

# **Generational Differences in Mental Health, Maladaptive Coping Behaviors, and Pandemic-Related Concerns During the Initial COVID-19 Pandemic**

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9934502/>

- Baby Boomers: born 1946–1964
- Generation X (Gen X): born 1965–1980
- Millennials: born 1981–1996
- Generation Z (Gen Z): born 1997–2012

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- April 2020; 2696 participants
- The mean age :47.8 years
- 87.8% :female
- 89.9% were non-Hispanic white.
- The data were weighted to the total U.S. population based on the 2018 Census Bureau population estimates by age, sex, and race/ethnicity

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1. Gen Z and Millennial :worse in perceived stress, loneliness, the personal distress
2. Gen Z and Millennial: worse in fatigue, motivation, physical activity, and concentration
3. Major depression: Gen Z (44.5%) and Millennial (35.8%) were greater than the Gen X (19.2%) and Baby Boomer (11.8%)
4. Generalized Anxiety Disorders: Gen Z (30.9%), Millennial (27.9%), and Gen X (17.2%) were higher than those in the Baby Boomer (8.1%).
5. Millennials and Gen Xers expressed significantly higher rates of concern regarding Employment and Finances , issues regarding Children , and issues regarding elderly parents compared to the Gen Z and Baby Boomer groups
6. 40–50% of the individuals in the Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z reported decreases in sleep during the initial pandemic

7. significant increase in alcohol use for individuals in the Millennial (52.2%) and Gen Z (48.5%), compared to the Baby Boomer group (19.3%), with no difference between the Gen X (38.7%) and Baby Boomers (19.3%), for those who indicated prior use of alcohol
8. sleep aid use: the increase in use with Gen Z (63.9%) and Millennials (62.9%); higher increased use reported by the Gen X (47.7%) and Baby Boomer (25.1%)

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## **CONCLUSIONS/DISCUSSIONS**

- **The younger generations** (i.e., Millennials and Gen Zers) reported a **greater increase in mental health symptoms**
- **Millennials and Gen Zers have higher rates of Major Depression Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder.**
- Gen Xers and Baby Boomer groups showed little increase in rates of these disorders
- Psychopathology symptoms were generally higher among younger generations compared to older generations
- **Alcohol use increased among Gen Z and Millennial participants**
- The Gen Z cohort group likely used alcohol as an additional coping strategy.
- While Gen X, Gen Z, and Millennial groups reported issues related to sleep, only **Gen Z and Millennial groups showed significantly increased use of sleep aids.**