

HOW DID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WHAT CAN PARENTS AND CARERS 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



Would you like to shape mental health research?

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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 PARENTS AND CARERS DO

Look out for early signs of distress and upset in your children - these may represent mental health issues which need support:

- A change in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Physical and behavioural changes
- Social isolation and withdrawal

Give time to your children – allow them to tell you about their problems and concerns:

- Have a chat on the way to school or friends
- Speak on the phone
- Write them a note
- Point them towards sources of support and let them choose



OUR INTERPRETATIONS

- The mental health risk of eating disorders, self-harm and ADHD for females may have risen since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Females may have been more likely to seek help from healthcare services during the pandemic for their mental health issues than males.
- Young males may have also been struggling with their mental health but not sought help from healthcare 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