COVID-19: impact on mental health

 4th September 2020

**Title:** impact on mental health care and on mental health service users of the COVID-19 pandemic

Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology | 28th August 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has potential to disrupt and burden the mental health care system, and to magnify inequalities experienced by mental health service users.

We investigated staff reports regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in its early weeks on mental health care and mental health service users in the UK using a mixed methods online survey. Recruitment channels included professional associations and networks, charities, and social media. Quantitative findings were reported with descriptive statistics, and content analysis conducted for qualitative data.

2,180 staff from a range of sectors, professions, and specialties participated. Immediate infection control concerns were highly salient for inpatient staff, new ways of working for community staff. Multiple rapid adaptations and innovations in response to the crisis were described, especially remote working. This was cautiously welcomed but found successful in only some clinical situations. Staff had specific concerns about many groups of service users, including people whose conditions are exacerbated by pandemic anxieties and social disruptions; people experiencing loneliness, domestic abuse and family conflict; those unable to understand and follow social distancing requirements; and those who cannot engage with remote care.

This overview of staff concerns and experiences in the early COVID-19 pandemic suggests directions for further research and service development: we suggest that how to combine infection control and a therapeutic environment in hospital, and how to achieve effective and targeted tele-health implementation in the community, should be priorities. The limitations of our convenience sample must be noted.

Full paper: [Impact on mental health care and on mental health service users of the covid-19 pandemic: a mixed methods survey of UK mental health care staff.](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s00127-020-01927-4.pdf)

**TITLE**: Mental health and COVID-19

National Institute for Health Research | 2nd September 2020

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the constraints it has imposed on people is an issue of interest and concern to patients, service users, carers and health and social care professionals alike. In pandemic conditions it is likely that people’s existing mental health problems may get worse. Mental health may also decline because of social isolation, loss of employment, stress and health anxiety caused by the pandemic and the steps taken to control it.

This Collection brings together NIHR research on several aspects of mental health that are particularly relevant to the COVID-19 situation.

Full detail: [Mental health and COVID-19](https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/collection/mental-health-and-covid-19/)

**Title:** Returning to school after the coronavirus lockdown

Mental Health Foundation | 25th August 2020

The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown is an unprecedented situation in modern times. It is hard to gauge the full impact that the situation is having on children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing.

Pupils’ experiences of the lockdown period will have been very varied. For some, it will mostly have been a safe and enjoyable time. For others, it will have been challenging or traumatic. Schools and teachers are used to supporting their pupils through challenges that they face in life – the current situation will amplify those situations many times over.

This short guide aims to:

* Outline the scale of the challenge that schools and pupils are facing.
* Provide practical advice, activities and support.

Full detail: [Returning to school after the coronavirus lockdown](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown)

**Title:** Generation COVID-19. Building the case to protect young people’s future health

The Health Foundation | 30th August 2020

New analysis from the Health Foundation looks at emerging evidence on the pandemic’s impact on young people across the UK – one of the most affected groups.

The analysis found:

* one in four young people were not able to access the mental health support they sought during lockdown
* 60% of young people aged 16-29 felt concerned about lockdown's impact on their friendships, compared to just 34% of 30 to 59-year-olds

But the challenges experienced by young people haven't fallen evenly. The analysis shows:

• those from the lowest income households were the most likely to no longer be working or remain not working

• young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are more than twice as likely to have not been working since lockdown than their peers.

The Health Foundation suggests a national cross-government health inequalities strategy is needed to level up health outcomes and improve the nation's health. It is vital that young people – irrespective of their background – are placed at the heart of these plans.

Full detail: [Generation COVID-19. Building the case to protect young people’s future health](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Generation%20COVID-19.pdf)

**Title:** Covid-related anxiety and distress in the workplace

 The British Psychological Society | 3rd September 2020

As Covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased, and in some cases temporarily re-introduced, people will experience many different emotional responses to what is happening.

Each employee will have their own specific concerns regarding their work or personal experience.

How individual employees and employers deal with these feelings can affect their transition into new ways of working, as well as their wellbeing and performance in the immediate and long term.

This document offers practical steps and ideas for creating healthy, sustainable working conditions.

Full document: [Covid-related anxiety and distress in the workplace](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Covid-related%20anxiety%20and%20stress%20in%20the%20workplace.pdf)

**Title**: Mental health services and Covid-19: Policy briefing

Centre for Mental Health | 2nd September 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the lives of people with mental health difficulties and on mental health services. This briefing identifies key themes from a survey of mental health service staff in the UK and a review of studies across the world.

The briefing makes recommendations based on the studies’ findings. These include investment in peer support and digital services as well as learning from the experience of the lockdown to inform future emergency situations.

Full document: [Mental health services and Covid-19: Policy briefing](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/publication/download/CentreforMH_MentalHealthServicesAndCovid%20_PRU_PolicyBriefing.pdf)

**Title:** Prevalence of Depression Symptoms in US Adults Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

JAMA Network Open | 2nd September 2020

Question: What is the burden of depression symptoms among US adults during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic compared with before COVID-19, and what are the risk factors associated with depression symptoms?

Findings:  In this survey study that included 1441 respondents from during the COVID-19 pandemic and 5065 respondents from before the pandemic, depression symptom prevalence was more than 3-fold higher during the COVID-19 pandemic than before. Lower income, having less than $5000 in savings, and having exposure to more stressors were associated with greater risk of depression symptoms during COVID-19.

Meaning: These findings suggest that there is a high burden of depression symptoms in the US associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and that this burden falls disproportionately on individuals who are already at increased risk.

Full document: [Prevalence of depression symptoms in us adults before and during the covid-19 pandemic](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2770146)

**Title:** Long-stay mental health care institutions and the COVID-19 crisis: identifying and addressing the challenges for better response and preparedness

World Health Organisation |

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by the Mental Health Programme, WHO Regional Office for Europe, with 169 long-stay institutions in the WHO European Region to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on services, staff, service users and residents with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.

Specific themes are how well the institutions were prepared for the crisis by authorities, the quality of communications within institutions and with service users and family members, the availability of personal protective equipment and challenges to the delivery of care, and the impact of the risk of infection and protective measures on staff and residents.

The survey results are presented in four thematic sections through the lens of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The report also presents some preliminary key considerations.

Full report: [Long-stay mental health care institutions and the COVID-19 crisis: identifying and addressing the challenges for better response and preparedness](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/333964/WHO-EURO-2020-40745-54930-eng.pdf)

**Title:** Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations

Psychiatry Research | Volume 293, November 2020

Background: COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown has brought about a sense of fear and anxiety around the globe. This phenomenon has led to short term as well as long term psychosocial and mental health implications for children and adolescents. The quality and magnitude of impact on minors is determined by many vulnerability factors like developmental age, educational status, pre-existing mental health condition, being economically underprivileged or being quarantined due to infection or fear of infection.

Aims: This paper is aimed at narratively reviewing various articles related to mental-health aspects of children and adolescents impacted by COVID-19 pandemic and enforcement of nationwide or regional lockdowns to prevent further spread of infection.

Methodology: We conducted a review and collected articles and advisories on mental health aspects of children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic. We selected articles and thematically organized them. We put up their major findings under the thematic areas of impact on young children, school and college going students, children and adolescents with mental health challenges, economically underprivileged children, impact due to quarantine and separation from parents and the advisories of international organizations. We have also provided recommendations to the above.

Conclusion: There is a pressing need for planning longitudinal and developmental studies, and implementing evidence based elaborative plan of action to cater to the psycho social and mental health needs of the vulnerable children and adolescents during pandemic as well as post pandemic. There is a need to ameliorate children and adolescents’ access to mental health support services geared towards providing measures for developing healthy coping mechanisms during the current crisis. For this innovative child and adolescent mental health policies policies with direct and digital collaborative networks of psychiatrists, psychologists, paediatricians, and community volunteers are deemed necessary.

Full paper: [Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations](https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S016517812031725X?token=73F0F87E176ADC49D0E93B2AAAA2763E8AEFB616DDE78692454EAD3AF0D780D09430CE29E20D8DB9C7452A94BBAD2D34)

**Title**: The association between COVID-19 WHO non-recommended behaviors with psychological distress in the UK population

Journal of Psychiatric Research | published online 20 August 2020

The novel Coronavirus COVID-19 has led the WHO to warn of the risk of potentially disruptive behaviours. However, the association between maladaptive actions and mental health has not been empirically assessed.

A national study of 1293 participants from the UK recorded location, underlying medical conditions and non-recommended behaviours along with psychological distress. Elevated psychological distress was associated with living in London, underlying medical conditions and practicing non-recommended behaviours.

Findings suggest that medical authorities should address the association between psychological distress and adoption of potentially maladaptive behaviours.

Full paper: [The association between COVID-19 WHO non-recommended behaviors with psychological distress in the UK population: A preliminary study](https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0022395620309237?token=13B0408DDD5FBE3CCD11AD6F0898FC1C07924D1525CBFAC88487716C89F690E7030F1F02062D49D1E24D51C85EF470C9)

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