



# The impact of Covid19 on Scottish older adults' physical activity: changes and associations with wellbeing.

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## AIM

The present study examined the impact of social distancing during the Covid19 pandemic on PA and wellbeing among Scottish older adults.

## METHODS

A mixed-methods online survey approach was used to examine current PA (IPAQ-short) and wellbeing (EQ5D-3L) and explore changes in these variables compared to before social distancing guidelines were imposed.

## RESULTS

Participants (n=1429, 77% female) living in Scotland completed a survey open between 'lockdown' and 'phase 3'; 1421 participants returned valid IPAQ data. IPAQ results did not differ across the phases of lockdown.

**326min**

of walking per week made walking the greatest contributor to total PA  
(out of 624.8±559.9min/wk)



**76.4%**

reported meeting physical activity guidelines of ≥150min/wk



**26.4%** reported walking **MORE**

"I have walked at least 3 miles round the garden every day since lockdown started." - 63y, F

"I haven't used public transport since lockdown. I have walked everywhere and [intend] to continue to do so." - 68y, F



**40.0%** reported walking **LESS**

"I do more gardening, but less walking. The weather has been incredible encouraging outdoor time." - 72y, M

"Stopped walking as cannot walk in slopes and depended on friend to drive me to area of flat ground. She is shielding." - 62y, F



**33.6%** reported walking **THE SAME**

"I'm trying to keep my walking up. Used to walk in a group twice per week for an hour before lockdown and have really missed that." - 62y, F

"Same level of activity but in more rural and less crowded places" - 65y, M

## RESULTS

Individuals who reported lower weekly volumes of total, moderate and walking PA had poorer wellbeing (all p<.001). Low PA participants (not meeting PA guidelines), and those who reported a change in PA, characterised by less walking and less moderate PA since lockdown started, had significantly poorer wellbeing (all p<.001).



## CONCLUSION

PA engagement during the lockdown period varied according to modality and dwelling but was associated with better wellbeing scores. However, given the cross-sectional nature of this study it is not possible to determine the causal direction of this relationship.

Nevertheless, this study indicates a positive link between PA and wellbeing which supports the notion that PA is an important contributor in recovery strategies targeted at older adults as we emerge from the pandemic.

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