

Survey suggests that self-reported health of young adults has improved

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Findings of a large survey indicate that since 2010, when young adults could be covered under their parents' health insurance plans until age 26, self-reported health among this group has improved, along with a decrease in out-of-pocket health care expenditures, according to a study in the June 18 issue of *JAMA*.

Beginning September 23, 2010, the Affordable Care Act allowed young [adults](#) to be covered under their parents' plans until 26 years of age. This dependent coverage provision increased insurance coverage and access among [young adults](#). However, little is known about the association between implementation of the provision and medical spending, [health care](#) use, and overall health, according to background information in the article.

Kao-Ping Chua, M.D., of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., and Benjamin D. Sommers, M.D., Ph.D., of the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, studied adults 19 to 34 years of age who were included in the 2002-2011 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, an annual survey conducted by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The study sample consisted of 26,453 individuals in the intervention group (adults 19 to 25 years of age) and 34,052 individuals in the control group (adults 26 to 34 years of age). Overall, the sample was 47 percent male and 74 percent white.

The authors reported that the dependent coverage provision was associated with a 7.2 percentage point increase in [insurance coverage](#)

among adults ages 19 to 25 years; no statistically significant changes in health care use; an increase of 6.2 percentage points in the probability of reporting excellent physical health; and an increase of 4 percentage points in the probability of reporting excellent mental health.

The researchers also found that compared with the control group, implementation of the dependent coverage provision was associated with a decrease of 3.7 percentage points in out-of-pocket expenditures among adults ages 19 to 25 years with any expenditures. Annual out-of-pocket expenditures declined by approximately 18 percent in the 19-25 year old group, relative to adults aged 26-34.

Results were similar after controlling for household income, education, and employment.

More information: [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2014.2202](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2014.2202)

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