Internet Use In The Early Stages of COVID-19

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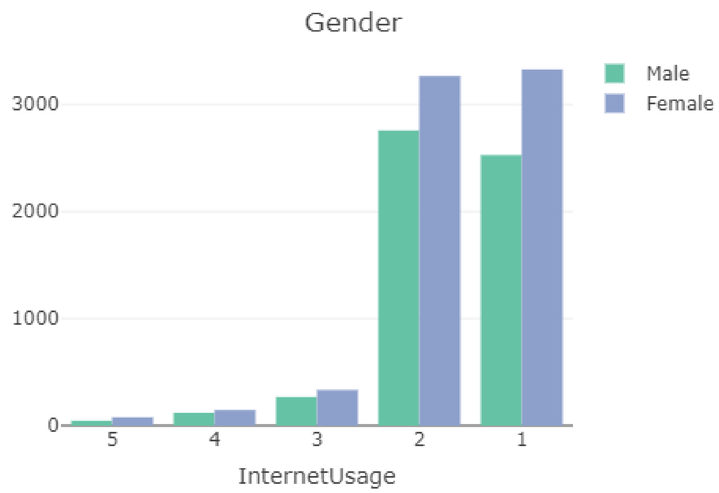
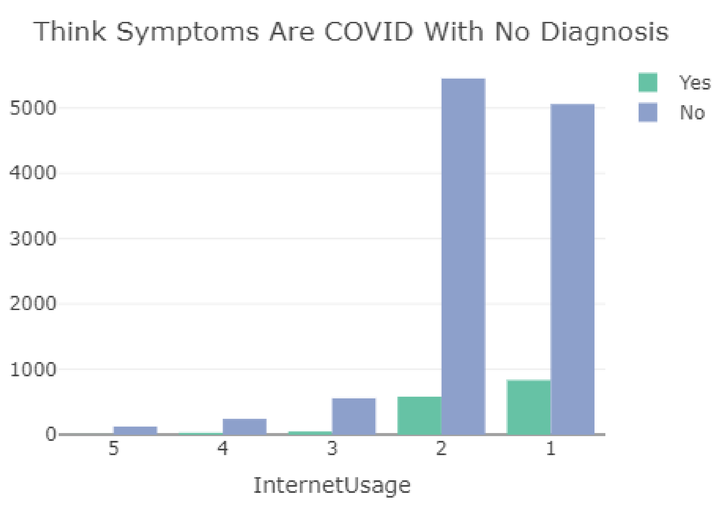
A research article conducted by Pew Research Center in 2020 with 12,970 participants on Americans' skepticism of news media.

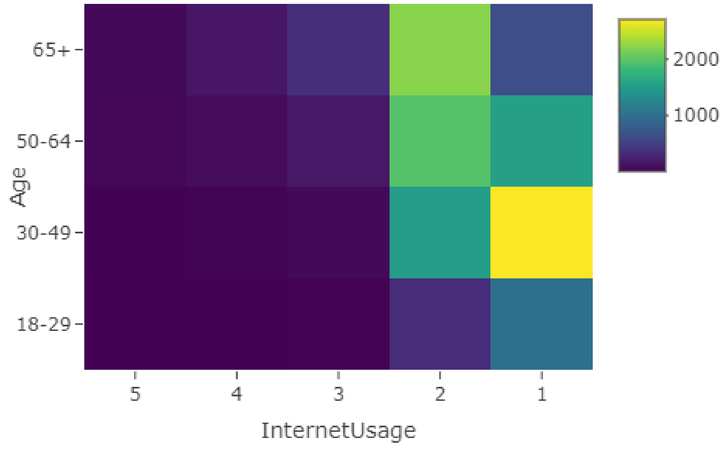
Questions

The results raise a couple of questions.

- How did being online change the way people viewed the pandemic?
- Is internet usage just a covariate, if so, what other variables would influence such views?
- What was the news media showing people to get them to change their views, and what media were the participants watching?







Conclusion

The frequency of internet usage during the early stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic was very influential for the American population. The more internet a user consumed, the more likely they were to wear a mask in public. Maybe not surprising here, but the older the participant, the less internet use they reported. Most interestingly, and the driving force behind why I used these variables, was the test between using the internet and saying you had COVID without getting tested. The results showed that both groups reported higher outcomes as internet frequency went up, but the "No" group was significantly higher.

Results

- The frequency of internet usage was a statistically significant predictor of wearing a mask in public, $R^2 = .002$, $F(1, 12957) = 29.9$, $p < .001$.
- There was a statistically significant positive correlation between age and frequency of internet usage, $r(12901) = .36$, $p < .001$.
- An independent samples *t*-test showed a statistically significant difference in frequency of internet usage between participants who were pretty sure they had COVID but were never diagnosed ($M = 1.52$, $SD = .67$) and participants who did not think they had COVID ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .754$), $t(2015) = 8.79$, $p < .001$, $d = .231$.

References

Gottfried, J., Walker, M., Mitchell, A. (2020). Americans See Skepticism of News Media as Healthy, Say Public Trust in the Institution Can Improve. *Pew Research Center*.

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