

RESEARCH REVIEW

Keeping you up to date with the latest peer-reviewed research on workforce health and productivity

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Predicting Potential Economic Impact of COVID-19 from the 1918 Spanish Flu

[*National Bureau of Economic Research*](#)

The 1918-2020 Spanish Flu caused a 0.5% mortality in the US, leading to a decline in consumption and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and an increase in inflation. This resulted in a substantial yet brief decline in stocks and bond returns after the pandemic ended. While public health advancements since then should keep the death toll from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) from reaching that of the Spanish Flu, the nation's economy is already seeing real GDP drop as decreases in travel and trade occur.

+ Lessons Learned: [Latest IBI Blog](#) dives deeper into what can be learned from the Spanish Flu.

Economic Model Shows Containment Strategies Will Increase Recession Severity but Saves Millions of Lives

[National Bureau of Economic Research](#)

Researchers modelled the interaction between economic decisions and epidemics to find that COVID-19 containment policies that can slow the rate of infection (e.g., stay at home orders, closure of non-essential businesses) are expected to result in decreased labor and consumption of goods, prolonging economic recession.

However, viewing containment efforts as a trade-off between public health and economic activity may be short-sighted. Without containment policies, the number of anticipated deaths—potentially between 100,000 and 2.2 million in the U.S. alone—could lead to a permanent decline of GDP. Managing containment strategies to therefore minimize infection could therefore be best for business in the long run.

+ What are some of the potential financial impacts for businesses? [IBI's latest study](#) finds that COVID-19 employer paid leave could cost billions

Factors Associated with Mental Health Outcomes Among Health Care Workers Exposed to Coronavirus Disease 2019

[JAMA Psychiatry](#)

Health care workers treating COVID-19 patients in Wuhan, China experienced significant levels of depression, anxiety, insomnia and psychological distress. Females, nurses, frontline health professionals and those working at the center of the Wuhan outbreak were found to have experienced the highest levels of psychological stress.

Nurses were more likely to have reported severe depression than physicians, women were twice as likely to experience severe anxiety than men, frontline workers were four times more likely to experience severe insomnia than second line workers and those inside Wuhan were twice as likely to experience severe distress than those outside Wuhan—likely a result of their higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

Employers whose workers face a substantial risk of exposure to COVID-19 on the job—not just healthcare workers, but other employees critical to the food and manufacturing supply and delivery chain, in transportation, and in other essential services—may consider reviewing their healthcare and employee

benefits to ensure that they include sufficient mental health resources and access.

+ Share Strategies with Your Colleagues: Employers are sharing how they are playing a role in helping with employees meet mental health needs during the coronavirus pandemic on [IBIBridge](#), an online networking platform for businesses. Join the discussion, ask questions, and learn from colleagues.

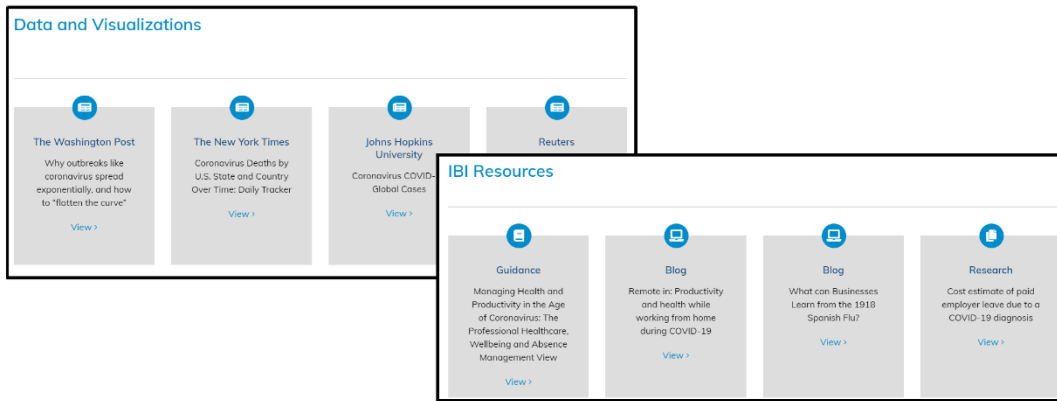
How Many Jobs Can be Done at Home?

[*National Bureau of Economic Research*](#)

Amidst the pandemic, researchers investigated the feasibility for moving employees to work from home, finding that approximately one in three US jobs were capable of being done remotely. Of note, this proportion is elevated, as it disregards anything that makes telecommuting difficult – but not impossible. In addition, estimates vary by both location and industry. According to full-time workers responding to the 2018 American Time Use Survey, less than one in four work at home on a typical day, and among those who ever work from home, they spend more hours during the week at their workplace than at home. In addition, fewer than 13% of US jobs have formal work from home policies. As the proportion of jobs available to be performed from home may help predict economic activity during the pandemic, employers may consider revising their work from home policies and expanding their remote workforce.

+ Need tips for working at home? IBI's Researcher Nicole Nicksic, who has been working remote full-time in both her past and current positions, shares her thoughts [here](#).

COVID-19 Resources, Data, Models, and Additional Reading



As COVID-19 brings forth evolving changes and challenges, IBI has created [a repository of resources](#) to help the businesses stay informed on the latest research, data, and information regarding COVID-19. This community resource page features information ranging from [government guidance](#), COVID-19 [progression trackers](#), cost and intervention [projections](#), suggested [published research](#) readings, and more.



IBI is the leading not-for-profit organization focused on the connections among workforce health, wellbeing, medical care, absence and productivity. We provide research, benchmarking, education and the tools to help guide sound decisions in workforce health investments. For more information, please visit www.ibiweb.org.

Upcoming Events

May 12: [Webinar: Building a Culture of Health in the Workplace](#)

July 23: [Regional Event: Data and Analytics Symposium \(Philadelphia\)](#)

September 15-16: [Conference: IBI/Conference Board Health and Productivity Forum](#)

