
Longing for Touch and Quality of Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Birgit Hasenack^{*1,2}, Larissa Meijer^{†1}, Jonas Kamps¹, Andy Mahon¹, Giulia Titone¹,
Chris Dijkerman¹, and Anouk Keizer¹

¹Experimental Psychology, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University – Netherlands

²Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University – Netherlands

Abstract

To combat the spread of the COVID-19, regulations were introduced to limit physical interactions. This could induce a longing for touch in the general population and subsequently impact social, psychological, physical and environmental quality of life (QoL). The aim of this study was to investigate the potential association between COVID-19 regulations, longing for touch and QoL. A total of 1978 participants from different countries completed an online survey, including questions about their general wellbeing and the desire to be touched. In our sample, 83% of participants reported a longing for touch. Longing for touch was subsequently associated with a lower physical, psychological and social QoL. No association was found with environmental QoL. These findings highlight the importance of touch for QoL and suggest that the COVID-19 regulations have concurrent negative consequences for the wellbeing of the general population.

Keywords: longing for touch, quality of life, touch deprivation, COVID, 19

*Speaker

†Corresponding author: l.l.meijer@uu.nl