



The up-down-up pandemic news experience: a mixed-method approach to its negative and positive effects on psychological wellbeing

Journal:	<i>Journalism</i>
Manuscript ID	JOU-21-0272.R2
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Pandemic news, News consumption, Mental Health, News avoidance, Negative news, Audience / Engagement, Audience Participation, Emotional responses
Abstract:	<p>Existing research has documented the dynamics of increased news consumption alongside – paradoxically – increased news avoidance during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting its adverse effects on mental health and emotional wellbeing. However, for methodological and theoretical reasons, research still lacks specifics on what types of negative psychological responses were directly triggered by pandemic news, how prevalent they were in the population, how they manifested in daily life, and what could be the alternatives to them. Further, the almost exclusive focus on negative effects has led to a relative negligence of the positive sides of pandemic news. This study takes a mixed-method approach to address these gaps, combining 59 interviews and a follow-up survey with a representative sample of 2,015 adults across the UK. We found that pandemic news consumption, driven primarily by the need for personalised surveillance in an uncertain situation, oscillated in parallel with its severity and associated lockdown restrictions. The influx of repetitive bad news triggered many negative feelings besides general pandemic anxiety – namely fear, despair and moral outrage (such as anger and disgust). This, in turn, led to various alterations of daily routines, including news avoidance. Such adverse effects were offset by the reassurance, happiness and hope that the news did, at least occasionally, bring to audiences during the pandemic. Participants suggested several potential “good news” categories that point to the need for more constructive news forms that not only inform but also inspire, motivate and/or empower people in some personal or collective ways.</p>

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

The up-down-up pandemic news experience: a mixed-method approach to its negative and positive effects on psychological wellbeing

ABSTRACT

Existing research has documented the dynamics of increased news consumption alongside – paradoxically – increased news avoidance during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting its adverse effects on mental health and emotional wellbeing. However, for methodological and theoretical reasons, research still lacks specifics on what types of negative psychological responses were directly triggered by pandemic news, how prevalent they were in the population, how they manifested in daily life, and what could be the alternatives to them. Further, the almost exclusive focus on negative effects has led to a relative negligence of the positive sides of pandemic news. This study takes a mixed-method approach to address these gaps, combining 59 interviews and a follow-up survey with a representative sample of 2,015 adults across the UK. We found that pandemic news consumption, driven primarily by the need for personalised surveillance in an uncertain situation, oscillated in parallel with its severity and associated lockdown restrictions. The influx of repetitive bad news triggered many negative feelings besides general pandemic anxiety – namely fear, despair and moral outrage (anger and disgust). This led to various alterations of daily routines, including news avoidance. Such adverse effects were offset by the reassurance, happiness and hope that the news did, at least occasionally, brought to audiences during the pandemic. Participants suggested several potential “good news” categories that point to the need for constructive news forms that not only inform but also inspire, motivate and/or empower people in personal or collective ways.

Key words: pandemic news, news avoidance, positive news, constructive news, pandemic news, mental health, emotional effects

INTRODUCTION

The manifold disruptions caused by Covid-19 **have** affected news consumption in ways not seen before. As people turned to the media to gratify cognitive, affective and socially integrative needs amidst the sheer disruption of the pandemic, early research has documented the ambivalence between the need to monitor an evolving crisis and the protection of mental and emotional health, which led to a rapid fluctuation of news consumption (Broersma and Swart, 2021; de Bruin et al 2021; Kormelink and Gunnewiek, 2021; Skovsgaard and Andersen, 2020; Van Aelst et al 2021). News avoidance attributed to the negative effects of pandemic news on psychological wellbeing has emerged as a key issue of concern for scholars. Most research, however, has focused on such effects at the expense of attention to positive aspects of Covid-19 news consumption. Among those focusing on the adverse effects, there is still a lack of specificity on the kind of negative feelings caused by pandemic news, how prevalent they were in the population, and how they manifested in the daily life of lockdown publics.

This study thus takes a more nuanced approach to add depth to current knowledge of pandemic news consumption and its effects on psychological wellbeing. In seeking to explain the fluctuations of Covid-19 news consumption over a one-year period of three national lockdowns, it employs a mixed-method examination of both negative and positive dimensions in the relationship between personal surveillance of pandemic news, mental and emotional states, and news avoidance. Based on 59 in-depth interviews and a survey with 2015 citizens across the UK, we examine and interlink three different foci: (a) the pervasive negative news environment's effects on users' psychological wellbeing, with a focus on the specific characteristics of news-induced feelings and behaviours (including multiple forms of news avoidance); (b) the positive psychological effects of pandemic news consumption and their potential contribution to mitigating news avoidance; and (c) alternative types of pandemic news that users perceived as helpful for them to offset its adverse effects.

RESEARCH INTO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC NEWS EXPERIENCE

News, as an uncertainty reduction means, is often considered to be a lifeline in times of crises – and the pandemic is no exception. In the UK's first lockdown week

1
2
3
4 in March 2020, for example, virtually every online user (99%) accessed news at least
5 once a day (Ofcom 2020) – a fact that might be deemed almost fiction-like by normal
6 measures of news consumption. After the initial steep surge in news consumption,
7 however, research found an increasingly heterogenous approach, with the surge
8 losing ground to a decline in news use and a fast increase in news avoidance,
9 especially among women and younger people (Nielsen et al., 2020a; Villi et al., 2021,
10 Ytre-Arne and Moe, 2021).
11
12
13
14

15 Within these rapid changes is consumers' reconfiguration of how they
16 consume the news to deal with the pandemic and its disruptions. Here, the
17 theoretical framework by Trenz et al. (2021) can serve as a useful starting point. As
18 news users are forced into social isolation during lockdowns and exposed to a
19 monothematic news agenda, they experience high levels of uncertainty and stress
20 and respond to them with two seemingly contradictory coping strategies, namely
21 news seeking and news avoidance.
22
23
24
25
26
27

28 The first takes the form of an information-utility approach, in which users
29 implement an active information-oriented search strategy to survey the environment,
30 to make sense of the unexpected crisis, and to grasp what public health measures
31 are in place for them to follow. All this is to serve the purposes of reducing
32 uncertainty (de Bruin et al., 2021) and/or improving one's social wellbeing through
33 accessing a shared crisis experience – i.e., feelings of solidarity and "security in the
34 form of bonds, affiliation and shared destiny" (Trenz et al., 2021: 10). During the
35 pandemic, for instance, rituals such as governmental press conferences and the
36 "liveness" of events enabled the perception of a shared experience. Frequent news
37 users and "news junkies" were more likely to benefit, as heavier news consumption
38 facilitated a stronger social tie and more active participation in public debates
39 (Broersma and Swart, 2021). Pandemic news seeking led consumers to reconfigure
40 their news intake, revising old routines and/or forming new habits (ibid). In the early
41 days of the pandemic, for instance, as people sought news to reduce uncertainty and
42 gain orientation, many turned to places that they would have not before – such as
43 "alternative" news or social media platforms (Newman et al., 2020). Trenz et al.
44 (2021) see these new habits as part of a resilience-enhancement strategy.
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

57 Such information-utility approach, however, might work in the opposite
58 manner: instead of helping users to cope with stresses, news could generate more
59
60

1
2
3 stress among users (Broersma and Swart, 2021). In the US, for example, more than
4 four in ten reported “feeling worse emotionally” from watching Covid news (Pew
5 Research Center, 2020). In Germany, a survey found that three exposure measures
6 – frequency, duration and diversity – were positively associated with symptoms of
7 depression, Covid-specific and Covid-unspecific anxiety (Bendau et al, 2020).
8
9 Further, people with pre-existing anxieties tended to be experiencing more distress
10 from the news (ibid). Similarly, a survey with people aged 13-25 with a history of
11 problematic mental health by YoungMinds UK (2020) found the vast majority (83%)
12 reported the pandemic worsening their mental health, with news use being the most
13 frequently cited unhelpful activity (66%). The literature points to two reasons for this.
14 First, news consumption itself introduces and reintroduces uncertainty due to the
15 presence of knowledge gaps, incomplete solutions, and expert disagreements in the
16 media (Trenz et al. 2021). Second, intense news seeking leads users into an
17 information overload that generates multiple forms of informational and emotional
18 overload, or news fatigue (de Bruin et al., 2021; Kormelink and Gunnewiek, 2021;
19 Ytre-Arne and Moe, 2021).
20
21

22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
These factors converge to give rise to the second practice of resilience, which
is the opposite of news seeking: news avoidance. Here, limiting or abandoning
exposure to news – either for a short or long term – helps users to achieve resilience
through two closely related processes: (i) avoidance can lower the chance for users
to experience the distress and anxiety caused by uncertainty; and (ii) avoidance can
help users to escape the subjective experience of bad feelings caused by the
predominantly negative nature of Covid news. This is, of course, not peculiar to the
pandemic: the abundance of negative news has long been a key driver of worrying
news avoidance in Western countries (Constructive Institute, 2020, Gottfried, 2020,
Serrano-Puche, 2020, Shehata et al., 2015), particularly among women and younger
people (Toff and Kalogeropoulos, 2020, Villi et al., 2021). But, as Trenz et al. (2021)
argue, the pandemic is like no previous situation: being exposed to a ceaseless influx
of bad news about a single issue, in an enforced social isolation, could create
unparalleled levels of negative mental and emotional effects, thus strengthening the
need to switch off.

The link between pandemic news avoidance and its negative psychological
effects has been established across the world. In the UK, two thirds of those who

1
2
3
4 avoided Covid-19 news cited its “bad effect on my mood” and 33% the feeling that
5 “there is too much news” as reasons (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2020). In the Netherlands,
6 Kormelink and Gunnewiek (2021) found that young audiences’ news consumption in
7 the early phase followed four distinctive stages – *indifference* (due to the perception of
8 the pandemic being far away); *shock* (and, consequently, a huge spike in news
9 consumption) as the outbreak arrived; *Corona fatigue* (an informational and emotional
10 overload) as the virus advanced; and the becoming of a *new normal*. Of these, they
11 found shock and fatigue to be the most critical: they demanded users to fundamentally
12 adapt news habits – including a reduced or more controlled consumption of news – so
13 that they were informed without letting their news intake overwhelm their information-
14 and emotion-processing capacities. In a Dutch survey, de Bruin et al. (2021:1) found
15 that, while mental wellbeing did not engender news avoidance, news avoidance had a
16 slight positive effect on mental wellbeing, meaning that “avoiding news is sometimes
17 necessary to stay mentally healthy”.

18
19 From Australia, Mannell and Meese (2022, p. 314) found news users striving
20 to balance between “two competing needs: the need to mitigate the negative impacts
21 of news consumption, and the need to keep up to date with important developments
22 about the lockdown”. The tension between them leads to what the authors labelled
23 as *situated* news avoidance (as opposed to habitual news avoidance). In Germany,
24 Bendau et al. (2020) found that those spending more time on Covid-19 news felt a
25 more pronounced need to reduce it to avoid its negative effects on mental health.
26 Perhaps, as they argue, consumers see overconsumption of news and information as
27 a risk factor for mental illness in the crisis. The risk of pandemic news consumption
28 has also gone beyond the media and communication realm to become a serious
29 concern for health professionals and organisations. As the pandemic deepened, for
30 instance, MentalHealth.org, a major health charity in the UK, advised its followers to
31 “find a balance” in news consumption to reduce stress. Likewise, the National Health
32 Service recommended its users to “limit the time [you] spend watching” news and to
33 “(turn) off breaking-news alerts on your phone” (NHS, 12 May 2021).

34
35 In sum, pandemic news consumption oscillates between phases of intensity
36 and laxity and between news seeking and news avoidance, and this has much to do
37 with its negative effects on users’ psychological wellbeing. Several things, however,
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 require more attention before we reach a balanced, more nuanced understanding of
5 what pandemic news does to the audiences' mental and emotional state.
6

7 First, the evidence base for the negative effects of pandemic news on
8 psychological wellbeing needs to be expanded in several aspects. For one thing,
9 most research so far tends to describe such effects through catch-all terms – such as
10 ill mental health, emotional drain and bad mood – but lacks details on specific
11 feelings. Often, descriptions do not go far beyond common mental and emotional
12 states that the pandemic-wounded public would have experienced, with or without
13 news consumption, such as despair, anxiety and fear. Other possible negative
14 feelings directly triggered by news per se – e.g., moral outrage (such as anger) or
15 pity towards what is reported in the news – have not been studied in detail. For
16 another, the vast majority of studies approach the negative psychological effects of
17 pandemic news from a qualitative perspective, stopping at describing their existence
18 in small and non-representative samples, with no external validity to generalise their
19 magnitude in the broader population. Even the contribution of negative news-induced
20 emotions to news avoidance has been established mainly through interpretation of
21 qualitative interviews rather than through rigorous statistical testing, except for
22 Bendau et al. (2020) and de Bruin et al. (2021). This study thus takes a step further
23 by combining qualitative and quantitative data to seek both depth and breadth in
24 answering the following:
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 **RQ1: What were the most prevalent negative psychological responses to**
41 **pandemic news and how did they contribute to its avoidance in the UK**
42 **population?**
43
44
45

46 Second, as scholars have focused on the negative psychological effects of Covid-19
47 news, they tend to overlook the other side of the coin. If news seeking is a resilience
48 strategy in times of crisis, then it must have some positive effects on users' mental
49 and emotional state. However dark the pandemic situation was, for instance, some
50 people might at least sometimes find news a source of joy, assurance or hope for
51 very personal reasons. Further, it is reasonable to expect that such positive reception
52 might reduce users' tendency to reduce or avoid pandemic news. So far, however,
53 there is little evidence of this. We ask:
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 **RQ2: What were the most prevalent positive psychological responses to**
6 **pandemic news and how did they relate to news avoidance in the UK**
7 **population?**
8
9

10
11
12 Third, although the abundance of negative Covid-19 news has been identified as a
13 key cause of news avoidance, no study has asked audiences what they think could
14 be the alternatives. Given that the pandemic was a pro-longed catastrophic crisis,
15 what type of “good news” did audiences think the media could provide to offset the
16 abundance of bad news? We ask:
17
18
19
20

21
22 **RQ3: In what ways did UK audiences think the media could make**
23 **pandemic news more positive?**
24
25

26
27 **METHOD**
28

29 This study is part of a larger project that investigated how UK audiences
30 experienced Covid-19 news and what they expected the media to do to help local
31 communities recover from the pandemic. The data came from the early stage of the
32 project, which combined in-depth interviews and a survey with UK news users.
33
34
35

36 **In-depth interviews.** 59 members of the public were interviewed between 15
37 February and 3 March 2021. The sample was recruited by a professional research
38 firm, to ensure proportionate representation relative to the UK population in terms of
39 *gender* (49% males and 51% females), *age groups* (19% in 16-25 group, 22% in 26-
40 35, 19% in 35-45, 15% in 46-55, 15% in 56-65 and 10% in 66+); *ethnicity* (10% from
41 minority groups); and *regions* (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and a good spread
42 of England, including London, Southeast, South West, East Midlands, West
43 Midlands, North West, North East, and Yorkshire). As one aim of the broader project
44 was to explore how the news could assist local communities to recover from the
45 pandemic, we intentionally included 20 “community leaders” in the sample. These
46 were basically ordinary citizens who were playing or had played some formal or
47 informal role in communities – e.g. support workers, mother and baby group leaders,
48 Brownie/scout leaders, school governors, community sports coaches, local club
49 committee members, local business leaders etc.
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 Interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and were conducted over Zoom. Each was
5 semi-structured in three sections: (a) general news consumption in pre-pandemic
6 times; (b) pandemic news use experience and expectations; and (c) the
7 psychological empowerment potential of solutions journalism (SOJO) in general and
8 in the context of the pandemic. Participants were not told about these specific topics
9 in advance. For this paper, we use data from the first two sections, when participants
10 had not been introduced to the SOJO concept and therefore were not potentially
11 primed towards it in their responses.
12
13
14
15
16

17 **Survey.** The findings of the interviews were fed into the design of a national
18 survey on pandemic news experiences. The questionnaire gathered information to
19 quantify and scale the phenomena observed in the interviews, especially the
20 psychological effects that emerged frequently in the interviews, as well as to explore
21 other relevant issues that have been raised in the literature on crisis news
22 consumption. Respondents were specifically asked about, *inter alia*, their uses of
23 Covid-19 news, its impact on mental and emotional states, how it shaped their
24 pandemic experience and what they expected from journalism in the exit from the
25 pandemic.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 The survey was administered by Opinium, a professional research firm.
34 Opinium recruited participants from a panel of about 40,000 UK citizens who signed
35 up to take part in its surveys on a range of subjects in exchange for small incentives.
36 Participants were not told about the survey's subject when they were invited to
37 prevent response bias. The final sample included 2015 qualified respondents, which
38 were demographically representative of the UK's adult population.
39
40
41
42

43 It is noteworthy that both qualitative and quantitative data were collected after
44 the UK had gone through three national lockdowns and various local ones. The
45 survey itself was live from 22 to 24 March 2021 – exactly one year after the UK went
46 into the first lockdown. This is a crucial difference from previous research, which has
47 examined pandemic news consumption within early single waves of the virus
48 outbreak rather than across different waves. As de Bruin et al. (2021) argued, a full
49 picture must include how news uses and avoidances evolved *throughout* the
50 pandemic. **While we did not collect time-series data, this study did specifically ask
51 audiences to reflect on how their news uses changed across the waves. Inevitably,
52 all self-reported data like these depend on audiences' ability to recall. As such, all**
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 interviewers were trained to use probing or clarifying questions wherever necessary
5 to encourage deep reflections on the chronological order of news consumption
6 changes since the first lockdown. During data analysis, we cross-checked and
7 eliminated any actual or potential inconsistencies in interviewees' responses. Overall,
8 despite their subjective nature, we are confident that the interview data had reached
9 a very high level of authenticity and trustworthiness.
10
11
12
13

14 **Data analysis.** Audio recordings of interview data were transcribed verbatim
15 and analysed in NVivo using a process of inductive thematic analysis. This provided
16 for the contextual development of key instances and themes across the transcripts
17 grounded in existing literature. Colleagues within the wider project team acted as
18 "critical friends" in the analytic process, providing reflective "sound boards" as
19 multiple themes were identified and contextualised. All interviewees' names here are
20 pseudonyms. As for survey data, this paper will use descriptive analysis to scale-up
21 what we found in the in-depth interviews. All percentages reported below would have
22 a sampling error of $\pm 2\%$. For the relationships between news avoidance and its
23 negative and positive psychological effects, we conducted multivariate regression
24 analyses with statistical controlling for age and gender (more below).
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 FINDINGS

35
36 Previous research found a clear oscillation in news consumption within the first
37 wave of the pandemic. **With the usual caveat about the nature of self-reported data,**
38 **we found that audiences' perceived changes in news consumption across multiple**
39 **waves followed a similar "inverted bell curve" pattern.** In general, participants
40 reported higher levels of news consumption – both in terms of use frequency and
41 time spent – than pre-pandemic times, with some developing new habits (e.g.,
42 heavier use of news apps or more tolerance of data and statistics). Following a steep
43 increase in the first lockdown (March 2020), however, engagement with news
44 reduced along with easing restrictions over the summer months, and then rose again,
45 to some extent, in the autumn and winter, when rising infection cases and deaths
46 forced the UK into lockdowns again.
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55 Some participants attributed their up-down-up pattern to the extra amount of
56 free time afforded by lockdowns. For the most part, however, they linked it to what we
57 would call the drive for *personalised surveillance* – i.e. the overwhelming lockdown-
58
59
60

1
2
3 induced need to monitor the pandemic *in relation to* how it affected their own daily
4 routines and concerns. As people sought to understand the evolving situation,
5 detailed local/national statistics – especially transmission rates, hospital admissions,
6 deaths and, later, vaccination rates – and updates on lockdown restrictions were in
7 high demand. Even when they looked beyond local/national contexts, it was often
8 about places with which they have personal connections. Due to this personalised
9 surveillance drive, news consumption went up and down in parallel with the severity
10 of the pandemic and its alternate waves. Embedded in this process are the
11 contradictory effects of surveillance on users' psychological wellbeing.
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 21 **“A barbed wire” of bad news to avoid: negative effects of pandemic news on** 22 **psychological wellbeing (RQ1)** 23

24 Heavy news consumption out of the personalised surveillance drive in an
25 uncertain, rapidly evolving situation took a heavy toll on the psychological wellbeing
26 of many participants. First, for some interviewees, news per se could not offer them a
27 sense of control, especially during the early days, when nobody could be certain
28 about anything. Second, in line with previous research, there was the pervasive
29 feeling of information overload. Interviewees frequently lamented about fatigue
30 caused by the sheer volume and intensity of, to use one interviewee's word, “samey”
31 news about Covid-19. This fatigue was worsened by the very negative focus of
32 Covid-19 news: all but a few interviewees felt that while repeated exposure to the
33 same news was bad, it was repeated exposure to *the same bad news* – especially
34 the influx of case numbers, death statistics and lockdown uncertainties – that
35 triggered much worse psychological distress. One participant, Nikki, compared this to
36 a barbed wire around her daily life:
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 You just heard from the five news articles exactly the same thing [and you
49 wanted to shout], “Please shut up and leave me alone, I don't feel like it.” ...
50 So, [it's like] you put a barbed wire around and really can't move.
51
52
53
54

55 Projecting these into the general population, our survey shows that a large
56 majority of the UK population experienced this overload of bad news, with two thirds
57 agreeing that “news about Covid-19 is rather repetitive” and more than half (53%)
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 agreeing “there is not enough news around the good things that happen during
5 Covid-19” (Figure 1). In addition, 81% sometimes, often or very often felt “overloaded
6 with Covid-19 news in the past 12 months” (Figure 2).
7

8
9 **Figures 1 here**

10 The range of emotions that emerged out of this “barbed wire” was wide.
11 Throughout the interviews, we found that despair and anxiety were the most
12 frequently mentioned responses to Covid-19 news. To a lesser extent, some
13 interviewees reported instances when they “got mad” or “felt sick” of the behaviours
14 of some people in the news – from the ordinary people who refused to wear masks in
15 a supermarket, to the powerful few who acted against pandemic standards (e.g. the
16 lockdown rule breaking of Dominic Cummings, the former senior advisor to Prime
17 Minister; the way Donald Trump was denying Covid or spreading misinformation
18 about its treatment). In the survey (Figure 2), a large majority of the public said they
19 at least sometimes felt “despair at the current situation” (79%), “anxious about things
20 that might happen to me” (71%) and “fearful about what might happen to me” (68%).
21 However, moral outrage came on top with 92% having at least sometimes felt
22 “disgusted by the action of some people in the news” and 80% “angry because of
23 something mentioned in the news”. Overall, only 25% of respondents in our survey
24 agreed – while 31% disagreed – that “news about Covid-19 generally made my
25 pandemic experience better” (Figure 1).
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 **Figure 2 here**

39 This manifested in a range of symptoms that were laid bare in interviewees’
40 accounts, including obsession by a “bleak outlook on the future” (Rohan), sleep
41 deprivation (Helen), “not wanting to go outside” (Nigel), various alterations of regular
42 activities and even the inability to function normally. One of the most sober accounts
43 came from Chloe, who went through to a slump period that saw her unable to get out
44 of bed:
45
46
47
48
49

50
51 In the first lockdown, watching the news was really negative for me, and it did
52 not help in any way, shape or form ... I spent three or four months reading the
53 news and then it got to a point where I just I didn't go out anymore. I didn't
54 walk the dog every day. I stayed in bed, I wasn't eating properly, I went into a
55 slump.
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 Some had to resort to mental medication. Nina, for example, took the
6 antidepressant Fluoxetine for the first time in her life, to calm herself from the
7 stresses that she attributed substantially to her “focusing so much on the Covid-19
8 situation on the news”.
9
10

11
12 Before moving on, it should be noted that such personal accounts cannot be
13 attributed solely to the influx of negative news. In fact, they cannot be removed from
14 the context of the stress, turmoil and uncertainty caused by the pandemic. In such
15 times, there was evidence that even positive developments could become a cause of
16 ill mental health. One respondent, for instance, described how Boris Johnson’s
17 announcement of the roadmap to the new normal a few weeks before the interview
18 had a “massive, massive, massive, massive” effect on her anxiety:
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

26 I remember I got halfway down the article to the one line that basically says
27 social distancing will just become non-existent. I started to have a mini panic
28 attack because, after the past year of not being near anyone or not hugging
29 my parents and my grandparents, [it was scary to think] suddenly in a few
30 months’ time I would be able to do that ... And I started crying. I was worried
31 about it, and then I saw things like Leeds festival coming ... I can’t even
32 describe how much anxiety I had and how scared I was ... just terrified of the
33 fact that we’re going back to square one. (Rebecca)
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

42 Regardless of what news content causes mental distresses and disorders, it
43 was clear, expectedly, that they led periods of total or partial news avoidances both
44 between and within phases of the up-down-up cycle. Our interviews reveal evidence
45 of audiences adopting three major strategies of avoidance that have been identified
46 in the literature. At a light level, some adopted a *news dosing* strategy (Kormelink and
47 Gunnewiek, 2021), i.e., controlling the amount of news they take in by, for example,
48 fixing it to certain times of the day and/or turning off news app notifications. At a
49 heavier level of avoidance was a *media substitution* approach – i.e. limiting their
50 exposure to news content by seeking non-news media alternatives [Newman et al.
51 2020]. The most frequently cited strategy was *news resistance* (Woodstock, 2014),
52 where users made deliberate attempts to shut their world from the news altogether.
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 Our interviewees, including some avid news users, reported avoiding the news for
5 periods of a few days to several months as, in one participant's words, "a mental
6 break" from the stress of "looking at that kind of thing every day". Regardless of the
7 length of switch-offs, participants did feel that avoidance helped them build resilience
8 in the face of calamities, especially to avoid being knocked down by "doom and
9 gloom" thoughts. Greg, for example, found that less news made him "feel more
10 positive about the situation because I'm not bogged down by the stats around cases
11 and deaths". Meanwhile, Chloe "completely turned all of my social media apps off ...
12 for the (Christmas) week" to find that "I've got time ... and *I can breathe*" [authors'
13 emphasis]. Our survey confirmed the strong prevalence of news resistance: two-
14 thirds of the respondents at least sometimes "switched off the news to avoid negative
15 feelings", with three in ten doing so often or very often (Figure 2).

16
17 To gain a deeper quantitative insight, we conducted a regression analysis
18 (Table 1) for news resistance on the frequencies of the aforementioned mental
19 responses – fear, anxiety, disgust, anger, despair and the cognitive information
20 overload – with statistical control for the key demographics of age and gender. We
21 found that these variables together explain about 37% ($p < .001$) of the total variance
22 in pandemic news resistance. Individually, all but one of the six feelings – anxiety
23 (coefficient = $-.06$, $p = 0.07$) – contributed significantly to that resistance. Of the five
24 significant contributors, interestingly, disgust was a negative one – the more often
25 people felt disgusted by the action of people in the news, the less often they resisted
26 the news during the pandemic. This suggests that even in the face of psychological
27 distresses, news audiences would, out of moral outrage, still keep up with the news
28 to monitor the deeds of those they thought were not behaving properly in relation to
29 the pandemic situation. Age and gender were statistically significant contributors to
30 news resistance in their own right, with females and younger people showing higher
31 frequencies of pandemic news switch-off.

32 **Positive effects of pandemic news on psychological wellbeing (RQ2)**

33
34 Although feelings about the negative effects of Covid-19 news on public mood
35 were overwhelming, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that there were positive
36 perceptions. As noted, uncertain and unsettling times like the pandemic prompt
37 people to look out to things that are near and dear to their heart – at least to assess
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 the situation, to know what to do, and to have a sense of security that they are on top
4 of the situation. This is where the positive values of news – particularly its
5 reassurance effect – comes in. As Nigel put it: “I don’t know whether they would even
6 have helped me prepare because nothing really helps prepare you for this, but I think
7 knowing was a little bit more, better than just not being aware.” For some, the simple
8 fact of having access to news was a reassurance. Hannah, for example, said that the
9 news has definitely made her pandemic experience better because “knowing what is
10 happening around me and seeing the trends” made her feel in control of the situation,
11 rather than “just imagining scenarios in my head”. As she explained:
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20
21 Even the slightest small news about the pensioners who got their first jobs, the
22 planning for holiday ... gives me a sense of safety. Not safety – I should say it
23 gives me a sense of being in control.
24
25
26
27

28 In our survey, there was an equal divide in responses to “news about Covid-19
29 helps to clear my thinking” (30% agreeing and 30% disagreeing). However, the
30 majority (53%) agreed – and 9% disagreed – that “news about Covid-19 reassures
31 me that I’ve been doing the right thing” (Figure 1). Further, 69% at least sometimes
32 felt “a sense of control over my life” from news consumption (Figure 2).
33
34
35

36 Some in-depth interviewees found other positives than cognitive reassurance,
37 particularly happiness and hope, from the news they consumed. This was
38 increasingly the case when news about the rollout of vaccines, new treatments and
39 other things became more prevalent. Such “cheerful news”, in an interviewee’s
40 words, “obviously got a bit of a psychological emotional effect on all of us” because it
41 provided “the hope (that) perhaps there's a light at the end of the tunnel” (Mandy).
42 When we brought these into the survey, six in ten sometimes/often/very often felt
43 “happy about what is reported in the news” and three quarters (76%) at least
44 sometimes felt from news that “things would get better out there” (Figure 2).
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 Did positive emotions help reduce news avoidance? Our regression of the
53 frequency of news resistance on the frequencies of feeling happiness, hope and a
54 sense of control, with control for age and gender, provided a firm yes to that question.
55 As seen in Table 2, the model explains 13% of the variance in news avoidance ($p <$
56 $.001$). The news-induced feelings of hope and happiness were significantly negative
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 determinants of news resistance. The “sense of control over my life” was also
5 negative but not statistically significant. In other words, there was enough evidence to
6 say that the more frequently people felt positive from pandemic news, the less
7 frequently they abandoned it. Note that the effects of age and gender remain
8 unchanged from those in the previous model for negative emotions.
9
10
11
12

13 **Perceived alternatives to negative pandemic news (RQ3)**

14
15 What, then, could the media do to make pandemic news more positive, or at
16 least, less negative? Although in-depth interviewees acknowledged that negativity is
17 unavoidable in the pandemic, many argued that the media could create more positive
18 pandemic news by restraining themselves from old habits. In particular, they saw the
19 abundance of negative Covid-19 news as an exacerbation of the inherent imbalance
20 between positive and negative stories in everyday news. Evident in their accounts is
21 the perception that there were positive stories around the pandemic that the media
22 could but chose not to tell. Christopher, for instance, said that he abandoned TV as
23 his main source because it “keeps repeating the same story (that just pushes) one
24 angle”. For him, this is not unintentional. “The [mainstream] outlets would draw a very
25 grim picture of the whole thing,” he said. “Well, the cases are rising, but how often do
26 we hear about people recovering?”
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 When participants were asked to recommend ways to make pandemic news
37 more positive, their perceptions of what is positive vary from one to the next. Some
38 might strike hard at the very pillars of journalism, such as the following suggestion
39 that the media should be less critical and deliver a “positive spin” on certain things:
40
41
42
43
44

45 The media have been quite critical of public bodies ... They've been very
46 critical about the NHS, ... about the reporting of numbers, ... about the
47 vaccine. I think they could definitely put a more of a positive spin on it, but
48 (they've chosen to be) more negative. (Toby)
49
50
51
52

53 Most recommendations, however, fall into two categories. First, there was a
54 strong call for *more emphasis on events that lift the public mood*. This is different
55 from asking journalists to put a “positive spin” on events, facts and figures: it means
56 bringing to light the positive things that have come from the pandemic. Chloe, for
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 example, wanted to see the benefits that lockdowns bring. One example she did not
5 “see reported much in the UK is the environmental benefits that we've had”. Others
6 shared the above Christopher’s demand for positive people-centred stories:
7
8
9

10 I'd like to see more stories regarding people beating Covid-19. Because I think
11 that people have had enough with the negatives, they need hope to know that
12 people are actually recovering from it. (Nigel)
13
14
15

16
17 I remember watching and reading one story about a volunteer at a vaccine
18 centre. I didn't look out for it, as that was not the reason I logged in, but I read
19 it and thought ‘oh, that was nice to hear about.’ There have to be hundreds,
20 maybe thousands, of these volunteers but we're not hearing about. It would be
21 nice to hear a couple more of their stories, like ‘a day in the life of’ stories
22 could be nice. (Greg)
23
24
25
26
27
28

29 One of the most oft-mentioned examples was stories about the 100-year-old
30 Sir Tom Moore’s effort to raise millions of pounds for NHS charities:
31
32
33

34 When Captain Tom's story came out it was ... a very positive story and literally
35 a ray of hope for us. (Hannah)
36
37
38

39 I think the more positive news you get the more you can cope with it ...
40 Positive stories do help. Like Captain Tom, that boosted everyone's morale,
41 didn't it? I think stories like that make people think that whatever was
42 happening with the virus and with lockdown, (everyone) could do something
43 positive. (Irene)
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 In line with this, nearly half (48%) of survey respondents agreed – and only
51 15% disagreed – that they “would like to see more news about those who deal well
52 with pandemic challenges” (Figure 1).
53

54
55 Second, there was a desire to see *a shift from an excessive focus on Covid-19*
56 *problems to more attention to how people overcome these problems*. Even simple
57 advice on how to cope with the situation could help. Christine – who, “at one point in
58
59
60

1
2
3 the second lockdown, ... just felt like losing the will to live a little bit” – commented on
4 how some advice in the news empowered her to escape depression:
5
6
7

8 They give you good ideas on what to do. ‘Make sure you get outside’ and
9 things like that, so I have watched that kind of news. And I took on board some
10 of the things that people have said to do.
11
12
13

14
15 Beyond lifestyle advice, others called for something that resemble the core
16 values of what has come to be known as constructive, solutions-oriented journalism
17 (SOJO), a journalism practice that breaks from traditional focus on problems in
18 society to a balance between problems and solutions to problems (Gyldensted, 2015;
19 Haagerup, 2014). Typical of this is Davide’s call for the news to focus on what
20 governments and other authorities are doing to find a way out of the pandemic:
21
22
23
24
25

26
27 If there are problems somewhere, what's happening? What's the way out? So,
28 the NHS is overwhelmed what's the way out? How do we build a new
29 hospital? Are we putting in applications into build new hospitals or we're
30 recruiting more staff? ... So, it might be bad news now, but is there anything
31 beyond that ... to put a smile on our faces ... as well as the facts?
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

39 This research has shown a multifaceted picture of the functions and impacts of
40 Covid-19 news in the daily life of a pandemic-wounded public. On the one hand,
41 people relied heavily on the news as a lifeline to keep themselves informed, assured
42 and, where possible, empowered in the face of extreme uncertainties. On the other,
43 they found an abundance of repetitive bad news that led them to experiencing,
44 intensively or extensively, many mental and emotional wellbeing problems. Inherent
45 in the search for information utilities in pandemic news – primarily for personalised
46 surveillance purposes – is the ambivalence between anxiety and security, with the
47 motive to seek information being characterized by deep ambiguity, uncertainty and,
48 hence, distress. By combining two rich sets of qualitative and quantitative data, this
49 research adds depth to previous research that has found how news emphasizing
50 negativity can lead to disillusion and disinterest in matters of civic interest, and,
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 ultimately, provoke a civic disengagement with social and political matters (Moeller,
4 1999, Kinnick et al., 1996).
5
6

7 Perhaps one of the most telling parts of the data are the sober personal
8 testimonies on how the adverse impacts of news consumption manifest the way
9 people altered their daily activities and routines during the pandemic (e.g., sleep
10 deprivation, no desire to go out, bedridden depression, medication and, of course,
11 news avoidance). Such psychological discomfort and disorders laid bare the very real
12 and dramatic impacts of negative news on the fabric of society. They speak to a
13 larger issue often expressed about the mental and emotional effects of the 24-hour
14 news cycle of unfinished stories. In this cycle, news outlets must keep reporting, even
15 with little new information, while the public gets increasingly bored, fatigued,
16 desensitised, stressed and sometimes despaired (Lewis and Cushion, 2009; Saltzis,
17 2012). Our mixed-method data show that most users, being ceaselessly exposed to a
18 prolonged repetition of bad news around Covid-19, would sooner or later reach a
19 point of informational saturation, emotional drain and mental distress. Amidst a
20 general climate of uncertainty and anxiety, we saw fear, anger, disgust, despair and
21 cognitive overload emerging both as the most prevalent psychological responses to
22 pandemic news content and as direct triggers of the alteration of regular daily
23 activities, including the partial or total abandonment of news. The regression data
24 show a clear contribution of these news-induced emotions to news resistance,
25 especially among younger females. In short, news resistance – and the lesser forms
26 of news avoidance (news dosing and media substitution) – could be seen an
27 essential part of living in a precarious and threatening situation, serving as a
28 resilience-building strategy against psychological disturbances.
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 It would be a critical mistake, however, to think of pandemic news exclusively
46 in terms of its negative psychological effects. This study breaks from previous
47 research into pandemic news consumption by paying close attention to its positive
48 aspects. It was clear from both the interview and survey data that news was at least
49 an occasional source of reassurance, happiness and hope for the majority of
50 audiences during the pandemic. The regression analysis further shows that such
51 positive psychological experiences did help to prevent people from tuning out the
52 news. This echoes the argument by Groot-Kormelink and Klein-Gunnewiek (2021: 8)
53 that “news is simultaneously a source of fear and comfort”: during a dark time like this
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 pandemic, it can expose audiences to the danger of mental erosion at the same time
5 as reassuring and empowering them.
6

7 This study thus highlights the urgent need for journalists and media executives
8 to take lessons from their heavily negative pandemic coverage to reconsider the
9 important but often overlooked function of news as a force to inspire, motivate and
10 empower the public. This invites a fundamental shift from traditional occupational
11 ideologies that prioritise negative news – i.e. the type of “if it bleeds, it leads” mindset
12 – to a balance of the negative and the positive. Of course, the pursuit of bad news to
13 inform and enlighten the public is integral to journalism’s watchdog role and its
14 professional reputation. However, over the years this conditioned journalists towards
15 an overemphasis of reporting the negative at the expense of the positive. In this
16 particular case, while the pandemic’s unprecedented disruptive and destructive scale
17 might make it hard for journalists to be positive in news reporting, the suggestions
18 from our interviewees did point to ample space for improvement. Audiences do not
19 always speak the same language as journalists but, as the interviews demonstrate,
20 they did see many ways in which pandemic news can be made more positive.
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

31 In relation to this, Beiler and Krüger (2018) remind us of the normative
32 underpinning of the role of the press in democracies, going back to ideas around
33 social responsibility of journalism and a resulting moral commitment for the news to
34 embrace the needs of society. Here, the media can provide a fundamental public
35 value to democratic societies, if they are understood to “not only entertain and to
36 inform, but to provide a positive contribution to society” as a normative aim (p. 170).
37 “Positive” in this sense can be understood as allowing orientation in a complex world,
38 mobilizing civic participation and, crucially, not overwhelming users with negative
39 problems-focussed news coverage. Perhaps the pandemic news experience of the
40 UK public could be a call for journalists to shift to a more balanced approach that
41 incorporates more positive, productive and socially shared elements. Although such
42 balanced models – e.g. public journalism, peace journalism and solutions journalism
43 – are yet to see a breakthrough in market-oriented journalism, they have shown
44 promises as forms of “mental hygiene”, morale boosters and action stimulators
45 (McIntyre, 2019). Embracing such practices – to put smiles on audiences’ faces, to
46 recite an interviewee – would help reduce news avoidance and ensure that decades
47 of declining audiences do not culminate into an existential crisis for journalism.
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 1. UK audiences' reflections on their general pandemic news experience (% , n = 2015)

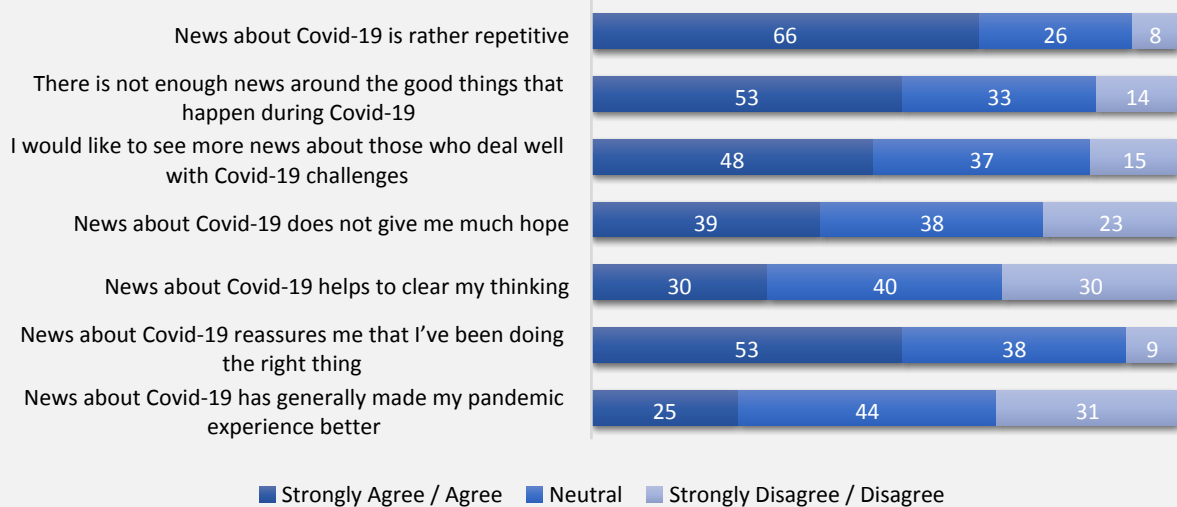


Figure 2. Positive and negative psychological responses to pandemic news (% , n = 2015)

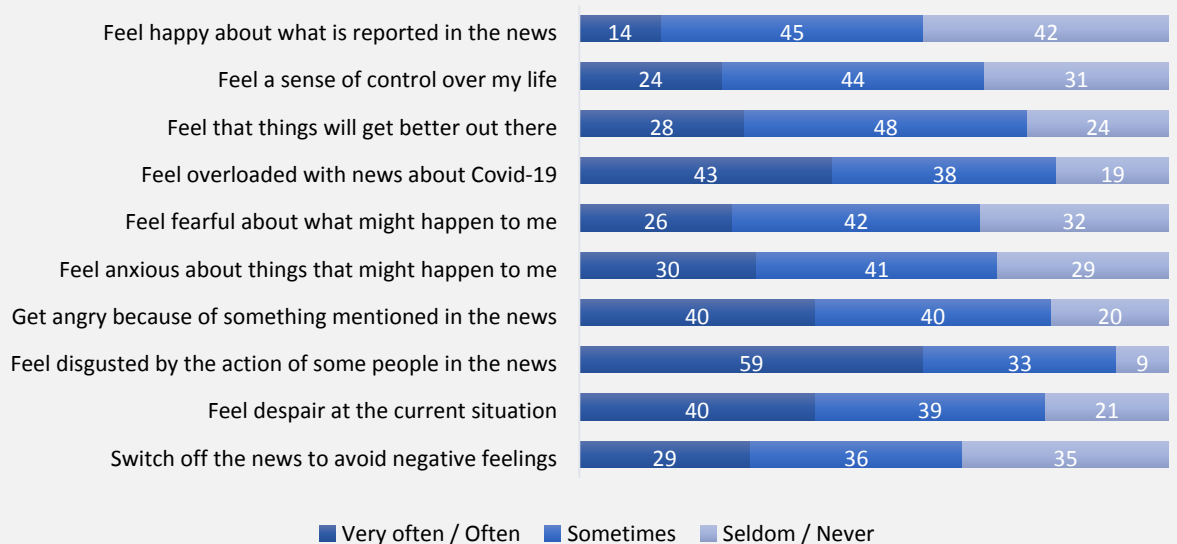


Table 1: Relationship between news-induced negative feelings and news resistance during the pandemic

	Coefficient
<i>Feel fearful about what might happen to me</i>	.07*
<i>Feel anxious about things that might happen to me</i>	-.06
<i>Get angry because of something mentioned in the news</i>	.11***
<i>Feel disgusted by the action of some people in the news</i>	-.60*
<i>Feel overloaded with news about Covid-19</i>	.47***
<i>Feel despair at the current situation</i>	.18***
Gender (0 = male)	.16***
Age (years)	-.01***
Adjusted R-squared	.37***

n = 2014; F(8, 2005) = 146.5

Table 2: Relationship between news-induced positive feelings and news resistance during the pandemic

	Coefficient
<i>Feel happy about what is reported in the news</i>	-.15***
<i>Feel that things will get better out there</i>	-.07*
<i>Feel a sense of control over my life</i>	-.02
Gender (0 = male)	.33***
Age (years)	-.02***
Adjusted R-squared	.13***

n = 2014; F (5, 2008) = 62

REFERENCES

- Aharoni, T., Kligler-Vilenchik, N. & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. 2021. "Be Less of a Slave to the News": A Text-to-Material Perspective on News Avoidance among Young Adults. *Journalism Studies*, 22, 42-59.
- Aitamurto, T. & Varma, A. 2018. The Constructive Role of Journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 12, 695-713.
- Beiler, M. & Krüger, U. 2018. Mehr Mehrwert durch Konstruktiven Journalismus? In: Gonser, N. (ed.) *Der öffentliche (Mehr-)Wert von Medien. Public Value aus Publikumssicht*. Wien: FHWien der WKW.
- Bendau, P. et al 2020. Associations between COVID-19 related media consumption and symptoms of anxiety, depression and COVID-19 related fear in the general population in Germany. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 271, 283-291. Available : <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00406-020-01171-6>.
- Broersma, M. & Swart, J. 2021. Do Novel Routines Stick After the Pandemic? The Formation of News Habits During COVID-19. *Journalism Studies*, 1-18.
- Constructive Institute 2020. News Experiences and Opinions in Denmark 2020. Aarhus: Constructive Institute.
- Meijer, I. C. & Kormelink, G. T. 2020. *Changing News Use*, London: Routledge.
- de Bruin, K., de Haan, Y., Vliegthart, R., Kruijemeier, S., et al. 2021. News Avoidance during the Covid-19 Crisis: Understanding Information Overload. *Digital Journalism*, 1-17.
- Gottfried, J. 2020. Americans' news fatigue isn't going away - about two-thirds still feel worn out. Pew Research Center.
- Groot-Kormelink, T. & Klein-Gunnewiek, A. 2021. From "Far Away" to "Shock" to "Fatigue" to "Back to Normal": How Young People Experienced News During the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journalism Studies*, 1-18.
- Hallin, D. C. 1989. *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- 1
2
3
4 Kinnick, K. N., Krugman, D. M. & Cameron, G. T. 1996. Compassion Fatigue:
5 Communication and Burnout toward Social Problems. *Journalism & Mass*
6 *Communication Quarterly*, 73, 687-707.
7
8
9 Lo, V.-h., Wei, R. & Su, H. 2013. Self-efficacy, information-processing strategies, and
10 acquisition of health knowledge. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 23, 54-67.
11
12
13 Mannell, K. & Meese, J. 2022. From Doom-Scrolling to News Avoidance: Limiting
14 News as a Wellbeing Strategy During COVID Lockdown. *Journalism Studies*,
15 23, 302-319.
16
17
18
19 Mayhew, F. 2020. UK broadcasters reaching record audiences during coronavirus
20 crisis. *Press Gazette*, 8 April 2020.
21
22
23 McIntyre, K. 2019. Solutions Journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 13, 16-34.
24
25
26 Moeller, S. D. 1999. Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War
27 and Death: Roudledge.
28
29
30 Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Schulz, A., Andi, S., et al. 2020. Reuters Institute Digital
31 News Report 2020. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
32
33
34 Ofcom, 2020. Covid-19 news and information: Consumption and Attitudes [Week 1
35 report]. 9 April. Available:
36 [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/
37 data/assets/pdf_file/0031/193747/covid-19-news-
38 consumption-week-one-findings.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0031/193747/covid-19-news-consumption-week-one-findings.pdf).
39
40
41
42 Pew Research Center. 2020. *About Seven-in-Ten U.S. Adults Say They Need to*
43 *Take Breaks From COVID-19 News*. Available:
44 [https://www.journalism.org/2020/04/29/about-seven-in-ten-u-s-adults-say-they-
45 need-to-take-breaks-from-covid-19-news/](https://www.journalism.org/2020/04/29/about-seven-in-ten-u-s-adults-say-they-need-to-take-breaks-from-covid-19-news/)
46
47
48
49 Serrano-Puche, J. 2020. Periodismo constructivo: una respuesta a las razones de los
50 usuarios para evitar las noticias. *Cuadernos.info*, 153-177.
51
52
53 Shehata, A., Wadbring, I. & Nicolas Hopmann, D. N. 2015. A longitudinal analysis of
54 news-avoidance over three decades: From public service monopoly to
55 smartphones. *65th Annual ICA Conference*. San Juan, Puerto Rico.
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4 Skovsgaard, M. & Andersen, K. 2020. Conceptualizing News Avoidance: Towards a
5 Shared Understanding of Different Causes and Potential Solutions. *Journalism*
6 *Studies*, 21, 459-476.
7
8
9
10 Toff, B. & Kalogeropoulos, A. 2020. All the News That's Fit to Ignore: How the
11 Information Environment Does and Does Not Shape News Avoidance. *Public*
12 *Opinion Quarterly*, 84, 366-390.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Trenz, H.-J., Heft, A., Vaughan, M. & Pfetsch, B. 2021. Resilience of Public Spheres in a Global Health Crisis. *Javnost - The Public*, 1-18.
- Van Aelst, P, Toth, F, Castro, L, Stetka, V, de Vreese, C, Aalberg, T, Cardenal, AS, Corbu, N, Esser, F, Hopman, DN, Koc-Michalska, K, Matthes, J, Schemer, C, Sheaffer, T, Splendore, S, Stanyer, J, Stepinska, A, Strömbäck, J, Theocharis, Y. 2021. Does a crisis change news habits? A comparative study of the effects of COVID-19 on news media use in 17 European countries. *Digital Journalism*, 9(9), pp.1316-1346.
- Villi, M., Aharoni, T., Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K., Boczkowski, P. J., et al. 2021. Taking a Break from News: A Five-nation Study of News Avoidance in the Digital Era. *Digital Journalism*, 1-17.
- Woodstock, L. 2014. The news-democracy narrative and the unexpected benefits of limited news consumption: The case of news resisters. *Journalism*, 15, 834-849.
- YoungmindsUK (2020). Coronavirus: The impact on young people with mental health needs. Available at: https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3708/coronavirus-report_march2020.pdf.
- Ytre-Arne, B., and H. Moe. 2021. "Doomscrolling, Monitoring and Avoiding: News Use in COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown." *Journalism Studies* 9 (9): 1–17.