COVID-19: impact on mental health

20th November 2020

**Title:** The Impact of Infectious Disease-Related Public Health Emergencies on Suicide, Suicidal Behavior, and Suicidal Thoughts

Crisis | 16th October 2020

Infectious disease-related public health emergencies (epidemics) may increase suicide risk, and high-quality evidence is needed to guide an international response.

The authors of this systematic review investigated the potential impacts of epidemics on suicide-related outcomes. Eight primary papers were included, examining the effects of five epidemics on suicide-related outcomes.

There was evidence of increased suicide rates among older adults during SARS and in the year following the epidemic (possibly motivated by social disconnectedness, fears of virus infection, and concern about burdening others) and associations between SARS/Ebola exposure and increased suicide attempts. A preprint study reported associations between COVID-19 distress and past-month suicidal ideation.

Findings support an association between previous epidemics and increased risk of suicide-related outcomes. Research is needed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on suicide outcomes.

Full paper: [The impact of infectious disease-related public health emergencies on suicide, suicidal behavior, and suicidal thoughts](https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/pdf/10.1027/0227-5910/a000753)

**TITLE:** CONTAINING COVID: THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF A COVID-19 WARD IN AN ADULT PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

BJPsych Open | 12th November 2020

Background: As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic in the UK emerged and escalated, clinicians working in mental health in-patient facilities faced unique medical, psychiatric and staffing challenges in managing and containing the impact of the virus and, in the context of legislation, enforcing social distancing.

Aims: To describe (a) the steps taken by one mental health hospital to establish a COVID-19 isolation ward for adult psychiatric in-patients and (b) how staff addressed the challenges that emerged over the period March to June 2020.

Method: A descriptive study detailing the processes involved in changing the role of the ward and the measures taken to address the various challenges that arose. Brief clinical cases of two patients are included for illustrative purposes.

Results: We describe the achievements, lessons learned and outcomes of the process of repurposing a mental health triage ward into a COVID-19 isolation facility, including the impact on staff. Flexibility, rapid problem-solving and close teamwork were essential. Some of the changes made will be sustained on the ward in our primary role as a triage ward.

Conclusions: Although the challenges faced were difficult, the legacy they have left is that of a range of improvements in patient care and the working environment.

Full paper: [Containing COVID: the establishment and management of a COVID-19 ward in an adult psychiatric hospital](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/B561CE1373EC50773A60D6ACBE4D4818/S205647242000126Xa.pdf/containing_covid_the_establishment_and_management_of_a_covid19_ward_in_an_adult_psychiatric_hospital.pdf)

**Title:** Adaptation or Revolution: Telemental Health and Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nursing During COVID-19

Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association | 9th November 2020

This article describes the current COVID-19 crisis and the evolving mental health concerns associated with it, discuss how mental health practice has changed, and ways in which psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNPs) can adapt and prepare for the future.

The study found that the COVID-19 crisis is having far-reaching implications for mental health treatment and in particular for PMHNPs in practice settings. There have been widespread consequences of the containment measures used for the protection and mitigation of the disease. One such result has been the inability of patients to have face-to-face contact with their providers. The role of TMH has become increasingly important as an adaptation in professional practice.

Technology has rapidly transformed traditional practice due to the COVID-19 crisis and there is strong evidence that it is well accepted by patients and providers. It is incumbent on PMHNPs to embrace TMH and become educated on best practices and TMH services.

Full detail: [Adaptation or revolution: telemental health and advanced practice psychiatric nursing during covid-19](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1078390320970638)

**TITLE:** REAL-TIME SUICIDE MORTALITY DATA FROM POLICE REPORTS IN QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN INTERRUPTED TIME-SERIES ANALYSIS

The Lancet Psychiatry | 16th November 2020

Deaths by suicide can increase during infectious disease outbreaks. This study analysed suspected suicide rates in 2020 relative to 2015–19 to assess any early effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Queensland, Australia.

There does not yet appear to be an overall change in the suspected suicide rate in the 7 months since Queensland declared a public health emergency. Despite this, COVID-19 has contributed to some suspected suicides in Queensland. Ongoing community spread and increasing death rates of COVID-19, and its impact on national economies and mental health, reinforces the need for governments to maintain the monitoring and reporting of suicide mortality in real time.

Full paper: [Real-time suicide mortality data from police reports in Queensland, Australia, during the COVID-19 pandemic: an interrupted time-series analysis](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2820%2930435-1)

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