and encouragement of a more diverse range of female bodies represented in the public eye.

Keywords:
Body Image, Instagram, Media, social media, Fitspiration, Feminine Beauty Ideals, Eating Disorders, Mental Health, Body Dissatisfaction, Gender Inequalities, Health & Wellbeing

# Mwaka Nanyangwe

A qualitative study of attitudes and perceptions of COVID-19 vaccines among ethnic minorities in the UK

**Abstract**

COVID-19 vaccines are being used to control the spread and effects of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed over six million people worldwide and presents an unusual challenge to public health. The UK began to offer vaccines to high-risk groups first after the 8th of December 2020. Despite being disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and the importance of the vaccines, willingness to be vaccinated among ethnic minority populations varies for reasons outside the accessibility of vaccines. This study explores the attitudes and perceptions of COVID-19 vaccines among ethnic minorities in the UK. A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews was conducted via Microsoft Teams with eleven participants in November 2021. Convenience and snowballing sampling were used. Data was collected, transcribed, and coded using thematic analysis. Of the 11 participants, four had overall good perception, and positive attitudes about COVID-19 vaccination while seven said that they were not vaccinated and did not intend to do so. Most of the participants stated that vaccines were developed too quickly hence they did not trust them. Participants also stated possible side effects that they feared could cause long-term ill-health and felt that the Government did not do enough to educate the public about COVID-19 and address discrimination and racism towards ethnic minorities. Despite the misinformation and the conspiracy theories circulating on social media, a few participants said they got vaccinated because it was the right thing to do and wanted to go back to their normal lives as soon as possible. Overall, there was COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among the participants in this study. Negative attitudes and poor perceptions toward the COVID-19 vaccination were important factors in the low uptake of the vaccines. The researcher's findings will add to what is already known about the factors that influence attitudes and perceptions towards COVID-19 vaccination uptake among ethnic minorities although there is a need for further research on the topic with a large population and a random sampling method for representation of a population.

# Kaz Randles

The perceptions and attitudes of LJMU students residing in the Liverpool City Region regarding outdoor air pollution

**Abstract**

Air pollution is a global issue affecting low, middle, and high income countries. Poor air quality can have both short and long term effects on health mainly effecting the respiratory and cardiovascular system and is believed to contribute to 4.2 million deaths annually worldwide. The severity of these effects is dependent on concentration, exposure and individual sensitivity to air pollution and more often affects the most vulnerable in society. The UK still follows the legal requirements for air pollution set by the EU although some cities remain in breach of these limits and tolerances which is damaging to the health of the population. The Liverpool City Region (LCR) is one of these, with asthma rates and preventable deaths from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases higher than the national average making the population of the LCR vulnerable to the ill effects of poor air quality. This study explores students' knowledge of anthropogenic sources of outdoor air pollution, the main pollutants and their health effects as well as their attitudes towards risk. The study also looks at students' awareness of schemes currently underway in the LCR trying to improve air quality. Data was collected using an online questionnaire emailed to Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) students targeting those currently residing in the LCR. Data from 83 students was analysed and presented in a number of charts before being interpretation. Overall students had good knowledge of anthropogenic sources, pollutants and health effects of outdoor air pollution. Despite being armed with this knowledge the participants weren't overly concerned about outdoor air pollution nor did they think it was a high risk to themselves. The students stated that they were responsible as well as government to improve air quality however their lack of concern towards themselves suggests they would be less likely to follow through on these actions. The awareness of current schemes running in the LCR was low among students which reflects the lack of concern and level of risk they think it poses. The implications for public and environmental health are that students' lack of concern about outdoor air pollution suggests they would be less likely to put pressure on the government to adopt stricter policies which in turn could pose a greater risk to their health in the longer term.

**Keywords:**

Outdoor air pollution, Risk, Students, Perception, Attitudes, Liverpool City Region

# Chelsea Stanford

## Exploring if Fat Acceptance Movement Perceptions Impact on Health Beliefs Regarding Obesity and Health

**Abstract**

Obesity affects every country in the world, in some way or another (World Obesity Federation, 2015; Galka, 2016). As it is one of the main risk factors for mortality worldwide (WHO, 2021), it is imperative that any relevant aspect that may pertain to public health protection is studied to assess the impact. The title of this study is: "Do Fat Acceptance Movement (FAM) Perceptions Impact Health Beliefs Regarding Obesity and Health?". The objectives of this study are to access participants' attitudes towards the FAM using an online questionnaire; to access participants' perceptions of the FAM in the same online questionnaire; to assess participants' health beliefs associated with obesity using the online questionnaire and lastly, this study principally hopes to understand if positive FAM perceptions impact upon participants' health beliefs regarding obesity and health. An online survey was created utilising 'JISC: Online Surveys' and then piloted. Advertising material for this online survey was sent to media sites related to the topic and to researchers' contacts and peers. This online survey was launched and received a response rate of 151. Once data was quantified and analysed, it became clear that FAM perceptions had an impact on the way participants answered health- related questions. Those who displayed positive FAM perceptions were more likely, for example, to class overweight further along the weight scale than those who displayed negative FAM perceptions. This study concludes that FAM is positive for tackling weight- related mental health issues, which is important as a public health concern. It concludes that obesity carries many risks to physical health. Due to misinformation present online in fat activist blogs, sites and groups regarding obesity and health, it may be more likely for those who follow the FAM will carry inaccurate health beliefs. This may be prejudicial to health, therefore the FAM should be further understood to protect public health, as the online world is now an integral part of our environment.

**Keywords:**
Fat Acceptance Movement (FAM), Body Positivity, Questionnaire, Fatosphere, Obesity

# Elena Trivanovic

Sexual Violence in the Night-Time Economy: Exploring the Determinants and Health Impacts

**Abstract**

Concerns about violent and disorderly behaviour in town and city centres are often associated with what is known as the 'night-time economy' which consists of bars, pubs, and nightclubs. Over recent years sexual violence against women has been recognised as a major public health issue within these settings. Many studies and scholars have found that street harassment is a global social problem, one that has been faced by women for many decades (Kearl 2013). According to the findings, many women, regardless of their demographics, experience public sexual harassment (Kearl and Sharma 2014). Overall, sexual violence in the night economy is considered a normalised part of society which dehumanises the freedom of women's health and safety. Such behaviours are expected to negatively impact women's self-worth leading to tragic outcomes. Frequent exposure to sexual harassment is linked to an increased risk of certain mental and physical disorders, however there is a gap in research when examining the long-term effects of sexual violence. The findings emphasise the need of intervening to prevent sexual violence in the night-time economy to improve women's safety and comfort in social spaces. As women continue to experience violence due to their gender, their mental and physical health have significant implications. Although there are laws in place to protect women against sexual violence, the prevalence of sexual harassment against women is still high, meaning more needs to be done to see a difference. Introducing laws which directly tackle men's behaviours can be a future opportunity for public health researchers to implement, it reflects the importance of prioritising women's health and safety in the night-time economy. The aim of this research is to explore the determinants and health impacts of sexual violence in the night-time economy. The literature will provide a critical analysis on the current social norms across society from a public health perspective and will allow a greater insight into the problem, furthermore it will aim to evaluate the health and social impacts of unwanted sexual attention; to critically analyse how 'laddish' behaviours influence sexual objectification of women; to identify the mental and physical outcomes of sexual violence; and to examine relevant interventions that help to tackle the issue. This study concluded that sexual violence in the night-time economy remains a substantial part of a night out for most women.

**Keywords:**

Sexual Violence, Night-Time Economy, Assault, Women, Health, Safety, Impacts, Men

# Tom Westlake

A study to find the effects of working from home on the mental and physical health of staff members at Liverpool John Moores University.

**Abstract**

Working from home became essential for many in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the attempts to reduce its spread by lessening public interactions. This sudden increase in people working from home had a large knock-on effect on people's mental and physical health as they, in many cases, were not prepared for this shift to home working. This study sets out to find the extent to which peoples' mental and physical health was affected by this change and how factors such as gender and caring responsibilities further impacted. A survey was undertaken with university staff at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) asking how working from home affected their physical and mental health, as well as finding out what specific factors were having this effect on them. The study found that all participants with caring responsibilities experienced some level of negative physical health when working from home, showing that caring responsibilities had the biggest effect of all recorded factors. Since many participants worked from home during the COVID-19 restrictions at the same time as schools being closed, they had to balance caring for their children as well as work. Some participants reported working longer hours which may be a result of juggling work and home commitments. It is concluded that if companies expect their employees to work from home in the future, significant investment in infrastructure to support this shift needs to be undertaken. Further research with the use of an increased sample size needs to be carried out to confirm and validate these results.

# Michael Yates

A survey study to explore Particulate Matter (PM) air pollution levels and assess parents' opinions towards air pollution around primary schools in Liverpool.

## Abstract

Outdoor air pollution is a serious threat to human health and the environment and is a global issue. In the UK around 40000 deaths are attributable to exposure to outdoor air pollution, and it plays a significant role in many of our health challengers today. Air Pollution is a significant threat to young people's health, and it has been widely recognised that children are highly vulnerable to its effects. Research has found that 3.4 million UK children are going to school in environments with unhealthy levels of air quality. The aim of the research was to explore levels of particulate matter (PM) and assess parents and carers opinions towards air pollution around primary schools in Liverpool. In doing this the study would gain a better understanding of air pollution levels present around primary school in Liverpool and identify and assess key areas where parents' actions and behaviours could be changed to improve the air quality around their child's school. The study used a quantitative method, using a dual approach of physical PM2.5 monitoring and the use of an online questionnaire to collect the data. The researcher used a self-selective sampling method. Three primary schools in the West Derby & Old Swan area of Liverpool were contacted by the researcher and agreed to act as the gatekeeper for the study and distribute the online questionnaire to their parents and carers, the questionnaire received 112 responses. The PM2.5 monitoring was carried out at primary school that agreed to take part in the study, during 3 intervals of the school day. The results were then analysed by the researcher using both Excel and SPSS data software. The results revealed the majority (80%) of participants believed their form of travel had some impact on air quality around the school. The majority of participants (55%) used a motor vehicle for the school commute (petrol 46%, diesel, 49%). The finding of the study also revealed that the majority (66%) of participants were parking as close to the school as possible during school drop of and pick up times. The research revealed that more research is required into air pollution around primary schools, to further parents and carers knowledge and understanding of the health threats associated with poor air quality can have on their children. Further research of the subject could provide schools and their parents and carers to make more informed choices on their actions to improve air quality around the school.

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