

Mental-health disorders growing faster among kids than adults

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Doctors' offices increasingly seeing young people with common psychiatric conditions.

(HealthDay)—Young people are increasingly more likely than adults to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder, according to a large new study.

Researchers analyzed data from nearly 450,000 patient visits to U.S. doctors' offices between 1995 and 2010 for the study, which was published online Nov. 27 in the journal *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Between the periods from 1995 to 1998 and 2007 to 2010, visits that led to diagnoses of mental-health problems increased faster for patients younger than 21 than for adults. Visits to psychiatrists also rose faster for youths than for adults, according to a journal news release.

Increases in the number of prescriptions of medications to manage

[mental health disorders](#) were similar for youths and adults.

"Over the last several years, there has been an expansion in [mental health](#) care to children and adolescents in office-based medical practice," said Dr. Mark Olfson, of the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University, and colleagues.

The researchers said this growth, which occurred along with a rise in prescriptions for psychiatric drugs, gives [health care providers](#) new opportunities to help children and teens in distress from common psychiatric disorders.

"Yet it also poses risks related to adverse medication effects, delivery of non-evidence-based care and poorly coordinated services," the researchers said.

More information: The National Alliance on Mental Illness has more about [mental illness](#).

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