

# The impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of older adults in Britain

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## Hypothesised impact of shielding and lockdown

**Stay at home:** Governments around the world have been strongly urging older people to stay at home for an extended period of time in self-isolation (“shielding”), to reduce their risk of infection.

However, older people are often dependent on the **support** from communities and carers in maintaining their daily routines, staying active, and access to essentials of daily living such as healthy food, personal care items and medications.

**Physical distancing** restrictions limits

- the activities older adults can engage in;
- Results in loss of freedom;
- Reduces social engagement, including access to even the closest family members.

Many older adults do not have easy access to **digital platforms and virtual communication** methods.

Consequently, physical distancing measures are likely to result in **lower wellbeing** and **greater social isolation and isolation** among older adults.

# Media reports of impact of pandemic lockdown on the wellbeing of older adults

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**'It's very lonely': older people's fears of extended lockdown**

Many over 70s are worried about health risks and frustrations of a longer period of isolation

- Coronavirus - latest updates
- See all our coronavirus coverage

Mattha Busby  
Tue 28 Apr 2020 17:41 BST

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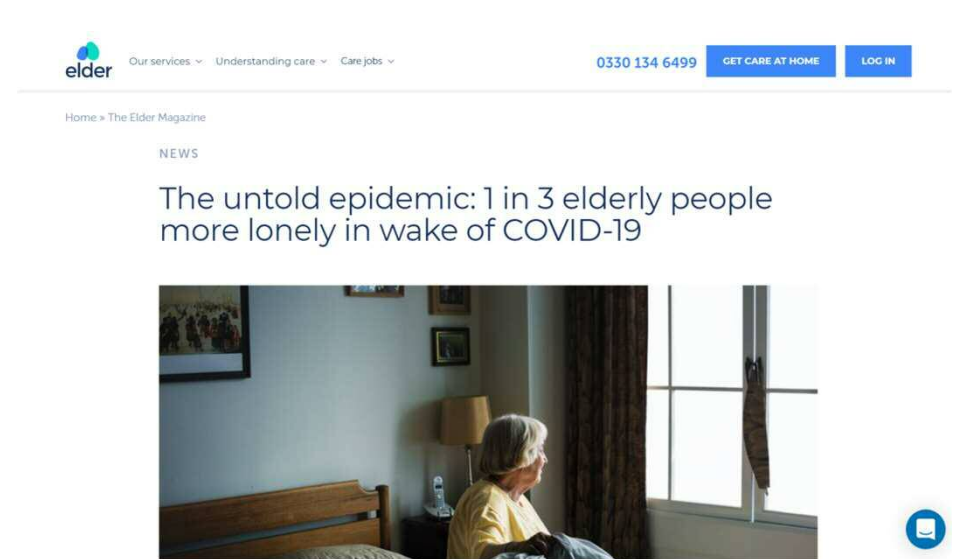
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Survey by Elder magazine: <https://www.elder.org/the-elder/>

Survey of 500 people over the age of 70 in the last two weeks of April.

- over half less likely to be in any contact with family
- three times more likely to fear being left alone.
- with over a quarter finding getting groceries this more challenging than before.
- 28% of respondents aren't confident with using digital technology.
- 1 in 5 of the over 70s are speaking family or friends less than fortnightly.



The screenshot shows the website for 'elder'. The top navigation bar includes the 'elder' logo, a menu with 'Our services', 'Understanding care', and 'Care jobs', a phone number '0330 134 6499', and buttons for 'GET CARE AT HOME' and 'LOG IN'. Below the navigation, the breadcrumb 'Home > The Elder Magazine' is visible. The main content area is titled 'NEWS' and features the headline 'The untold epidemic: 1 in 3 elderly people more lonely in wake of COVID-19'. Below the headline is a photograph of an elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing a yellow top, sitting on a bed and looking out a window. A small blue circular icon with a white envelope symbol is located in the bottom right corner of the image area.

## **Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (Covid-19 module)**

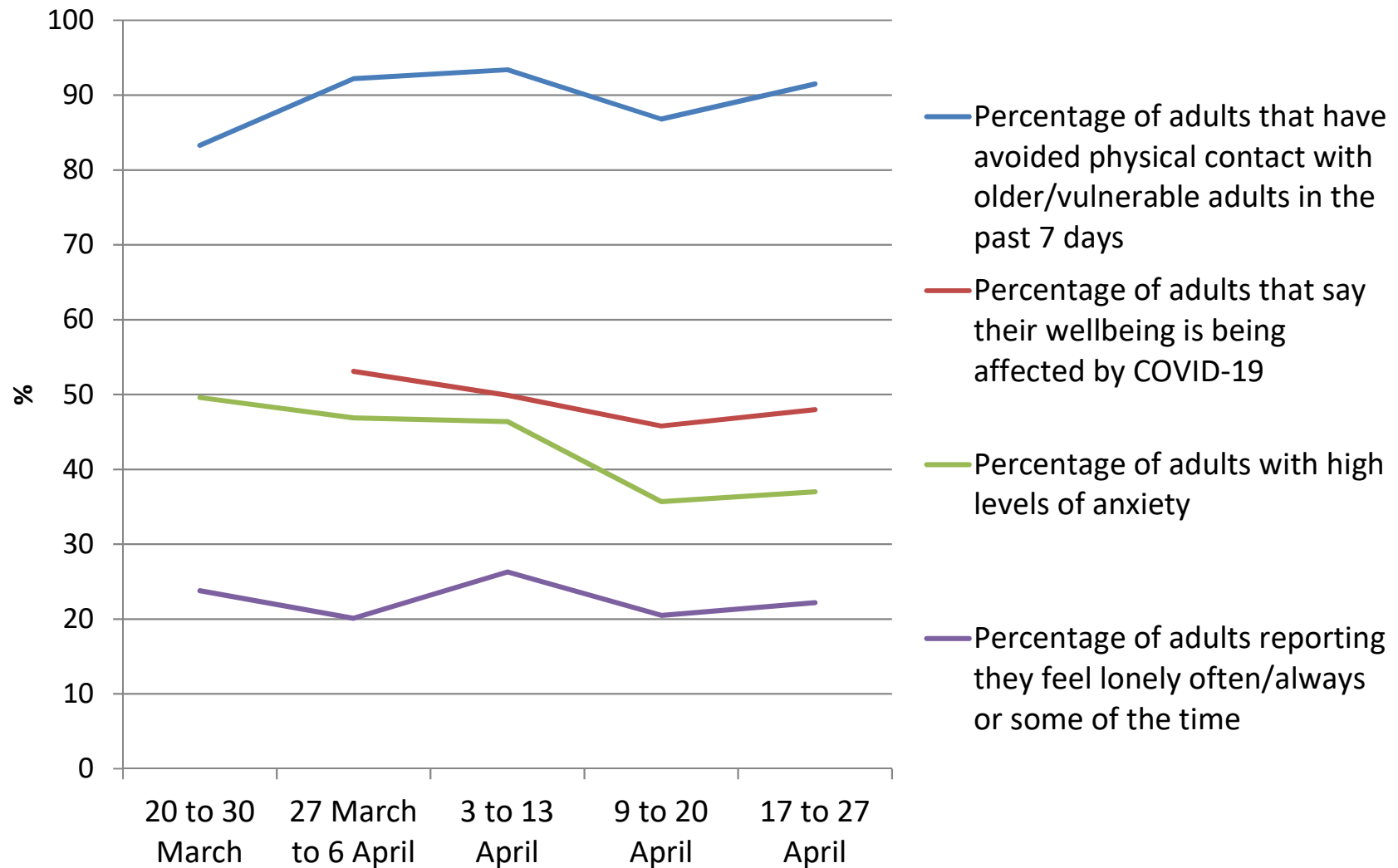
Coverage: adults aged 16 years and over living in Great Britain.

Sample: 1,320 respondents

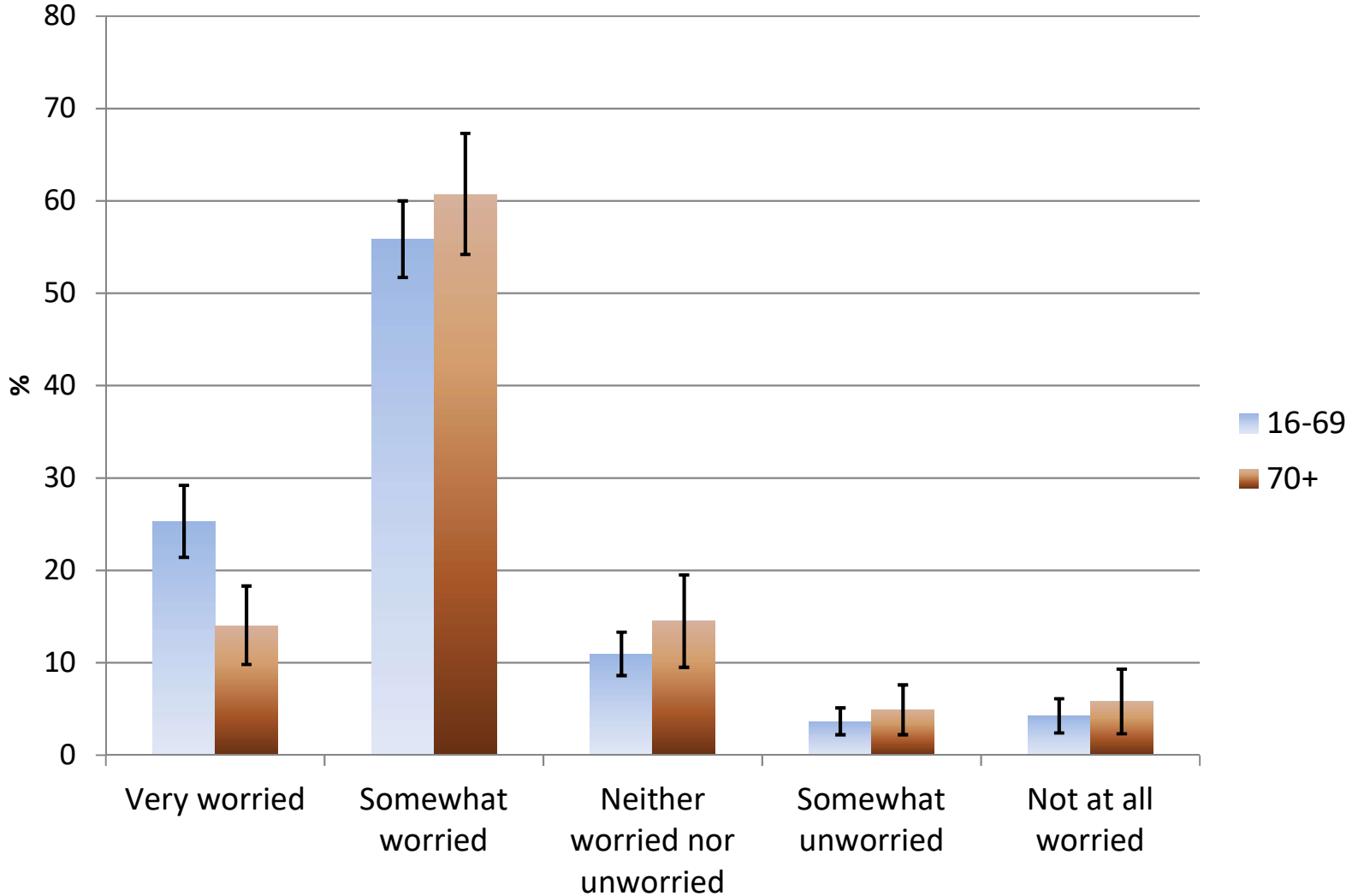
Weighting: takes account survey design and non-response to make the survey representative of the population

Mode: From 17th April onwards- online and via the telephone, prior to this it was online only.

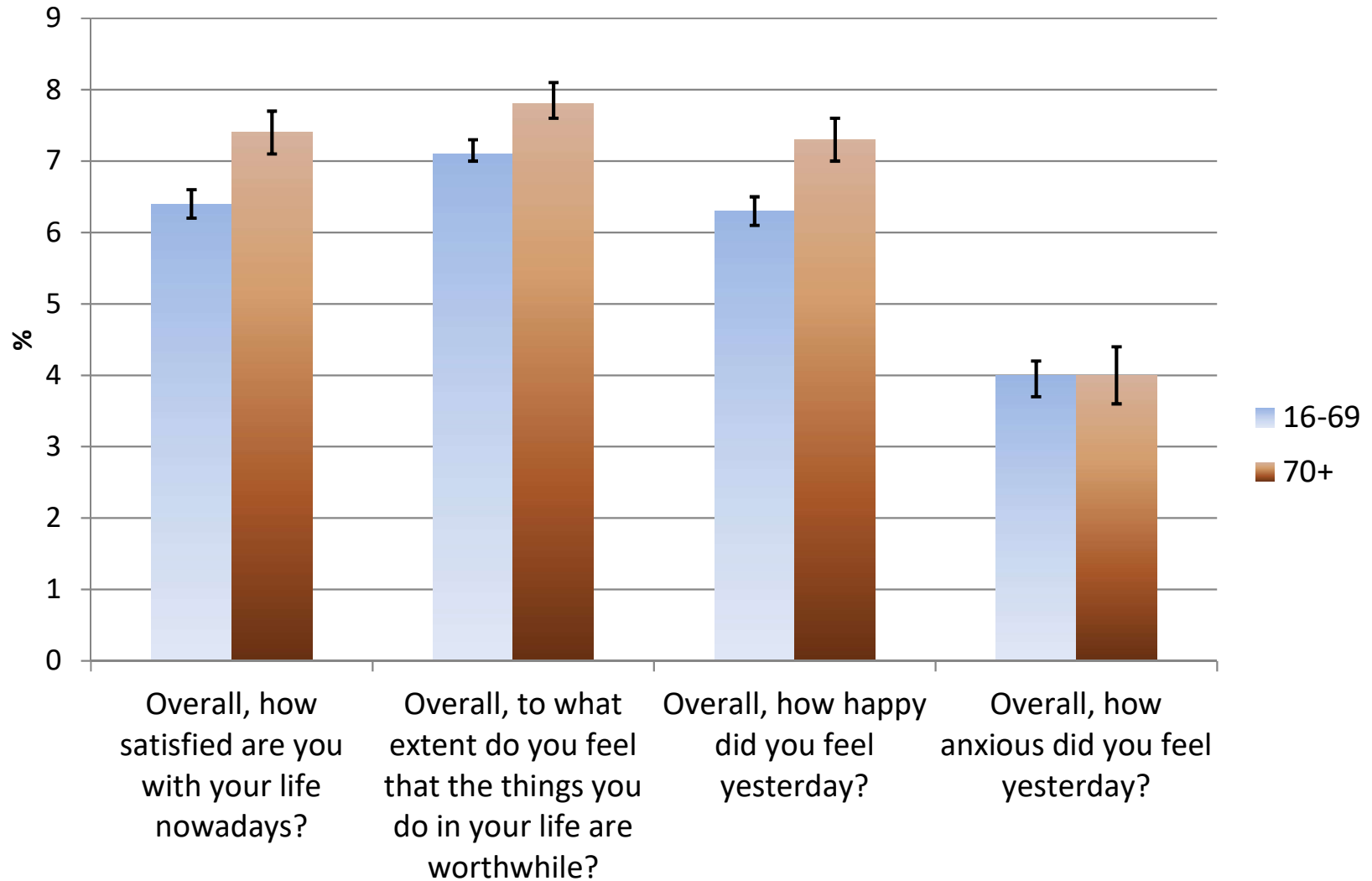
# Trends on headline indicators: Opinion & Lifestyles Survey COVID-19 module



# How worried or unworried are you about the effect that Coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on your life right now?

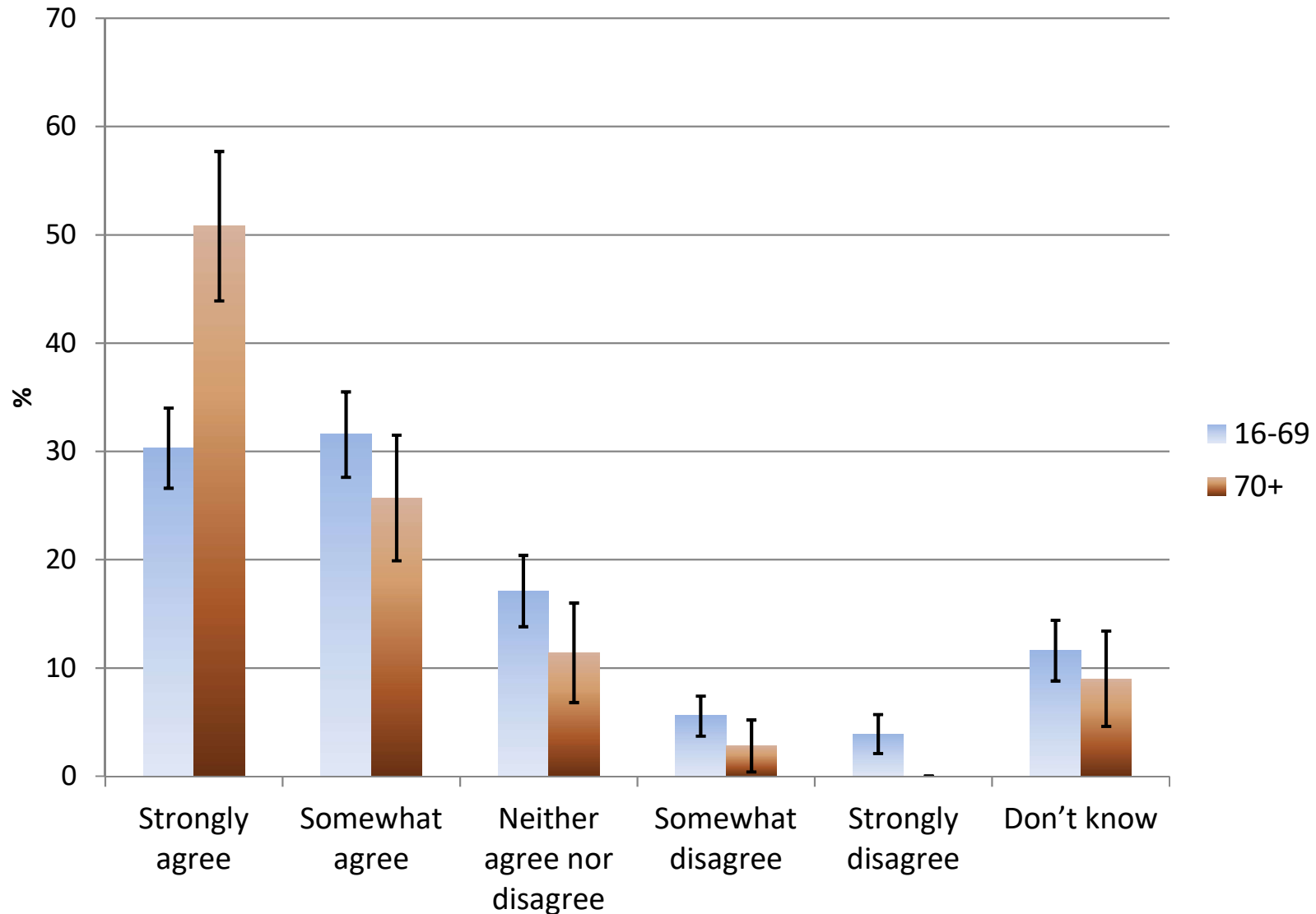


# ONS personal well-being questions

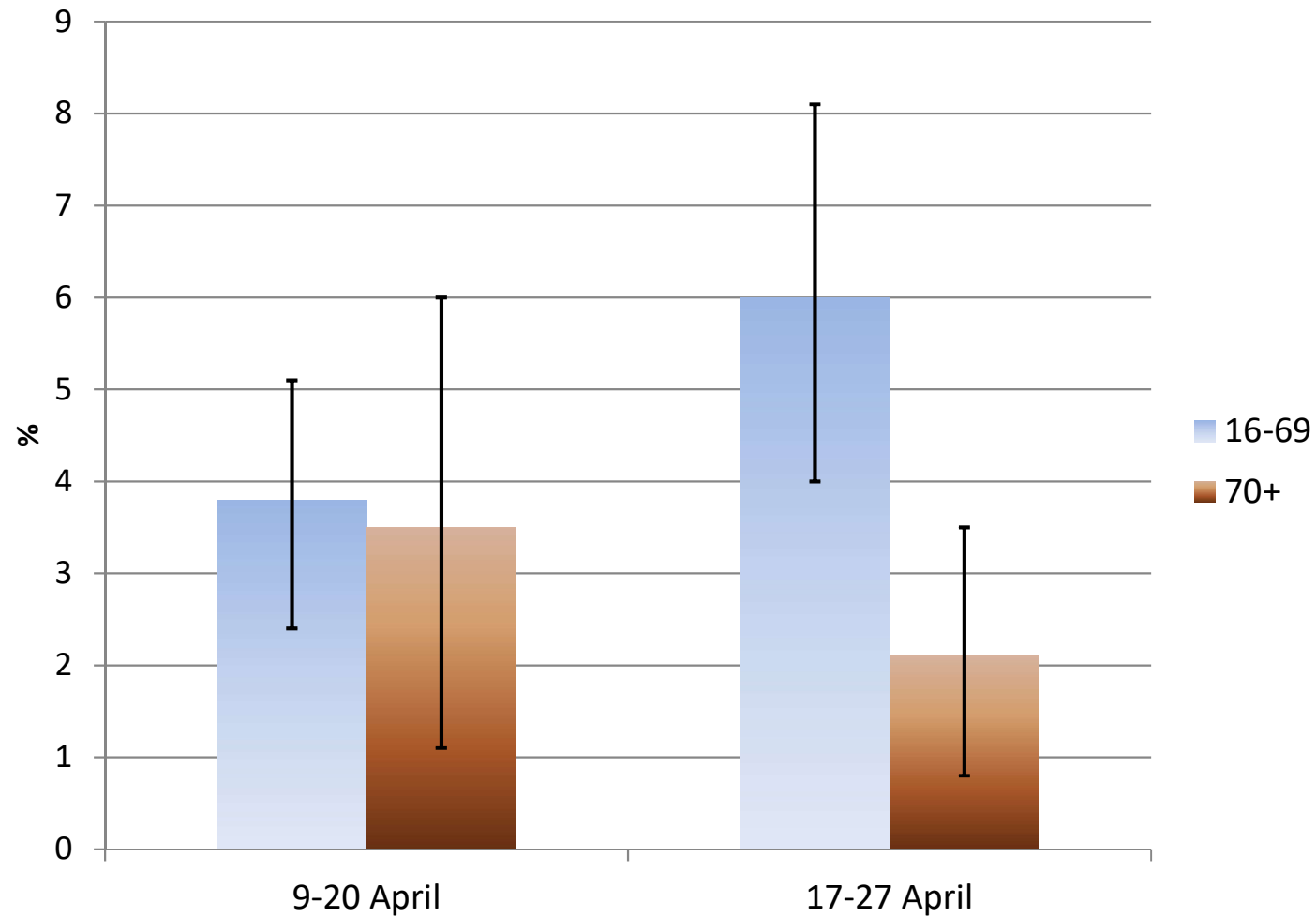




# If I need help, other local community members would support me during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak



## Percentage (%) who are feeling lonely often or always



# Discussion

- Older adult's wellbeing indicators in GB are better than younger adults (aged under 70 years)
- Some suggestion of improved wellbeing of older adults as lockdown progresses
- Be wary of media reports and poorly conducted surveys