COVID-19: impact on mental health

August 2021

**Title:** Predictors and rates of PTSD, depression and anxiety in UK frontline health and social care workers during COVID-19

European Journal of Psychotraumatology | The Mental Elf | 10th August 2021

Studies have shown that working in frontline healthcare roles during epidemics and pandemics was associated with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.

The objectives of this study were to identify demographic, work-related and other predictors for clinically significant PTSD, depression, and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic in UK frontline health and social care workers (HSCWs), and to compare rates of distress across different groups of HCSWs working in different roles and settings.

Nearly 58% of respondents met the threshold for a clinically significant disorder (PTSD = 22%; anxiety = 47%; depression = 47%), and symptom levels were high across occupational groups and settings.

This study identified predictors of clinically significant distress during COVID-19 and highlights the need for reliable access to PPE and further investigation of barriers to communication between managers and staff.

Full paper: [Predictors and rates of PTSD, depression and anxiety in UK frontline health and social care workers during COVID-19](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/20008198.2021.1882781)

Summary: [PTSD, anxiety and depression in UK frontline health care workers during COVID-19](https://www.nationalelfservice.net/mental-health/ptsd/covid-19-mental-health-healthcare-workers/) | The Mental Elf

**Title:** Coronavirus: the consequences for mental health.

Mind | July 2021

This research with almost 12,000 people found that those with mental health problems report an increase in the severity of challenges they're facing now and concerns about the future. The authors call for services to be ready for the increase in severity of people's mental health problems, and to take into account the trauma that people have experienced over the last year and how this might affect the support they need.

Full report: [Coronavirus: the consequences for mental health. The ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people with mental health problems across England and Wales](https://www.mind.org.uk/media/8962/the-consequences-of-coronavirus-for-mental-health-final-report.pdf)

Press release: [What has the impact of coronavirus been on mental health?](https://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you/coronavirus-research/)

**Title:** Interventions to address mental health issues in healthcare workers during infectious disease outbreaks: A systematic review

Journal of Psychiatric Research | The Mental Elf | 6th August 2021

The potential impact on the mental health of healthcare workers has been widely discussed during Covid-19. This review looked to understand the potential interventions to tackle mental health problems in healthcare workers, summarising interventions from previous disease outbreaks and reporting their effectiveness.

The review presents a variety of interventions to support the mental health of healthcare workers in pandemic disease outbreaks. Interventions ought to address the breadth of support that is required for staff, including informational support, equipment and supplies, organisational support approaches as well as emotional and psychological interventions.

Further detail: [Interventions to address mental health issues in healthcare workers during infectious disease outbreaks: A systematic review](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022395621000868?via%3Dihub)

Summary: [Mental health interventions for healthcare staff in infectious disease outbreaks](https://www.nationalelfservice.net/publication-types/systematic-review/mental-health-healthcare-staff/) | The Mental Elf

**Title:** Covid-19 Loneliness Fund: A process evaluation

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport | 12th August 2021

The £5m Loneliness Covid-19 Fund was launched in May 2020 to support nine national organisations working to tackle loneliness and build social connections to help them to continue and adapt their critical work during the pandemic. The National Centre for Social Research was appointed as evaluator for this fund.

This report presents the results of a process evaluation of the fund, to see how it supported the delivery and adaption of services aimed at addressing loneliness during Covid-19 restrictions.

Full report: [Covid-19 Loneliness Fund: A process evaluation](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1010052/Covid-19_Loneliness_Fund_Evaluation__accessible_version_.pdf)

**Title:** Impact of Covid-19 on older people’s mental and physical health: one year on

Age UK | 31st July 2021

This report finds that the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of some older people in early 2021 is so demonstrably severe that it raises big questions over whether they will be able to ‘bounce back’. The adverse effect may prove long lasting in many cases, or even irreversible, with big implications for the NHS and social care in the months and years to come.

Full report: [Impact of Covid-19 on older people’s mental and physical health: one year on](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health--wellbeing/coronavirus/impact-of-covid-19-on-older-peoples-health_one-year-on.pdf)

Press release: [Research showing just how badly the pandemic was impacting older people](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/research-pandemic-impact/)

**Title:** The mental health workforce: challenges facing the NHS

Nuffield Trust | 10th August 2021

Demand for mental health services is increasing in England, particularly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But the NHS mental health workforce is struggling to meet the demand for care. This article looks at workforce numbers and considers how the NHS can make mental health careers more accessible and attractive.

Full detail: [The mental health workforce: challenges facing the NHS](https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/news-item/the-mental-health-workforce-challenges-facing-the-nhs)

**Title:** Mental health emergencies and COVID-19: the impact of 'lockdown' in the East Midlands of the UK

Bjpsych Open | 26th July 2021

The most immediate response of the research community to COVID-19 has been a focus on understanding the effects, treatment and prevention of infection. Of equal and ongoing importance is elucidating the impact of mitigation measures, such as lockdown, on the well-being of societies. Research about mental health and lockdown in the UK has predominately involved large surveys that are likely to encounter self-selection bias. Further, self-reporting does not constitute a clinical judgement.

The aims of this research were to:

(a) compare the age, gender and ethnicity of patients experiencing mental health emergencies prior compared with during lockdown

(b) determine whether the nature of mental health emergencies has changed during compared with before lockdown

(c) explore the utility of emergency medical service data for identifying vulnerability to mental health emergencies in real time during a pandemic.

The study revealed that people of younger age, male gender and South Asian and Black ethnicity are particularly vulnerable to acute mental health conditions during lockdown. Patients with acute cases of anxiety have increased during lockdown whereas suicide and intentional drug overdose have decreased.

Self-reported data may underrepresent the true impact of lockdown on male mental health and ethnic minority groups. Emergency medical data can be used to identify vulnerable communities in the context of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the current pandemic, as well as under more ordinary circumstances.

Full paper: [Mental health emergencies and COVID-19: the impact of 'lockdown' in the East Midlands of the UK](https://europepmc.org/backend/ptpmcrender.fcgi?accid=PMC8314071&blobtype=pdf)

**Title:** Association Between Mood Disorders and Risk of COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death

JAMA Psychiatry | 28th July 2021

Preexisting noncommunicable diseases (eg, diabetes) increase the risk of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death. Mood disorders are associated with impaired immune function and social determinants that increase the risk of COVID-19.

The objective of this study was to assess whether preexisting mood disorders are associated with a higher risk of COVID-19 susceptibility, hospitalization, severe complications, and death.

In this systematic review and meta-analysis of more than 91 million people, individuals with preexisting mood disorders, compared with those without mood disorders, had significantly higher pooled odds ratios for COVID-19 hospitalization and death. There were no associations between preexisting mood disorders and risk of COVID-19 infection or severe events.

These results suggest that individuals with mood disorders should be categorized as an at-risk group for COVID-19 hospitalization and death, providing basis for vaccine prioritization.

Full detail: [Association between mood disorders and risk of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2782453)

**Title:** Young people say their prospects are dwindling and wellbeing suffering in the wake of the pandemic

The Health Foundation | 24th August 2021

A survey of young people conducted by the Health Foundation has revealed the extent to which young people feel their employment prospects and mental health have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

The Health Foundation carried out a survey of 2,000 young people in the UK (aged between 22 and 26), as part of its Young people’s future health inquiry, which is looking at ways to improve the long-term health of young people. The survey finds that opportunities – such as gaining the right skills or finding secure work – are narrowing for young people and that more support is needed to enable them to flourish.

While 80% of those surveyed agreed that the pandemic has made young people’s mental health worse, the findings highlighted that there is less support available for those experiencing mental health issues. 80% said the pandemic had a negative impact on the availability of emotional support and 69% agreed that it had become harder to access mental health support.

Full detail: [Young people say their prospects are dwindling and wellbeing suffering in the wake of the pandemic](https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/news/young-people-say-their-prospects-are-dwindling-and-wellbeing)

**Title:** Reaching the tipping point. Children and young people’s mental health

NHS Confederation | 24th August 2021

According to this report, many children and young people will be left without vital mental health support unless the Government goes further to invest fully in services where they are most needed. It lists the Covid-19 pandemic as a factor as it brought with it uncertainty and anxiety caused by the lockdowns, school closures, isolation from friends and peers, bereavement and loss, and extra stresses and pressures on families.

The report identifies how demand for mental health support for children and young people across all services has already grown significantly since the pandemic, with the number of children and young people contacting mental health services rising by nearly a third in the last year. In particular, demand for support for eating disorders has risen dramatically over the course of the of the pandemic. The number of young people receiving urgent treatment for eating disorders increased by 141 per cent between the last three months of 2019/20 and the first three months of 2021/22.

Full report: [Reaching the tipping point. Children and young people’s mental health](https://www.nhsconfed.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Reaching%20the%20tipping%20point%20Final.pdf)

Press release: [Generation of children and young people risk not getting the mental health care they need](https://www.nhsconfed.org/news/generation-children-and-young-people-risk-not-getting-mental-health-care-they-need)

See also: [Eating disorders: Record number of young people wait for treatment as demand soars](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2058) | BMJ

**Title:** Covid grief has cracked us open: how clinicians respond could reshape attitudes to bereavement

BMJ | 2021; 374: n1803 | 10th August 2021

People working in healthcare experience grief professionally as well as personally and societally. This BMJ Feature argues that attitudinal shifts are needed to improve access to formal and informal support and make grief a less lonely experience. It suggests that Doctors’ openness and willingness to show vulnerability could help.

Full detail: [Covid grief has cracked us open: how clinicians respond could reshape attitudes to bereavement](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n1803)

**Title:** Mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents during the covid-19 pandemic

BMJ | 2021; 374: n1730 | 24th August 2021

Many children and adolescents remain resilient over time and may recover rapidly after disasters such as a pandemic. However, their experiences and the burden of sustained, multiple stressors (including prior trauma, illness, attachment disruption, grief, isolation, closed borders, and home confinement) may result in a range of challenges to their mental health and wellbeing, both short and long term.

This article covers common impacts and effects of the pandemic; assessment, including recognition of symptoms suggestive of mental health disorders; and management, including referral and mitigation of the potentially adverse impacts of the covid-19 pandemic.

Full detail: [Mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents during the covid-19 pandemic](https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n1730)

**Title:** The effect of COVID-19 isolation measures on the cognition and mental health of people living with dementia: A rapid systematic review of one year of quantitative evidence

EClinical Medicine | 31st July 2021

COVID-19 prevention and control policies have entailed lockdowns and confinement. This study aimed to summarize the global research evidence describing the effect of COVID-19 isolation measures on the health of people living with dementia.

The review concludes that COVID-19 isolation measures have damaged the cognitive and mental health of people with dementia across the world. It is urgent to issue guidance that balances infection control measures against the principles of non-maleficence to guarantee fair and appropriate care during pandemic times for this population.

Full paper: [The effect of COVID-19 isolation measures on the cognition and mental health of people living with dementia](https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2589-5370%2821%2900327-8)

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[TRFT Library & Knowledge Service](https://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/) aim to bring together the latest guidelines, research and news on Covid-19 through our [Covid-19 portal](https://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/coronavirus.html). For daily updates on Covid-19 visit our '[Latest Health](https://trfthealthweeklydigest.wordpress.com/)' newsfeed, or use the hashtag [#covid19rftlks](https://twitter.com/hashtag/covid19rftlks?src=hashtag_click) to see our latest tweets on Covid-19 research, guidelines and news.

We also produce a range of subject-specific news feeds to ensure our clinical and professional teams stay up to date with developments in their work areas. Please visit our [website](http://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/) for more information

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