

The unprecedented 2021? - Results of a national representative survey

The survey of health inequalities in Bulgaria was conducted among 1151 adults, using the standardized interview method, that includes a home visit, and the respondents were selected through a two-tier stratified sample representative of the country.

A survey conducted by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in accordance with the unified methodology of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) shows that mastering the Covid-19 situation in our country requires the application of serious restrictive measures.

The majority of adult Bulgarians consider it necessary in the situation of a pandemic to ban public gatherings (according to 74%), to require wearing masks (according to 75%), to close businesses and jobs (according to 56%), to require people to stay at home (according to 60%). The data also show that 83% of the adult population support the measure of isolating people who are known to be carriers of the disease; 75% approve the measure to close the borders to other countries, while the measure to suspend compulsory education and to close schools and kindergartens is considered as acceptable by 62%. The presented data reveal the resoluteness of the Bulgarian society that the pandemic can be controlled with the help of adequate and at the same time strictly applied measures.

The data show that in 2021 Bulgaria is divided into three comparable groups on the topic of 'Covid vaccines': 1) antivaxers (36%), 2) neutral (31%) and 3) pro-vaxers (33%) with each group convinced of the correctness of its own arguments. On the question of what is the better way for building immunity to Covid-19 - through illness or vaccination, adult Bulgarians are divided into three groups: 44.3% prefer to build immunity through illness, 22.4% prefer vaccination, and another 33.3% take a neutral position on the issue. These numbers give one of the possible explanations for the relatively low share of Bulgarians who have been vaccinated against Covid-19.

At the same time, 69.3% of the respondents stated that according to them the health system in Bulgaria is not working well. Despite the difficulties and disappointments of the functioning of health care as a system, 46% of people are convinced that in case of a serious illness they will receive the best possible treatment in Bulgaria. 58% of the adult population in our country believe that the state should provide wider packages of health care and services and should not be limited only to the most basic ones.

According to the survey, in 2021, 67.2% felt happy - completely or to some extent. The feeling of happiness is most pronounced in people between 18 and 50 years of age. With age, this feeling decreases and reaches its lowest numbers in those over 70 years of age. If we study the relationship between employment status (employees, self-employed, employer) and self-perception of happiness, it becomes clear that the feeling of happiness is most pronounced in self-employed (39.6%), followed by employees (23.5%) and employers (15.1%).