

Twenty-five weekly cross-sectional surveys of US adults, conducted by Ipsos and risk-assessment of the public. Risk-reducing behaviors such as not dining in at restaurants and only visiting with people in one's household have been recommended to the public to limit the spread of COVID-19. Public compliance with these recommendations has changed over time. Since April, social distancing has increased. Eating out and visiting friends and family have also increased while the perceived severity of the risk of dining in and visiting friends and family has decreased.

## INTRODUCTION

The spread of COVID-19 has greatly affected many uncontrollable aspects of daily life. No longer can cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper be predictably in stock at the grocery store. For many, work and social events have moved online. Mask wearing and social distancing reminders are posted on the front doors of businesses and in public spaces. Restaurants have closed and re-opened, perhaps only to close again. Some started operating as take-out only; others operate as normal with social distancing when they are not forced to close.

Widely identified by the media and by scientists as one of the most vulnerable groups are older persons. And contact with an infected, possibly asymptomatic, person is recognized as the most likely mechanism of transmission. This has brought on public health guidelines that stress not visiting relatives and friends, especially older relatives and friends, in order to keep each other safe and reduce the spread of the virus.

Following these guidelines has made pre-COVID habits of socializing and interaction impossible, or at least greatly transformed the way they are done. This project looks at how the public views public health guidelines, if they are followed and how risky breaking guidelines is perceived to be.

## **METHODS**

In order to examine the prevalence of risk-reducing behavior and risk assessment, I did secondary research on the Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index, a weekly web-based survey conducted with the lpsos KnowledgePanel which uses address-based sampling. For each survey, sample size is around one thousand. The survey started in early March and is ongoing. I use the most recent published data in my analysis, surveys from March 13 through October 1.

Over the course of the surveys, some new questions were added. Risk-assessment of visiting family and friends was added to the survey on April 10. **Risk-assessment of dining in was added on May 15. Mask** wearing and social distancing were added on April 10. For this reason, some public behaviors were observed longer than others, and trends before May cannot be compared for all behaviors. Data was analyzed using R to find relevant results.

# Popularity and Variation of Risk-Reducing Behavior in Response to COVID-19

# University of Missouri-Della Cox & Joan Hermsen **ABSTRACT**



Some risk-reducing behaviors have become widely adopted by