

**Video games like Among Us and Fall Guys have become increasingly popular with the national lockdown and introduction of the tier system. At the same time, some claim this to be a negative thing; many others believe it to be a form of salvation for those suffering the mental health pitfalls of legally mandated isolation.**

The sheer number of 'coveidogamers' has increased drastically since the government introduced the first lockdown rules; online gaming has increased by 63% in the UK alone. Among Us, a relatively inexpensive Cluedo-style online game for 4 – 10 players by indie game studio Innersloth, has seen a significant boost in its player base, with downloads resting at 1 million back in May 2019, jumping up to a massive 60 million downloads by the beginning of October 2020 and growing steadily.

Second-year Graphics design student Michael Chapman told this reporter that gaming more during lockdown "nearly makes up for the fact that I'm not seeing my mates so often" and stated, "having a laugh in the voice chat with my friend group whilst playing Among Us or Call of Duty with them has helped me mentally much more than just sitting in my room doing nothing".

Second-year financial Mathematics student Sam Currell agrees with this sentiment. Mr Currell told this reporter, "I'm from Cornwall; when I'm in lockdown at uni, the fact that I'm so far from my family builds on to the fact that I can't even see my friends, so playing games of Fall Guys or Among us with my mates really helps my mental health.'

Sally Ransome, a parent living in the tier 4 lands of Essex, told this reporter that she thinks the massive increase in gaming may not be such a good thing. Ms Ransome stated, "The sheer increase I've seen in my son's time on computer games can't be good for him nor anyone; going outside and being active, even by yourself, will always be what I'd recommend for helping your mental health, that or reading a book."

A study by Oxford University scientists, which studied thousands of players of Plants vs. Zombies and Animal Crossing, found that gaming during lockdown for a few hours can, in fact, help mental health and that those who had played fewer hours reported more negative results of mental well-being.

Whilst online gaming can be an addiction, with the mainly increasing cases of negative mental health states due to isolation caused by Covid lockdown procedures, it remains one of the best ways to socialise with friends without the risk of contracting the virus.