Healthcare Innovations
How practice has changed

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Depression and anxiety symptoms in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic in Queensland

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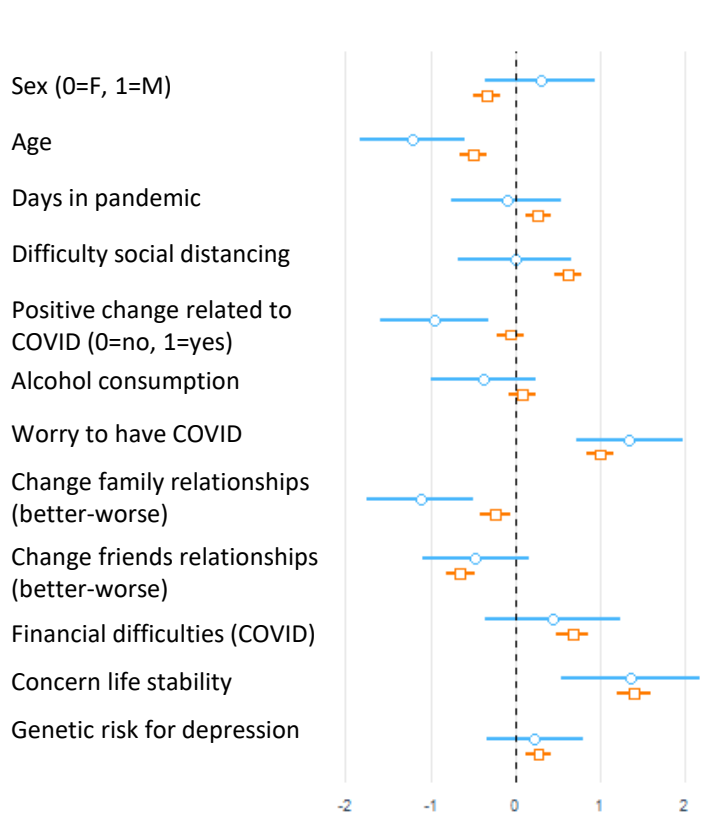
Aim: To identify individual factors associated with depressive and anxiety symptoms following the first months of response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Queensland (May to August 2020).

Methods: With funding from QLD Health, we invited participants from two samples at QIMR Berghofer to complete an online survey on health and wellbeing: the Australian Genetics of Depression Study (AGDS, analyses restricted to QLD participants; N = 798, 75% females; age M=49, SD=15; range:20-86) and the QSkin Sun and Health Study (QSkin; 52% females; N = 3,537, age M=56, SD=8, range: 40-70). We conducted linear regression models to identify demographic and behavioural predictors of nine depression and anxiety symptoms in the previous two weeks for individuals with and without history of depression.



Results: The figure shows general trends of the predictor coefficients included in regression models with outcome number of symptoms in the last two weeks. The statistical power is more limited for the AGDS analyses. The results show similar trends for both samples: people with more symptoms of depression and anxiety tended to be younger, more worried to get COVID-19, and more concerned about the stability of their living situation. Improvement in the quality of the relationships was a protective factor. Days since the outbreak of the pandemic, higher genetic risk for depression and finding social distancing more difficult was associated with an increase of symptoms in participants with no history of depression.