

# Our research into COVID-19 policies in Rotterdam

## We scoped dozens of policies

implemented between March and October 2020, in the city of Rotterdam. We identified 199 policies and grouped them according to their possible consequences.



## We looked into differences

and wanted to know if the health of specific groups of people was more impacted than others. We used the PROGRESS-plus framework to identify characteristics for which differences may occur.



## Characteristics



Place of residence



Religion



Race/ethnicity/  
culture/language



Socioeconomic  
status (SES)



Occupation



Education



Gender/sex



Social capital



Age

## We searched for evidence

and selected literature reviews to understand how policies could have caused unintended harmful effects on health. This systematic approach – from policy to evidence – will help to tailor policies and promote better health among all people.



# Promoting better health for everyone in times of crisis

All policies can make the difference

Policies in all domains can have an impact on health, but this impact is not the same for everyone. Some of the policies introduced during the COVID-19 crisis were likely to be harmful for health, while others were implemented to soften the negative harms. We found that lockdown policies might result in unequal effects on health for different groups of people.



## The impact of COVID-19 policies

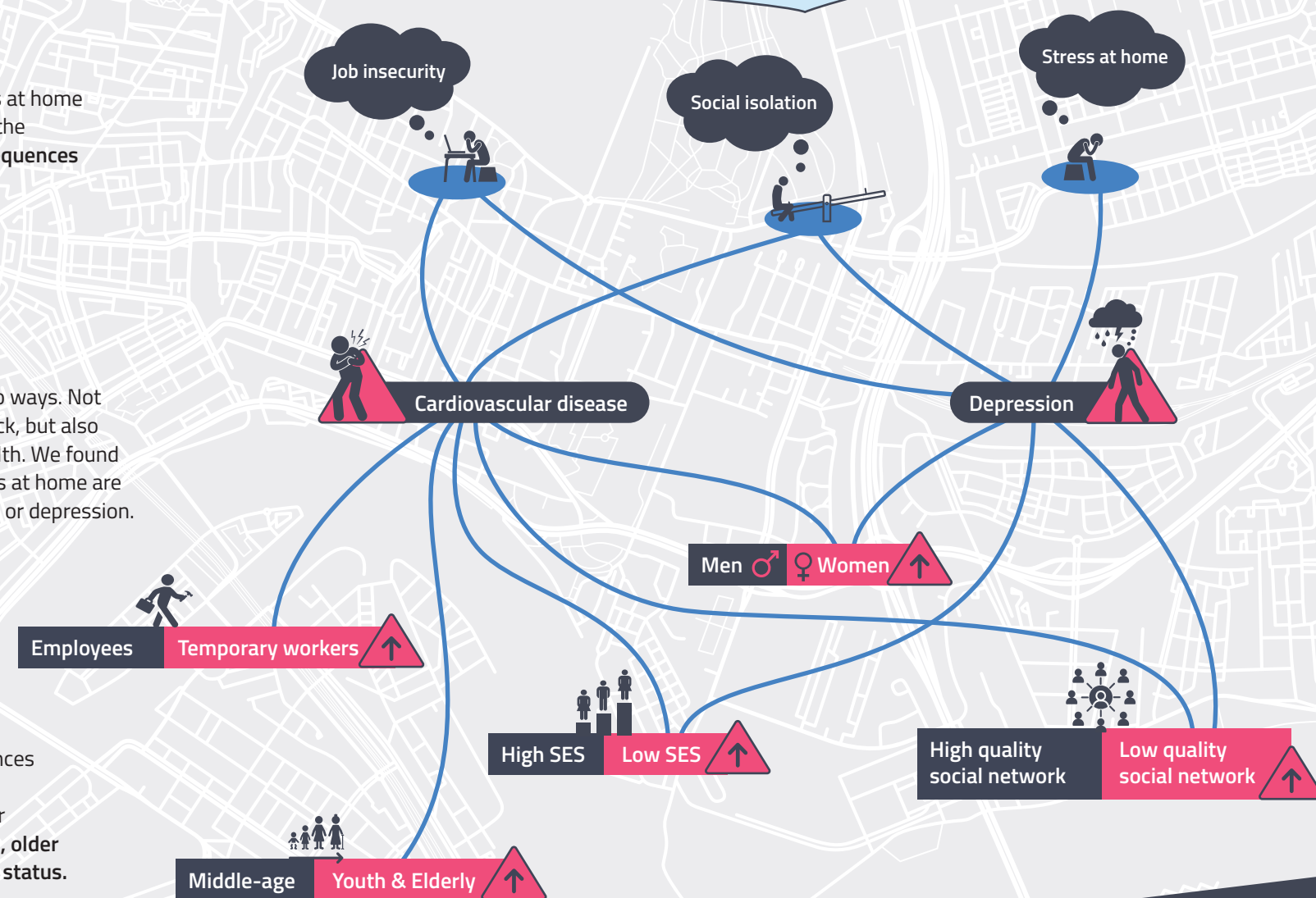
Lockdown policies have limited the number of visitors at home and closed down restaurants and schools to prevent the spread of the virus. This came with unintended consequences as social isolation and worrying about losing jobs.

## Adverse effects on health

Health was affected during the COVID-19 crisis in two ways. Not only would an infection with the virus make people sick, but also lockdown policies had negative consequences on health. We found evidence that job insecurity, social isolation and stress at home are associated with higher risks of cardiovascular disease or depression.

## Some people are at higher risk

Some people will be more impacted by the consequences of policies than others, depending on several of their characteristics. For example, the risk of cardiovascular disease or depression may differ for men and women, older as compared to younger adults, or by socioeconomic status.



## Consider the health effects of all policies

The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that all policies have an impact on our health, in positive and negative ways, but not everyone is affected equally. To prevent unfair or avoidable differences, it is key to bring health into all policy areas and to design policies that take into account differences between groups. This strategy can be used to recover from the current crisis, but also to tackle other public health challenges of our times.

ES de Jong, F Vargas Lopes, W Jansen, FJ van Lenthe, J Oude Groeniger, MA Beenackers, FJM Mölenberg (2021). Promoting better health for all people in times of crisis. Rotterdam: Erasmus MC.

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