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Impact of Corona Virus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Christopher Mark*

Department of Child Psychology, University of Leyland, Legon/Methodist University College, Italy

Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic, among other challenges faced by their generation, has resulted in young people suffering from "devastating" mental health effects, according to the U.S. Surgeon General (U.S. Surgeon General, 2021). Numerous scientific and policy briefs that echo these sentiments on a global scale have also been published by the United Nations (United Nations, 2020) and the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were concerns about youth mental health. However, in the past two years, children and adolescents have been exposed to unprecedented events like repeated quarantine periods, school closures, broken peer relationships, COVID-19 infections, the death of loved ones, and a general sense of unpredictability in their lives. A growing body of research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on youth mental health, in line with previous pandemics like Ebola and H1N1 influenza.

Keywords: Corona Virus; Child; Adolescent; Mental Health

Introduction

Youth have experienced an increase in mental health issues, with a greater impact on vulnerable subgroups like those with pre-existing mental health issues, those with physical disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and sexual minorities according to studies conducted at the beginning and throughout the pandemic. The equitable provision of high-quality services to those in need and mental health treatment have also faced new obstacles as a result of COVID-19. The following five pertinent questions are addressed in the current paper, which provides an overview of youth mental health in the context of COVID-19: 1) In what ways has COVID-19 affected the mental health of young people? 2) During COVID-19, what factors have contributed to mental health resilience and risk? 3) How has the use of mental health services been affected by COVID-19? 4) How have treatments based on evidence affected COVID-19? 5) In order to lessen the negative effects of COVID-19 on the mental health of young people, what are the next steps in clinical research and policy? [1, 2].

Discussion

How has the COVID-19 virus affected the mental health of youth? Changes in youth psychological wellness starting from the beginning of the pandemic. Concentrates on that give pervasiveness paces of likely psychological wellness problems in everyone promptly earlier and after pandemic beginning are scant. The NHS Digital survey of youth mental health in England (NHS Digital, 2020) is one study that provides such data. It found that 17% of youth had a probable mental health disorder in July 2020, up from 11% in 2017 in 2021, these high rates persisted (NHS Digital, 2021). Using questionnaires filled out by parents and children in the United States, another study found significant increases: 31.7% versus 56.7% of youth had internalizing problems in the subclinical or clinical range in 2018 versus 2020, and 17.4% versus 56.2% had externalizing problems in the subclinical or clinical range in 2018 versus 2020 [3, 4].

Additionally, significant increases have been observed in longitudinal studies that have examined mental health symptoms in general. For instance, information from parent-kid dyads in the U.S. who took part in something like two floods of information assortment previously and during the pandemic, showed an inside individual expansion in psychological wellness issues in the wake of controlling for changes related with development. The proportion of adolescents with a "low level" of emotional and peer relationship problems and a decrease in those with a "high level" of prosocial behaviors was found to be significant decreases in the UK Household Longitudinal Survey, which has been collecting data from youth (ages 10-16) since 2009. Girls, families with low incomes, and households with only one parent experienced more adverse changes. Furthermore, data from a Spanish 10-year longitudinal study discovered an increase in conduct, peer, prosocial, and overall problems. The data unexpectedly also showed a decrease in emotional problems following the lockdown. The authors hypothesized that this was because they used parent-report data, which might have underestimated how distressed adolescents were [5, 6].

Longitudinal studies that look at how the pandemic affected anxiety and depression in particular also say that these symptom domains got worse. An ongoing Australian study of 13-16-year-olds who completed surveys in the 12 months prior to COVID and two months after government restrictions and remote learning were implemented found a decrease in life satisfaction and a significant, albeit modest, increase in depressive symptoms and anxiety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, adolescents in China (ages 11-16) experienced significant increases in depressive symptoms and decreased sleep duration. In addition, anxiety and depression symptoms were significantly higher than what would have been predicted based on previous trajectories in a study of adolescents in the United States that included four pre-COVID time points and a fifth post-COVID time point. Individual trajectories that deviated from the expected path were also associated with a greater perception of the pandemic's impact. 2021. An increase in depressive symptoms and a decrease in mental wellbeing across all age groups during the pandemic compared to the same age groups prior to the pandemic were found in a nationwide sample of Icelandic youth (ages 13-18) in what may be the only longitudinal population-based study. In a similar vein, found that while anxiety symptoms

***Corresponding author:** Christopher Mark, Department of Child Psychology, University of Leyland, Legon/Methodist University College, Italy, E-mail: chistpermark@edu.it

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remained stable, aggregated data from a collaborative of 12 longitudinal samples of adolescents from three nations namely, the United States, the Netherlands, and Peru showed significant increases in depressive symptoms (median increase = 28%) 2021) [7].

Conclusion

While the majority of studies on the pandemic have reported worsening mental health outcomes, a few longitudinal studies have found significant improvements. From pre-COVID to post-COVID time points (i.e., after lockdown restrictions), one Netherlands-based study found no change in internalizing symptoms and improved psychosomatic health. According to Hu & Qian (2021)'s research, there has been an increase in the proportion of young people who do not have any or very few issues with their conduct. Anxiety and depression decreased, and sleep quality improved, in a Chinese sample of 14-19-year-olds. Last but not least, at least two longitudinal studies support the hypothesis that the pandemic may have a positive impact on youth substance use and other issues related to it, with declines in cigarette smoking, e-cigarette use, and alcohol intoxication decreases in alcohol-related harms (35 percent) and alcohol consumption (17 percent) [8].

While clarifications for conflicting discoveries with respect to the effect of the pandemic on emotional wellness across studies are not completely clear, a few prospects include: The use of parent versus child reports, differences in restriction guidelines between nations, and social-contextual factors (e.g., parent employment status, exposure to pandemic stressors) are all factors that contribute to the variability in pandemic assessment time points. The quarantine and associated restrictions (such as remote learning) have provided a brief respite from school and sanctioned avoidance of many situations that may trigger anxiety symptoms in youth (such as social encounters, academic pressures, etc.), which is another explanation, at least in relation to emotional issues like anxiety [9, 10].

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Conflict of Interest

None

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