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**Title:** Mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: The importance of the vagus nerve for biopsychosocial resilience.

**Authors:** Dedoncker, Josefien, ORCID 0000-0003-4838-5088. Department of Head and Skin – Psychiatry and Medical Psychology, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium, Josefien.Ddr@gmail.com  
Vanderhasselt, Marie-Anne. Department of Head and Skin – Psychiatry and Medical Psychology, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium  
Ottaviani, Cristina. Department of Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy  
Slavich, George M., ORCID 0000-0001-5710-3818. Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, US

**Address:** Dedoncker, Josefien, Department of Head and Skin – Psychiatry and Medical Psychology, Ghent University Hospital, C. Heymanslaan 10, 9000, Ghent, Belgium, Josefien.Ddr@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread increases in mental health problems, including anxiety and depression. The development of these and other psychiatric disorders may be related to changes in immune, endocrine, autonomic, cognitive, and affective processes induced by a SARS-CoV-2 infection. Interestingly, many of these same changes can be triggered by psychosocial stressors such as social isolation and rejection, which have become increasingly common due to public policies aimed at reducing the spread of SARS-CoV-2. The present review aims to shed light on these issues by describing how viral infections and stress affect mental health. First, we describe the multi-level mechanisms linking viral infection and life stress exposure with risk for psychopathology. Then, we summarize how resilience can be enhanced by targeting vagus nerve function by, for example, applying transcutaneous vagus nerve stimulation and targeting lifestyle factors, such as exercise. With these biopsychosocial insights in mind, researchers and healthcare professionals will be better equipped to reduce risk for psychopathology and increase resilience during this challenging pandemic period and beyond. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)

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