

HOW DID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WHAT CAN CLINICIANS DO?

The **CHOOSE study** – Children and young people psychiatric diagnoses before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

What impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on young people's mental health?

We looked at the electronic health records of children and young people up to the age of 24 in the UK. These are records from UK primary care (such as GPs and nurses).

We looked at young people's:

- Mental health diagnoses
- Mental health prescriptions
- Mental health referrals

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WHAT DID WE FIND?



Fewer young people sought help from their GPs at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



There was an increase in the recording of eating disorders, self-harm and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in females during the pandemic in people's medical notes.



The number of young males seeking help from their GPs is lower than it was pre-pandemic.

WHAT CAN CLINICIANS DO?

Consider how to make practices easy to access for children and young people.

Some young people may prefer:

- telephone consultations
- online consultations
- face-to-face consultations
- having a parent, carer or friend present or not present during the appointment

Where possible:

- Follow-up on support for a young person beyond the initial consultation, this will make the young person feel supported.
- Try and keep in contact with the young person. A quick text or phone call from the surgery can make the young person feel cared for.
- Make sure the young person has a support network around them.



REMEMBER

- Be open to listen and work with children and young people – they are the experts of their own lives
- Look for information and training opportunities to ensure sufficient skills for working with young people with mental health issues
- Be aware of services and resources available for children and young people with mental health issues – including third sector services

USEFUL RESOURCES

youngminds.org.uk/media/2csbkvlz/final-the-role-of-gps-in-early-support-for-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf

healthtalk.org/seeing-gp-advice-and-tips-young-people/overview

bjgp.org/content/69/681/168

[More info about the CHOOSE study](#)

[CHOOSE BBC article](#)

[Full findings and journal article](#)



SCAN ME