

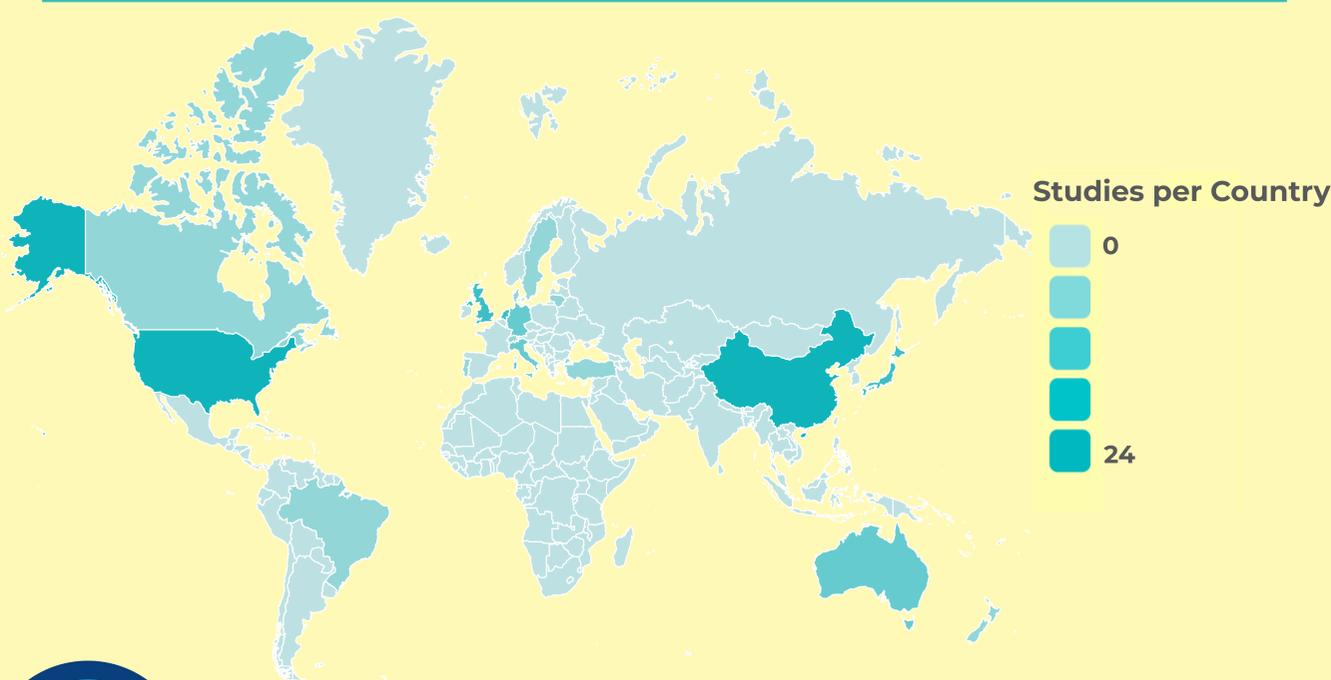
# Mental Health Changes During COVID-19: A Story of Resilience

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused millions of deaths worldwide and has disrupted the social fabric due to its rapid spread, morbidity and mortality, toll on health care systems, and economic impact
- Many have assumed that mental health has **worsened substantially** across populations, but whether this occurred was not known
- We conducted the most comprehensive living systematic review to compare mental health outcomes (general mental health, anxiety symptoms, depression symptoms) **prior to** and **during** the COVID-19 pandemic



## Study Methods & Characteristics

- Searched **10** databases for studies in any language
- Reviewed over **90,000** studies to identify eligible studies
- Included **137** studies from **31** countries
- Involved over **170,000** participants in total
- Estimated changes in the **general population** and **11 subgroups**



## Main Results



**General Population**  
**No changes** in general mental health or anxiety, but minimal worsening of depression symptoms

**Women/Females**  
General mental health, anxiety, and depression symptoms **worsened by minimal to small amounts**

**Other Subgroups**  
**No consistent changes** in mental health outcomes

**Small sample sizes** and methodological characteristics reduced confidence in the estimates of many individual studies

Study populations and conditions of pandemic severity in which they were conducted **varied substantially**

There were **no data** to allow us to assess outcomes in **low-income countries** or among some **vulnerable groups** such as people with low income or racial or ethnic minority groups



## Implications



Rather than a **“tsunami”** of mental health worsening, evidence suggests a high level of **resilience** but important negative changes among some people

It is important that mental health services are **accessible** for people who have experienced negative mental health changes



## Next Step



- We are continuing to update our findings as research accumulates
- We are taking a careful look at mental health across different time periods in the pandemic
- We are also looking at what governments and health agencies can do to ensure that we have access to **better-quality** and **more timely** mental health data going forward

Sun Y, Wu Y, Fan S, Dal Santo T, Li L, Jiang X, Li K, Wang Y, Tasleem A, Krishnan A, He C, Bonardi O, Boruff JT, Rice DB, Markham S, Levis B, Azar M, Thombs-Vite I, Neupane D, Agic B, Fahim C, Martin MS, Sockalingam S, Turecki G, Benedetti A, Thombs BD. Comparison of mental health symptoms prior to and during COVID-19: evidence from a systematic review and meta-analysis of 134 cohorts. BMJ.