

# Covid-19, pelvic health and women's voices: a descriptive study

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## Abstract

Objective: To examine how the pandemic affected women with pelvic dysfunction. Design: A Survey Monkey questionnaire on how the pandemic and Covid-19 infection affected women's pelvic problems, exercise, and weight. A free text box captured their comments. Setting: Online questionnaire worldwide. Sample: Six hundred and forty-seven women. Results: Bladder control 265 (41%), prolapse 240 (37%), pelvic pain 40 (6%), sexual dysfunction 27 (4%), faecal incontinence 19 (3%) and other 56 (9%) were respondents' main pelvic problems. Symptoms were unchanged for 331 (51%), worse for 243 (38%), and improved for 60 (10%). Weight was gained by 290 (45%), unchanged by 243 (38%), and lost by 114 (17%). Exercise levels were unchanged, worse, or better in 33%. Difficulty accessing medical appointments and date for surgery were experienced by 235 (36.5%) and 38 (6%) women respectively. Sixty-six (10.3%) women reported covid-19 infection: the distribution of pelvic problems and changes through the pandemic, weight and exercise patterns, and difficulty either getting a date for surgery or accessing healthcare were similar to those not contracting infection. Sexual dysfunction was the main new or worsening problem, featuring 13 women (18%). Seventy women - 16 recently delivered, and 54 with a pre-existing pelvic problem commented. Five core themes were identified. Difficulty accessing healthcare review, mental health impact and physiotherapy services especially affected delivered women, while lifestyle alterations and conservative treatment tools were more prominent in women with a pre-existing problem. Conclusions: The pandemic left many women with pelvic dysfunction without services, and this survey captures their suffering.

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