

## A PRISMA-Based Systematic Review of Studies on COVID Related Health Anxiety

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**Background:** Bilingualism has been shown to enhance cognitive reserve and potentially delay the onset of dementia symptoms. This study investigates the impact of bilingualism on cognitive reserve and the age of diagnosis in Parkinson's Disease (PD). The relationship between bilingualism and cognitive reserve is explored in the context of PD.

As the year 2020 saw its dawn so did the outbreak of a new pandemic worldwide, later famously known as COVID-19. Since its beginning until it was comfortably controlled, the pandemic infected more than 702 million people claiming more than 6.9 million lives globally. The waves of infection spiked by the beginning of 2022 and gradually dialed down ever since. The pandemic began in mainland China and spread globally with substantial velocity. Not every country reacted to the outbreak the same. Some did not take the pandemic as seriously as was needed, while some did not have the necessary means to face the pandemic efficiently and effectively. However, there were also countries which took precautionary measures quite fast and efficiently. For instance, countries like Iran and Syria which were suffering from international sanctions and internal civil war and state failure could not face the pandemic effectively enough. Consequently, they had higher rates of casualties. On the other hand, there were countries such as Taiwan where effective and meticulous precautionary measures took place resulting in considerably lower casualty rates. Upon further inspection, it became clear that public participation played an instrumental role in the precautionary measures taking effect. On May 5th the World Health Organization officially declared an end to the pandemic. A closer look at different countries' reaction to the pandemic one could observe differences in the way they reacted in the beginning as well as their reaction to its ending. These differences were both evident in the government's behavior and the people's reaction towards the pandemic. While in some countries people showed increasing reluctance to take even the most basic precautions such as wearing masks and avoiding crowded gatherings, in some others, people exhibited exponentially cautionary behaviors. In some countries even after all the official measures to face the dangers the pandemic poses have been lifted; the public remained cautious. For instance, even though there are no official measures in place any longer, most of the Taiwanese are still wearing masks and avoid crowds. Even though Taiwan has not been hit with the pandemic as hard as some other countries, the public's insistence on observing such measures voluntarily suggests the existence of a level of health anxiety and phobia against the pandemic among the public. Such mental outcomes have been observed in other countries as well. Consequently, to find an effective path towards normalization, comprehensive study of such mental effects is necessary. The present study intends to take one of the first steps in this endeavor by conducting a systematic review of the previous studies on mental outcomes of the COVID pandemic. The study used PRISMA2020 guidelines. The study's main question was 'has the COVID-19 outbreak resulted in significant health anxiety issues?'. The search protocol was the combination of COVID-19 with mental health, health anxiety, gender, women, and phobia. Using a web scrapping algorithm, 240,000 titles out of 109 databases were screened, out of which 951 titles were extracted for further inspection. In the identification stage the algorithm excluded 20 titles, leaving 931 titles to be further analyzed. 916 studies had mental health in their title. Only 9 studies had anxiety in their title, 1 study had health anxiety in its title and no article had phobia in its title. Finally, 17 studies had an explicit focus on gender. More than half of the studies were conducted in 2020 with an exponential decline in the number of studies afterwards. The five top institutions which covered the subject were NCBI, Springer, MDPI, FRONTIERSIN, and Cambridge. Most of the studies were qualitative, suggesting the need to conduct more quantitative studies to complement the literature. Further inspection of the quantitative studies on COVID-19 phobia revealed an average effect of 28.69 for gender on phobia. Moreover, the studies on COVID-19 phobia have shown substantial heterogeneity.

**Keywords:** Systematic Review, PRISMA, COVID-19, Mental Health, Health Anxiety

### Biography

Mein-Woei Suen has obtained PhD degree from the University of Birmingham in UK. His research interests are Social Psychology, gender stereotype influences, stereotype threat effects, stereotype boost effects, stereotype threat deduction, LGBTQ-related issues, and mental health etc. Currently, he is also the Honorary Chairman of the Taiwan Applied Psychology Association (TAPA) of Psychology & Psychotherapy under-equality education and social issues research center (GEESIRC), Asia University in Taiwan. From 2007 to now, he has successfully obtained several research grants from the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), in Taiwan and completed them.