

UC Davis
Public Health Sciences

Title

What are the needs in a rural community amidst COVID-19?

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5s73m3hn>

Authors

Kelly, Kiersten
Bateman, Kim

Publication Date

2021

Data Availability

The data associated with this publication are not available for this reason: N/A

What are the needs in a rural community amidst COVID-19?

Kiersten Kelly, MS4, UC Davis

Kim Bateman, PhD, Sierra College

Introduction

It is important to assess the needs of a rural community amidst pandemic to best allocate resources and assess whether they follow national trends.

Hypothesis

The Latino population will be more impacted by stay-at-home orders and the needs of the community will mirror national trends of increased depression/anxiety, food and housing insecurity, and job loss.

Methods

- A 43-item survey was developed with community partners and given to Sierra College students – 129 responses
- Analyzed using Mann Whitney U and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests
- Discussion with community partners regarding demand on resources

Main Findings:

Mental Health

- Students felt more anxious and depressed after stay-at-home orders in March 2020 compared to before ($z = 5.41, p < .01$).

- 52 students indicated they were not aware of resources available for mental health support.

- The 24-hour crisis line received 620 calls between 01/20 and 06/20 compared to 706 calls in all of 2019. Calls were related to mental health, domestic violence, and substance abuse emergencies.

Food insecurity:

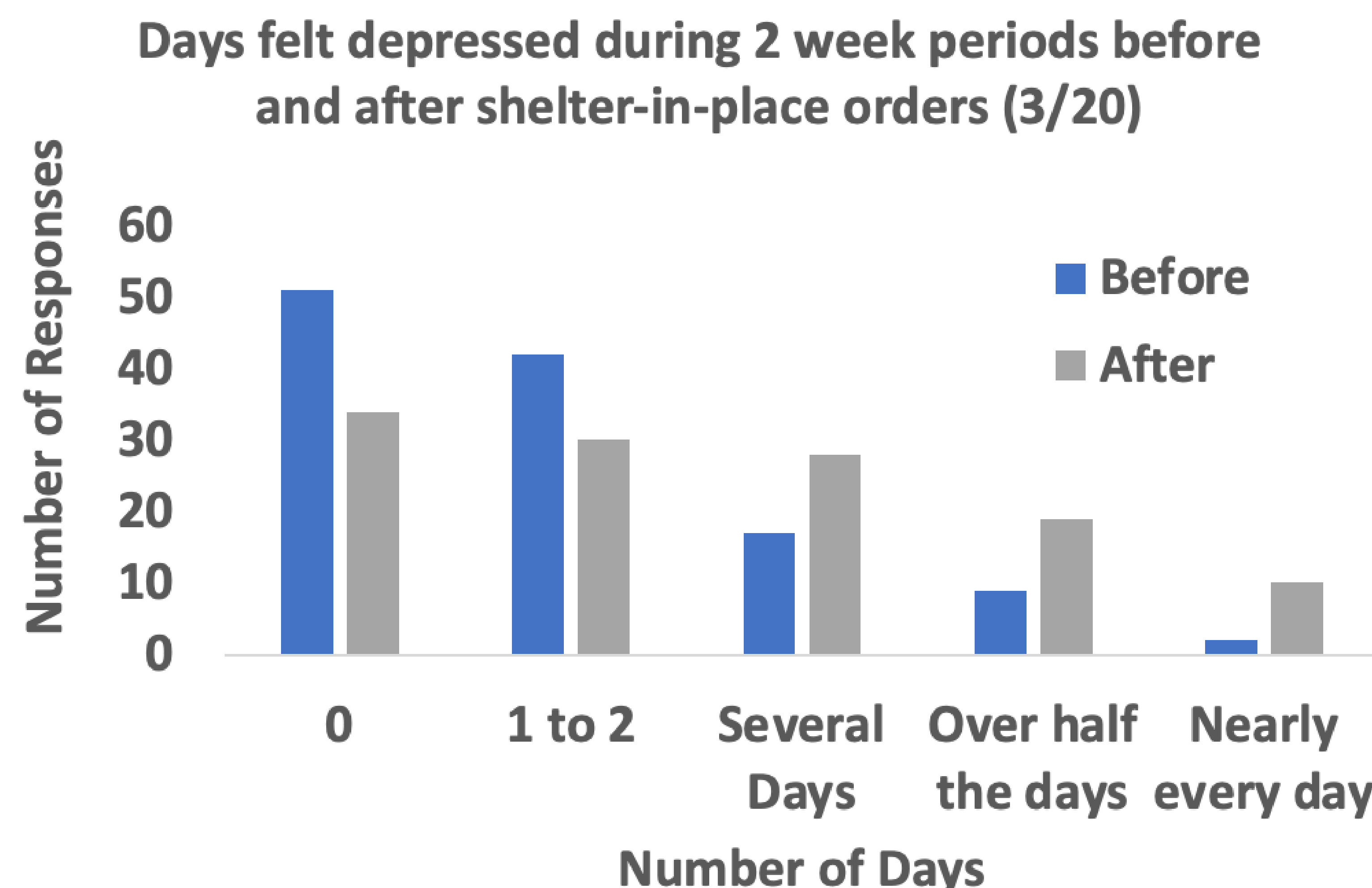
- 29 students indicated not having enough money to buy food was a minor problem, for 7 it was a moderate problem, and for 1 it was a major problem.

- The Sierra Community House began delivering 10,000 meals per week in March 2020. From 3/20-9/20, they served 2,187 unduplicated individuals compared to 1,583 served from 3/19-9/19.

Substance use:

- 14% (all White) indicated that their substance use increased after stay-at-home orders.

- Whites indicated that they consumed more alcohol per week compared to Latinos ($z = 2.19, p < .05$).



Results

The graph (left) shows increased number of days students felt depressed in March 2020. There were similar findings for students feeling more anxious. There was no significant difference by race/ethnicity.

Discussion

- Need further resource allocation in areas of food insecurity, mental health, and housing assistance.
- Need further evaluation of impact of COVID-19 on Latino population in rural communities.
- Ensure that students have access to tele-education (and tele-health) with switch to asynchronous learning and decrease in enrollment.

