Susanne Richter

During the COVID-19 virus, we’re all equal, but are we as a population?

The European research network Population Europe presents the first results of demographic research on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Older people are affected the most by COVID-19 infections, but it makes a difference depending on who we are actually referring to. For example, distinctions must be made between the “young old”, those with or without an additional illness (comorbidity), people who live in areas with low population density or those with a migration background. In addition, educational attainment, family composition and co-residence also play a role. People living in precarious conditions and without social ties will suffer from the consequences more, while the lockdowns will have the strongest effect on those dependent on social networks and their (caring) family members. Uncertainty about the future might also have an impact on lower birth rates.

These are some of the findings of a newly published policy brief from the European research network, Population Europe, that presents some of the first findings from the field of demography on the COVID-19 pandemic. Authors include researchers from Bocconi University in Milan, the Institut national d'études démographiques in Paris, the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute in The Hague, the University of Oxford and Syddansk Universitet in Odense.

Currently, the available data only allows for general trends to be described. Once information from administrative and survey data, as well as big data has been consolidated, a more thorough analysis will be possible. Population Europe is planning to organise a stakeholder meeting to bring experts from science, politics, business and society together to discuss lessons we have learned from this current situation. As the researchers from Population Europe network have emphasised, we must be better prepared for the possibility of another virus that could trigger a new pandemic.

About the Policy Brief
Population Europe’s policy brief series summarises the most recent research results and provides policy recommendations: https://population-europe.eu/policy-briefs.

About Population Europe
Population Europe is the network of 35 leading European research centres in the field of population sciences. The secretariat in Berlin is hosted by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research. The aim is to inform decision-makers in politics and society, as well as the public, about current demographic research findings, mainly through policy dialogue events (stakeholder seminars, expert workshops, webinars), regular publications (discussion papers, policy briefs, popdigests) and on social media.

contact for scientific information:
Dr Daniela Vono de Vilhena, Population Europe (vono@demogr.mpg.de)