

Living in a pandemic

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A study conducted by researchers from Fondazione Bruno Kessler and Cnr-Isti, published in Scientific Reports, analyzed changes in daily routines and the ability to adapt to precautionary measures following the outbreak of COVID-19.

What impact did the first year of the pandemic have on human behavior? How have our routines changed, our ability to adhere to restrictions and to give up, at least partly, social activities?

The study published in the journal “**Scientific Reports**” entitled “[Living in a pandemic: changes in mobility routines, social activity and adherence to COVID-19 protective measures](#)” focused on these questions. The research was carried out by Trento-based **Fondazione Bruno Kessler** in cooperation with the **Institute for Information Science and Technology of the National Research Council** (Cnr-Isti) and with the company **Cuebiq Inc.** in New York City.

The research was based on anonymously processed GPS data from 837,000 cell phones in the United States from January to September 2020. Researchers found that, during that period, the number of visits to stores and other places of interest significantly dropped marking a -28% compared to pre-pandemic figures in New York State and, at the same time, time spent at these venues was shortened by 23%. The study also found that people maintained a protective behavior even during the reopening phase, keeping the trend to visit fewer venues and above all to spend less time there.

“From our observation and examination of the data, it emerges that, as the pandemic went on – **Lorenzo Lucchini**, researcher at the Kessler Foundation, said -, people started to pay less attention to the counts on cases and deaths caused by the pandemic and in some way their perception of risk changed. Therefore, they changed their behavior accordingly. Another hypothesis is that economic reasons at some point led anyway to resume visiting more venues and to stay there longer.

The analysis also showed that, – **Luca Pappalardo**, a researcher with Cnr-isti said – while people generally limited social contacts to lower the likelihood of becoming infected in places of interest, the same precautions were not observed inside homes. So, at home we have not been as careful to limit social contacts with people living in the same household, despite the fact that it is well known that contacts in that kind of environment significantly contribute to the spread of

infections”.

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