

# OU researchers seek public participation for COVID-19 study

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A group of researchers in Oakland University's Department of Biological Sciences is seeking public participation in a research study to identify COVID-19 symptoms and track the timeline of their development among the general population.

## Online COVID19 symptoms study

Get involved in helping researchers to better understand COVID-19

**Coronavirus Infection Timeline**

The chart shows a timeline from Day -7 to Day 14. Key events are marked: 'Exposure to virus' at Day -2, 'Viral shedding' starting at Day 0, 'Symptoms' starting at Day 1, and 'Contagious' starting at Day 2. A legend indicates: 'Exposed' (grey bar), 'Symptoms' (orange bar), 'Viral shedding' (green bar), and 'Contagious' (red bar).

The project collects data through an anonymous online survey in which participants record information about their symptoms and general background, including age, sex, country of origin and ethnicity.

The survey is designed to assess symptoms in people who have been or are currently diagnosed with COVID-19, as well as healthy individuals who would like to track their symptoms for up to three weeks to monitor if they contract the virus given the presence of non-specific symptoms.

Luis Villa-Diaz, assistant professor of biological sciences and principal investigator of the research study, said it will help researchers better understand the disease and provide data needed to refine forecasting models and inform public health measures.

“This data will expand our knowledge of COVID-19 and may also help us determine whether certain anecdotally reported symptoms, such as loss of smell and taste, are truly associated with the disease,” said Villa-Diaz. “The more we can distinguish COVID-19 symptoms from those of other respiratory diseases, the more effective our diagnostics will be.”

Villa-Diaz added that while the research study is intended to raise awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, it is not to be used as a self-diagnostic tool. People experiencing symptoms should consult a medical professional.

Co-investigators Walter Wolfsberger and Khrystyna Shchubelka are Ph.D. students in the Department of Biological Sciences and helped design the study to draw international participation.

“People around the world have different responses and survival rates regarding COVID-19, which makes it very important to study different populations,” said Shchubelka. “At this point, most of the data come solely from China, which may introduce bias into our

understanding of this disease. We still know little about it, but there may be genetic factors that influence susceptibility and survival rates around the world.”

To facilitate responses, the research team enlisted the help of bilingual professors who are working on translating the survey into various languages, including Spanish, Ukrainian, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Italian, German and French.

The survey is available in English [here](#).

The study results may be published in an article or presentation, or shared for future research studies. Identifying details of participants will be kept private. For more information on the study, view the [Informed Consent document](#).