

**Speaker:** Eugenio Proto, University of Glasgow

**Date:** Monday, May 10, 2021

## **Covid-19 and the Mental Health of Individuals with Different Personalities**

### **Abstract:**

Several studies have been devoted to establishing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health across gender, age and ethnicity. However, much less attention has been paid to the differential effect of lockdown according to different personality. We do this using the UKHLS longitudinal dataset, representative of the UK population. The UKHLS dataset allows us to assess the mental health of the same respondent during the Covid-19 period and the year before based on their personality and cognitive skills. The study's results are robust to the inclusion of control variables such as physical health, household income, job status (like unemployed or furloughed). We find that during the Covid-19 period individuals who have more Extrovert and Open personality report a higher mental health deterioration, while the ones scoring higher in Agreeableness are less affected. The effect of Openness is particularly strong: one more standard deviation predict one more symptom on the GHQ12 test for about 1 respondent over 4. Neuroticism seems to predict more mental health deterioration, as it is normal to expect, but this effect is not robust to the inclusion of potential confounding factors. Holding personality and confounding variables constant, cognitive skills do not predict mental health deterioration.