

Children who are well informed are less worried

A study in 42 countries on “Children, Media, and COVID-19”

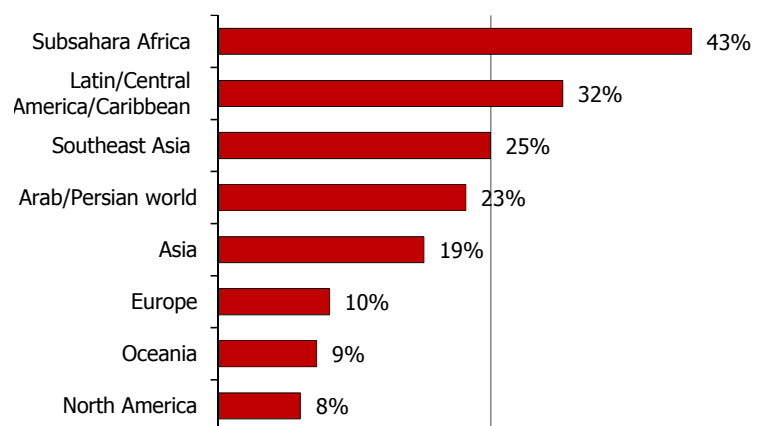
A worldwide survey of 4,322 children aged between 9 and 13 shows that if children have a basic knowledge about the coronavirus and how to protect themselves and others from it, they are less worried. If children believe fake news such as “Eating garlic can prevent you from catching the coronavirus”, they’re more likely to be “very worried”.

Munich, 13 May 2020 – The International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television at the Bavarian Broadcasting Cooperation, and the PRIX JEUNESSE Foundation, together with international researchers, conducted a study with n=4,322 children aged between 9 and 13 in 42 countries. The study “Children, Media, and COVID-19” asked questions about children’s emotions and knowledge regarding the coronavirus, their media use, and their strategies for reducing stress and regulating their own media consumption. The fieldwork period was 31 March to 26 April 2020, i.e. the peak of the lockdown in most countries. The samples cannot claim to be representative for the countries or on a global level. Nevertheless, the study offers some interesting findings and tendencies how children perceive this very special situation.

The level of children’s anxiety differs between the world regions, and the children perceive their parents as worried

For nearly all the children surveyed worldwide, life has changed radically. Most are no longer going to school, often their parents are working from home, sport and leisure activities are no longer possible. Worldwide, one in two children feel worried because of the coronavirus. The percentage of children being “very worried” differs from country to country. While the proportion of “very worried” children in Austria (2 %) and Germany (3 %) is very low, it is much higher in e.g. Tanzania, where around three quarters of the children surveyed are “very worried”.

Percentage of children who are frightened „very much“



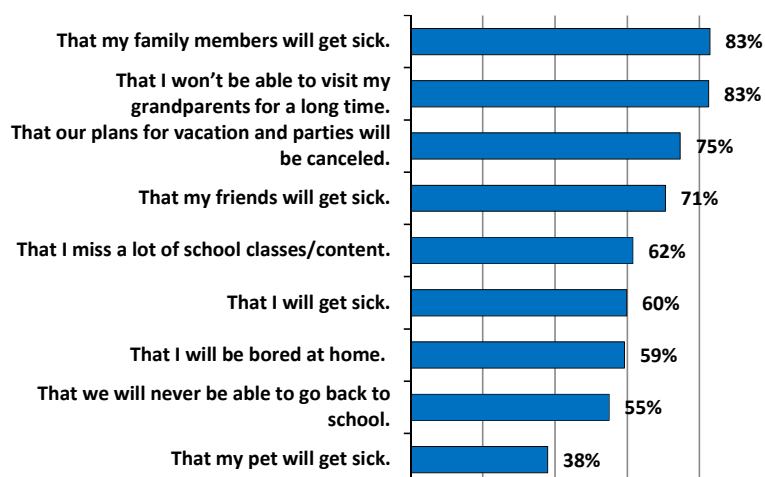
The most common fear: that the family will fall ill

The greatest fears of the children are that a family member will fall ill and that they won't be able to visit their grandparents and other relatives for a long time. These are fears that are found worldwide to a very similar extent. Regional differences could be found in terms of worries that they themselves or their pets might fall ill.

Those who know a lot are less often "very worried"

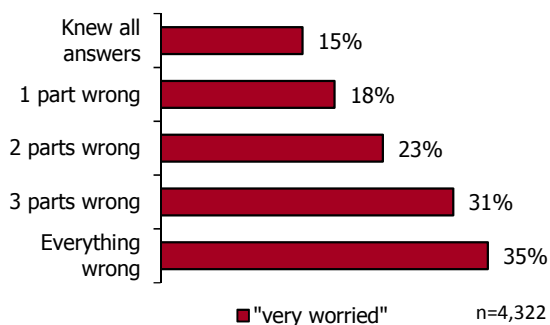
What this study makes very clear is the connection between being worried and knowledge. The fewer facts the children know about the virus and how to protect themselves from it, the higher the proportion who are "very worried".

What children are worried about



n=4.200

Percentage of "very worried" children in relation to knowledge



The more the children believe in fake news, the more they are "very worried"

Children are especially likely to be "very worried" if they are taken in by the fake news stories in circulation, e.g. that "coronavirus has been used as a weapon by a foreign government", or that "garlic stops you from catching the coronavirus". The conclusion drawn from this is that knowledge is linked with a reduction in uncertainty and thus in a reduction of worries.

"Children need reliable age-appropriate information and media contents that are made for them and explain the situation without scaring them or fostering anxiety", says the leading researcher of the study, Dr Maya Götz from Germany. What the results of the study mean and what children's TV worldwide is offering to its young audience is the theme of this year's virtual PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2020 from June 5th to 11th: "Separated by crisis, together in commitment for children", organised in Munich and streamed freely worldwide.

This study "Children, Media and COVID-19" and other qualitative studies with children from countries including Syria, Iran and Sierra Leone, or from refugee centres in Luxembourg, will be presented via livestream on June 7th 2020 at the international Info Night at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL.

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