COVID-19: impact on mental health

23rd April 2021

**Title:** Eating Disorders Spectrum during COVID Pandemic: a systematic review

medRxiv | 18th April 2021

*This article is a preprint and has not been certified by peer review. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.*

Several data suggest that COVID-19 pandemic might exacerbate or trigger Eating Disorders (EDs). The aim of this paper was to summarize present literature on COVID pandemic and EDs.

The analysis revealed five main findings:

1) changes in physical activities routines were related to a worsening of preoccupation on weight/body shape

2) food access limitation during pandemic represented a risk factors for both triggering and exacerbating EDs

3) restriction in healthcare facilities contributed to increase anxiety levels and modifies treatment compliance

4) social isolation was related to symptoms’ exacerbation in EDs patients who are home-confined with family members

5) conflicts and difficulties in relationships with ‘no way out’ were maintenance factors for EDs symptoms, especially in adolescents and young adults.

The review concludes that theCOVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on EDs that might be triggered or worsened by the exceptional conditions deriving from COVID-19-related stress in predisposed subjects. Patients already affected by EDs experienced a worsening of their clinical conditions and related quality of life.

Full paper: [Eating Disorders Spectrum during COVID Pandemic: a systematic review](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.04.16.21255390v1.full.pdf)

**Title:** Mental health and social interactions of older people with physical disabilities in England during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Lancet Public Health | 21st April 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected mental health, psychological wellbeing, and social interactions. People with physical disabilities might be particularly likely to be negatively affected, but evidence is scarce. The aim of this paper was to evaluate the emotional and social experience of older people with physical disabilities during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic in England.

The authors foud that people with physical disability might be at particular risk for emotional distress, poor quality of life, and low wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the need for additional support and targeted mental health services.

Full article: [Mental health and social interactions of older people with physical disabilities in England during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2468-2667%2821%2900069-4)

See also: [Are older people with disabilities neglected in the COVID-19 pandemic?](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(21)00077-3/fulltext) | The Lancet Public Health

**Title:** Effects of a multi-faceted education and support programme on anxiety symptoms among people with systemic sclerosis and anxiety during COVID-19 (SPIN-CHAT)

The Lancet Rheumatology | 16th April 2021

No trials have tested multifaceted mental health interventions recommended by public health organisations during COVID-19. The objective of this trial was to evaluate the effect of the Scleroderma Patient-centered Intervention Network COVID-19 Home-isolation Activities Together (SPIN-CHAT) Program on anxiety symptoms and other mental health outcomes among people vulnerable during COVID-19 owing to a pre-existing medical condition.

The intervention did not significantly improve anxiety symptoms or other mental health outcomes post-intervention. However, anxiety and depression symptoms were significantly lower 6 weeks later, potentially capturing the time it took for new skills and social support between intervention participants to affect mental health. Multi-faceted interventions such as SPIN-CHAT have potential to address mental health needs in vulnerable groups during COVID-19, yet uncertainty remains about effectiveness.

Full article: [Effects of a multi-faceted education and support programme on anxiety symptoms among people with systemic sclerosis and anxiety during COVID-19 (SPIN-CHAT): a two-arm parallel, partially nested, randomised, controlled trial](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2665-9913%2821%2900060-6)

**Title:** Suicide in England in the COVID-19 pandemic: Early observational data from real time surveillance

The Lancet Regional Health – Europe | 20th April 2021

There have been concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic may lead to an increase in suicide. The coronial system in England is not suitable for timely monitoring of suicide because of the delay of several months before inquests are held.

This study used data from established systems of "real time surveillance" (RTS) of suspected suicides, in areas covering a total population of around 13 million, to test the hypothesis that the suicide rate rose after the first national lockdown began in England.

The authors did not find a rise in suicide rates in England in the months after the first national lockdown began in 2020, despite evidence of greater distress. However, a number of caveats apply. These are early figures and may change. Any effect of the pandemic may vary by population group or geographical area. The use of RTS in this way is new and further development is needed before it can provide full national data.

Full article[: Suicide in England in the COVID-19 pandemic: Early observational data from real time surveillance](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2666-7762%2821%2900087-9)

See also: [COVID-19 and suicide](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(21)00164-4/fulltext) | The Lancet Psychiatry [editorial]

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