• **Put the words below in the right place in the article.**

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Stress, anxiety and depression levels soar under UK Covid-19 restrictions.

Researchers say mental health levels may worsen as infections rise and lockdowns are _____.
Restrictions to curb the spread of coronavirus in the UK has _____ stress, anxiety and depression far above normal levels and may do again in coming months if widespread lockdowns are re-imposed, researchers say.

A major study into the mental health impact of the pandemic found that in the early _____ of lockdown 57% of those who took part reported symptoms of anxiety, with 64% recording common signs of depression.

_____the mental health problems improved as restrictions _____, scientists warn they may worsen again as infections rise and more aggressive nationwide lockdowns are considered over the autumn and winter.

"This is far in excess of levels usually seen in the UK," said Kavita Vedhara, a professor of health psychology who led the study at the University of Nottingham. Based on _____ that qualify people for psychological help on the NHS, 26% of the volunteers had moderate to severe anxiety and 31.6% had moderate to severe depression.

The study conducted with King's College London _____more than 3,000 UK adults about their mental health as _____ restrictions came in earlier this year. The researchers looked specifically at which groups were most affected by lockdown and what issues they found most difficult.

Women, young people and those in _____ categories for Covid-19 were most affected, the researchers found, though different factors probably drove the mental health difficulties in each group.

While the fear of catching the virus was likely _____to those with underlying health conditions, young people and women may have felt more distress through work insecurity, loneliness and more domestic violence.

As part of the study researchers have collected hair _____ from the participants to measure the stress hormone cortisol. The hormone plays a role in how emotional wellbeing affects physical health. Tests on the samples should reveal _____ the pandemic, and the social restrictions imposed in response, have altered cortisol levels and whether this changes the severity of Covid-19 infections.

In a separate study, which has yet to be published, Michael Daly investigated the mental health of 14,000 people in UK households during lockdown. The results _____ that women and young people experienced the greatest increases in mental health difficulties, though they also enjoyed the fastest recovery.

Vedhara said worrying about contracting Covid-19, feeling lonely, and not thinking positively were all strongly _____ with how anxious and depressed people became.

To prepare for the coming months, she said new policies were needed to help people feel less worried about _____ up the virus. Specifically, she said the UK needs to _____ the virus to low levels, have an effective system for tracing the contacts of those who test positive and have enough testing capacity so people can go about their daily lives without fear of becoming infected.

"If there is another lockdown, we need to be prepared for a potential _____ in mental health difficulties," she added.

Vedhara advised people to stay as socially connected as possible, to help _____ off loneliness, and ensure they found time to have fun: "Take time in every day to do at least one thing that makes you feel good, and makes you laugh out loud if possible, and reach out to friends, family or seek professional help as soon as you feel things are becoming _____," she said.

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