
An empirical assessment of worry about microplastics among the Norwegian public

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Abstract

The current presentation reports from an empirical study that aims to investigate worry about microplastics and its related factors. For this purpose, we asked an online sample ($N = 699$) of Norwegian adults about their familiarity with and their worry about microplastics. Additionally, respondents answered survey questions pertaining to further risk perception components. Respondents reported to be both familiar with and to be worried about microplastics. Microplastics were judged as being moderately known and somewhat uncontrollable. Respondents did not view microplastics as very threatening on a personal level, but they viewed microplastics as very threatening to humankind, and even more so to plants and animals. Initial regression analysis showed that women and older age groups indicated higher worry about microplastics than men and younger age groups, respectively. Higher worry was also related to endorsing self-transcendence over self-enhancement values. However, when risk perception components were added to the model, socio-demographics and personal values no longer showed a significant association with worry. The preliminary findings from this study address existing knowledge gaps in the literature and may shed further light on how worry about microplastics relates to individual risk perception.

Keywords: microplastics, familiarity, worry, risk perception, personal values

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