



# COVID-19, time to oneself, and loneliness: Creativity as a resource

Theresa Pauly<sup>1</sup>, Li Chu<sup>2</sup>, Elizabeth Zambrano<sup>3</sup>, Denis Gerstorff<sup>4</sup>, & Christiane Hoppmann<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universität Zürich; <sup>2</sup>Stanford University; <sup>3</sup>The University of British Columbia; <sup>4</sup>Humboldt University Berlin

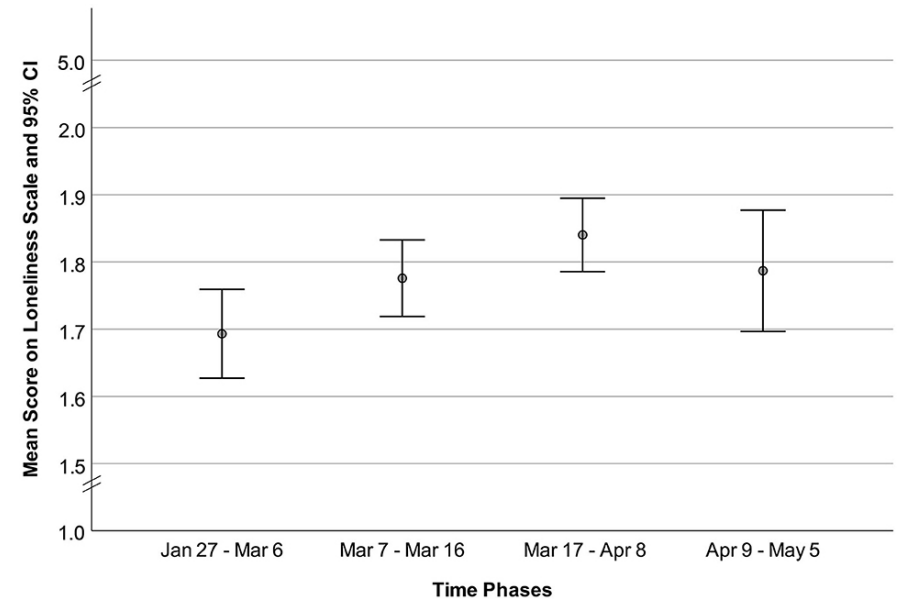
## Time to oneself during COVID-19



- Loneliness → serious mental and physical health consequences (Leigh-Hunt et al., 2017; Menec et al., 2020)

## Time to oneself, social isolation, and loneliness in old age

- Representative survey of 1,990 adults aged 65+ living in Switzerland (Seifert & Hassler, 2021)
  - Risk factors: living alone, having no children, having no good contact with neighbors
- Time use survey (Lam & García-Román, 2020)
  - 65-74 years: 7.5hrs alone/day; 10% all day alone
  - > 85 years: 8.5 hrs alone/day, 20% all day alone



## Everyday Creativity as a Resource

- Time alone need not be negative (Lay et al., 2019; Lay et al., 2020; Pauly et al., 2017; Pauly et al., 2018)
- Important benefits of alone time (Ost Mor et al., 2020; Thomas & Azmitia, 2019)
- Everyday creativity = original and meaningful acts that individuals perform in their ordinary lives (Cohen, 2006; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009)



## Hypotheses

Individuals feel lonelier on days when they have more time to oneself than usual

Everyday creativity  
moderates the time to  
oneself-loneliness link



## Methods



### Sample and design

- Study period: April to August 2020
- 126 Canadian adults aged 18-84 years
- 77% female; 74% White; 75% at least some college
- Online questionnaire
- 10-day daily diary



### Measures

Time to oneself: yes/no (yes = 88% of days), duration ( $M = 4.5$  hrs,  $SD = 4.1$ ), feeling bothered by it ( $M = 12.9$ ,  $SD = 21.0$ ; 0-100)

Everyday creativity: “Overall, how creative were you today? Creativity includes coming up with novel or original ideas; expressing oneself in an original and useful way; or spending time doing artistic activities (art, music, painting, writing, etc).” ( $M = 36.2$ ,  $SD = 17.6$ , 0-100)

Loneliness: “How lonely did you feel today?” ( $M = 25.4$ ,  $SD = 24.1$ , 0-100)

Covariates: Gender, age, relationship status, study day, date of participation, average day-level predictors



## Analytical Approach

Multi-level models in R (lme4 package; Bates et al., 2015)

$$\text{Loneliness}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} \text{DayOfStudy}_{ij} + \beta_{2j} \text{DailyTimeToOneself}_{ij} + \beta_{3j} \text{EverydayCreativity}_{ij} + e_{ij}$$

Day level

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{ParticipationDate}_j + \gamma_{02} \text{Age}_j + \gamma_{03} \text{AgeSquared}_j + \gamma_{04} \text{Gender}_j + \gamma_{05} \text{RelationshipStatus}_j + \gamma_{06} \\ \text{Person-averageTimeToOneself}_j + \gamma_{07} \text{Person-averageCreativity}_j + u_{0j}$$

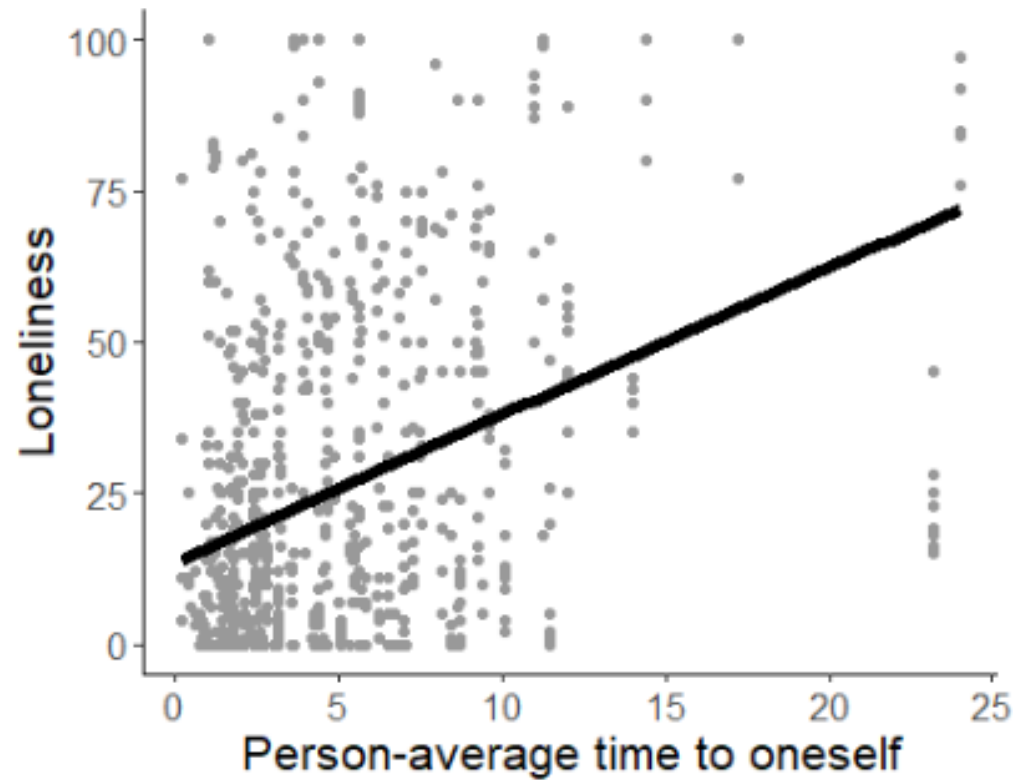
$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + u_{1j}$$

$$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + u_{2j}$$

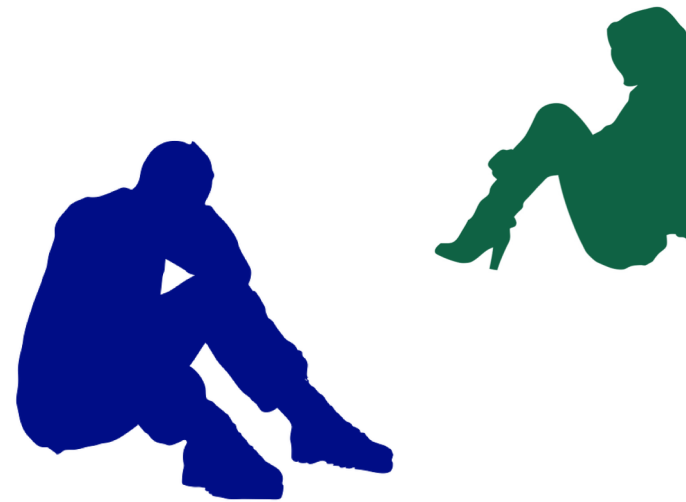
$$\beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30} + u_{3j}$$

Person level

## Higher overall alone time is associated with higher average loneliness



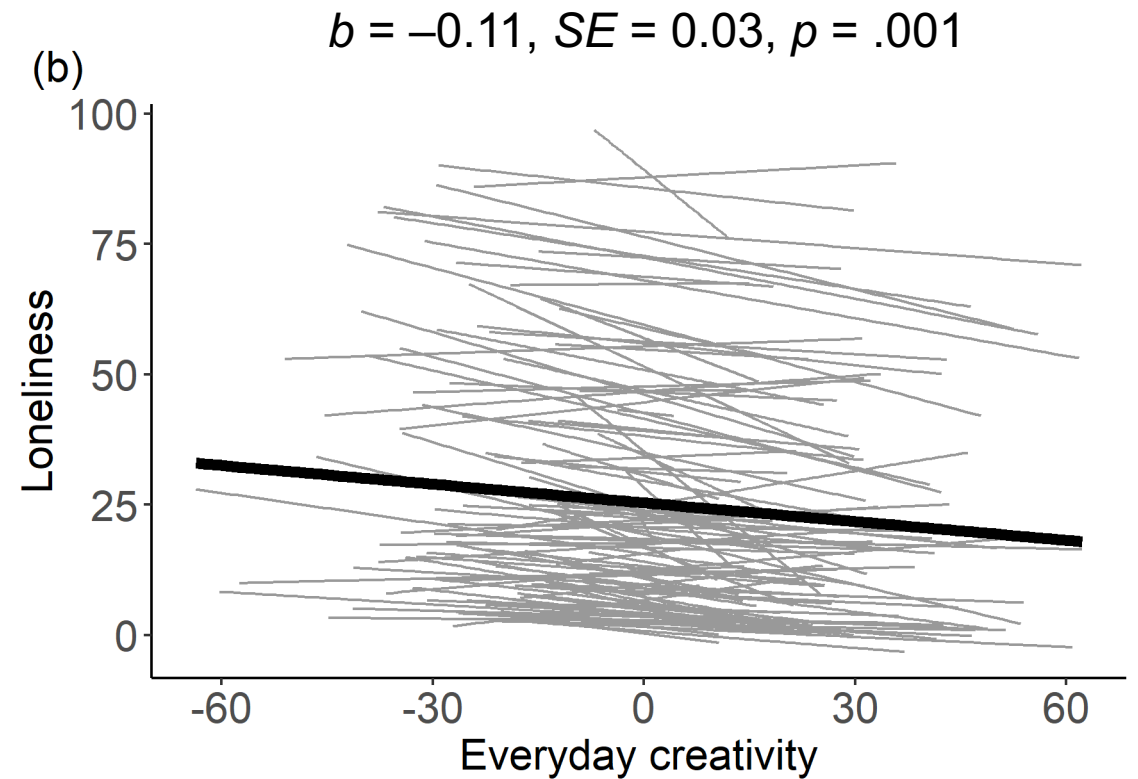
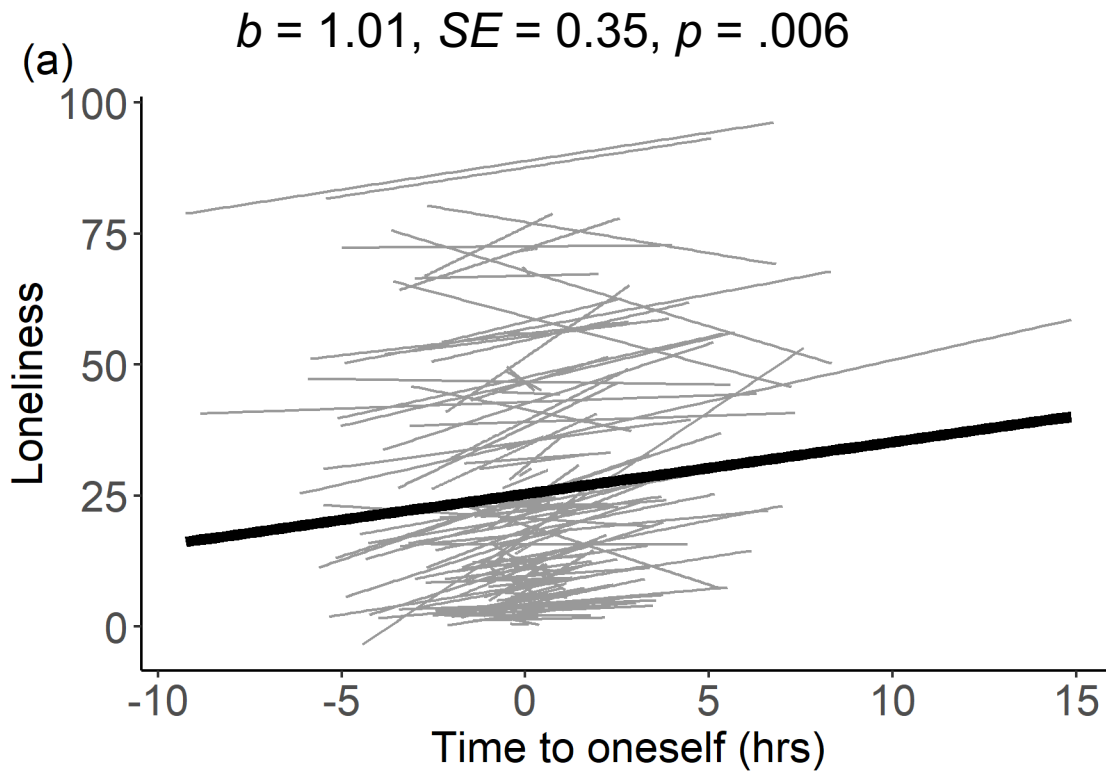
$$b = 1.90, SE = 0.53, p < .001$$



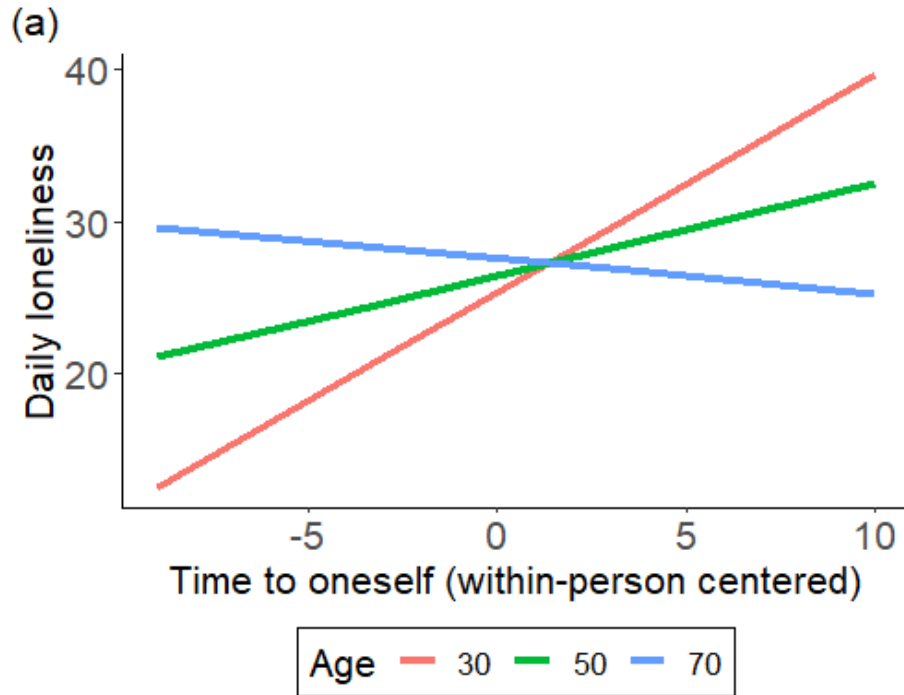




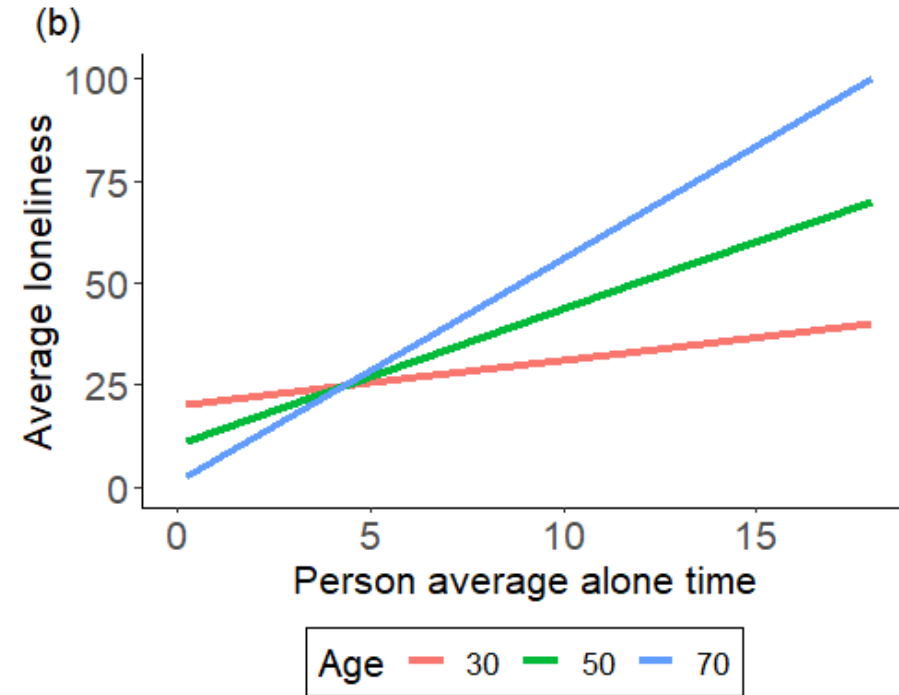
## Time to oneself ↑ Loneliness; everyday creativity ↓ Loneliness



## Within- and between-person associations were moderated by age



Older age: weaker association between daily time to oneself and loneliness



Older age: stronger association between person-average alone time and loneliness

## Discussion

*Everyday creativity was common! (M = 36/100)*



- Feelings of engagement with life and flow (Cohen, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013)
- Appraisals of alone time (Rodriguez et al., 2020)
- Preventing rumination (Lay et al., 2019)



- Denser scheduling of questionnaires → time-ordered associations
- Other samples
- Types & duration of creative activities



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Research Report

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Theresa Pauly, PhD,<sup>1,•</sup> Li Chu, PhD,<sup>2,•</sup> Elizabeth Zambrano, BA,<sup>3,•</sup> Denis Gerstorf, PhD,<sup>4,•</sup> and Christiane A. Hoppmann, PhD<sup>3,5,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland. <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Stanford University, California, USA. <sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. <sup>4</sup>Department of Psychology, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. <sup>5</sup>Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

\*Address correspondence to: Christiane A. Hoppmann, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, 2136 West Mall, Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1Z4, Canada. E-mail: [choppmann@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:choppmann@psych.ubc.ca)

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Theresa Pauly  
[theresa.pauly@psychologie.uzh.ch](mailto:theresa.pauly@psychologie.uzh.ch)



Department of Psychology,  
University of Zurich,  
Binzmühlestr. 14, 8050 Zürich



@TheresaPau1y