

The impact of the COVID pandemic on pet adoption

To identify the impact of the COVID pandemic and on pet adoption, we studied the **actual data** from several shelters in the area of Catalonia, Spain. We have split the analysis in 3 time periods:

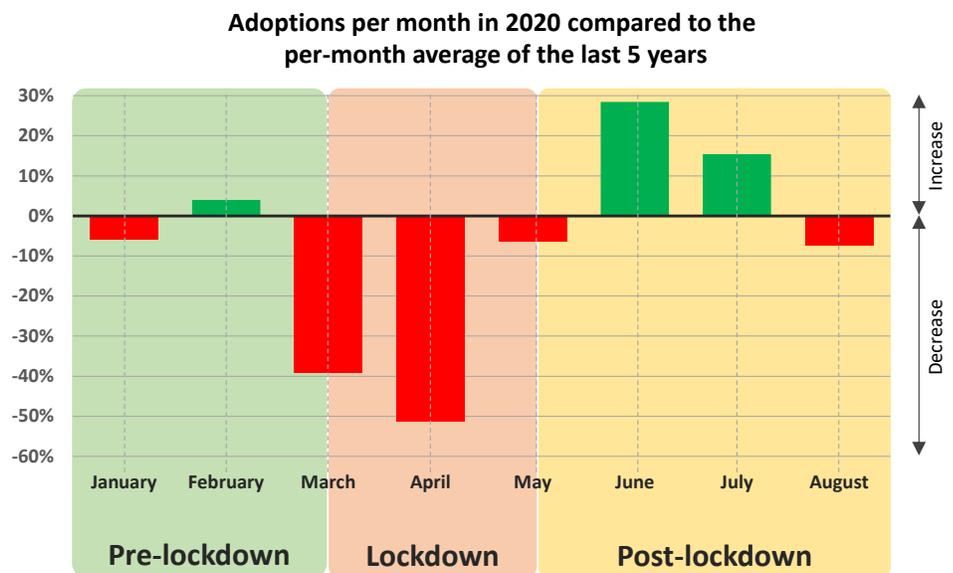
- **Pre-lockdown:** During January and February of 2020 the situation was quite normal. The number of COVID infections was very low among the local population and practically no preventive measurements were taken.
- **Lockdown:** The lockdown lasted for two months, from the 3rd week of March, to mid-May 2020. During this period, shelters were operating with restrictions and the mobility limitations did not allow any visits to the shelters.
- **Post-lockdown:** The lockdown ended in mid-May and since then, the situation is little by little returning to normality.

We compare each month, to the corresponding month for the last five years and present the increase/decrease in the adoptions (positive numbers correspond to increase whereas negative numbers to decrease). For each month we calculated:

$$Ratio_x = \frac{Adoptions\ in\ month\ X\ in\ 2020}{average(Adoptions\ in\ month\ X\ from\ 2015\ to\ 2019)} - 1$$

The results are shown in the Figure that follows.

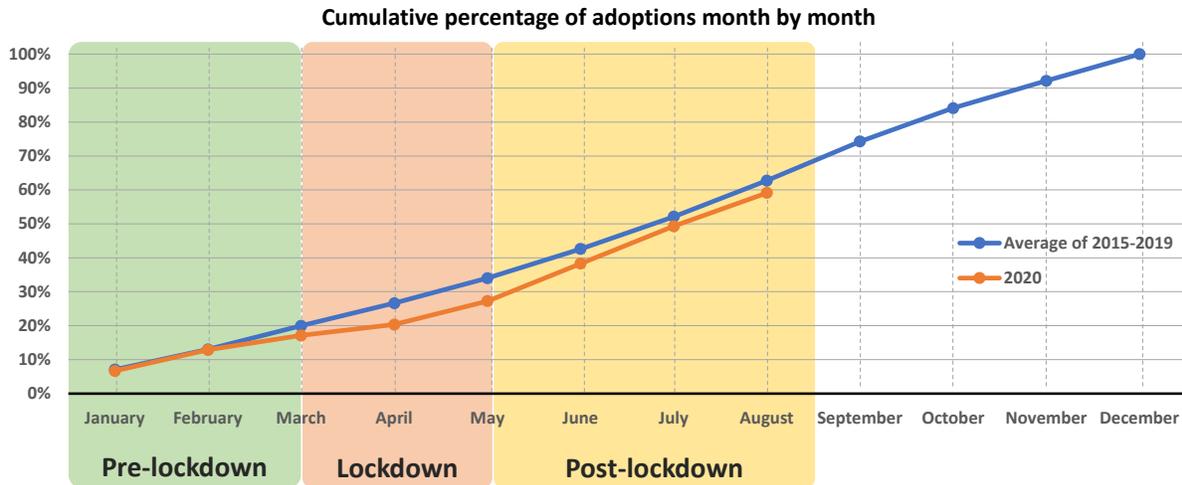
- **Pre-lockdown:** The months of the pre-lockdown period are within the range of normal variation between years.
- **Lockdown:** In the lockdown, the number of adoptions dropped significantly up to 50%. The mobility restrictions made it very difficult for adoptions to take place. Shelters had to find new ways to deliver the animals to their homes which, typically took much longer compared to the ordinary process.
- **Post-lock down:** The first month after the lockdown, June, presents an increase in the number of adoptions of 28%. This increase is 15% for July whereas August is in the range of normal variation between years. The increase in adoptions in the period immediately after the lockdown, is mostly related to “delayed adoptions”, that is the adoptions that could not be completed due to the lockdown.



This temporary deficit in adoptions during the months of the lockdown, can be viewed more clearly in the analysis that follows. The chart presents the cumulative percentage of adoptions completed each month. The blue line represents

this metric for the years 2015-2019. For example, for 2015-2019, an 8% of the annual adoptions was completed in January, a 12% until February, a 20% until March etc. The orange line represents the same metric for 2020.

In the months prior to the lockdown, 2020 follows the same trends as the previous years. During the lockdown, the number of adoptions decreased creating a gap in the order of 10%. After the lockdown, this deficit started decreasing and was just a 4% in August.



Conclusions

The COVID pandemic has affected the normal operation of the shelters. During the lockdown, the adoptions have decreased by a 50%. In the months after the lift of the restrictions, these delayed adoptions started completing and the situation is progressively reaching its normal state.