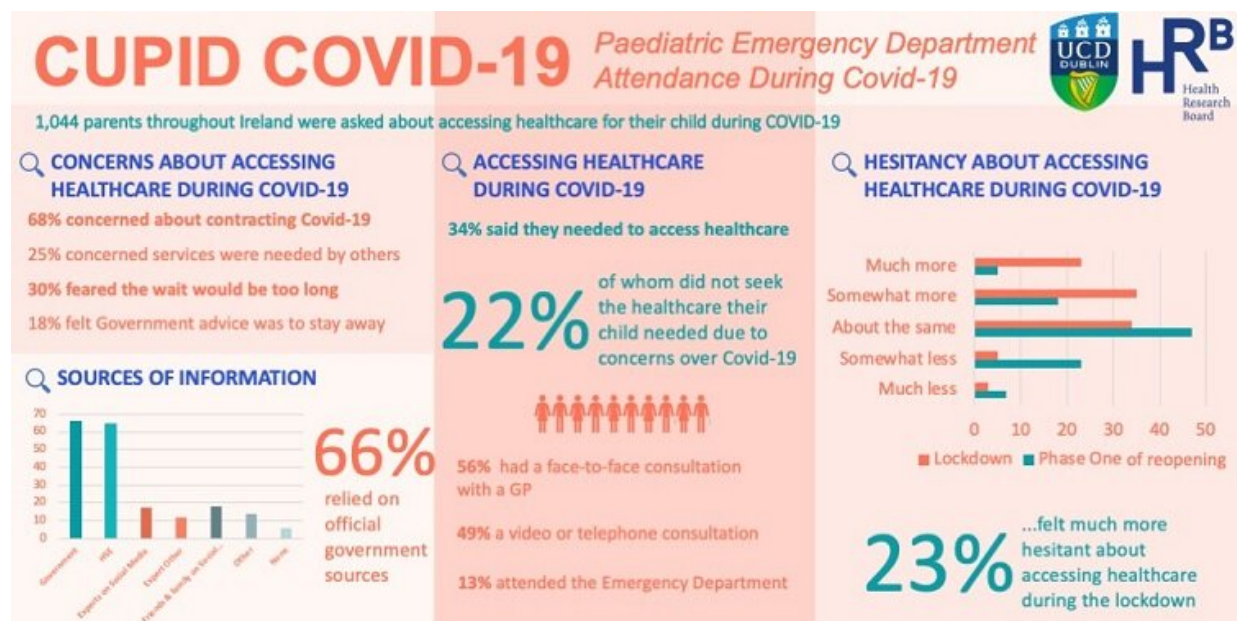


22% of parents avoided accessing healthcare for their children over COVID-19 concerns, survey finds

July 2 2020, by David Kearns



Credit: University College Dublin

Nearly a quarter of parents requiring healthcare for their children chose not to access the relevant service because of fears over COVID-19.

Researchers from the UCD Center for Interdisciplinary Research Education and Innovation in Health Systems (IRIS) found that 34% of [parents](#) in Ireland needed to access [healthcare](#) for their child but among

these 22% decided not to due to concerns about the [coronavirus](#).

The experience of parents in need of healthcare for their children during the recent lock-down was assessed by the CUPID COVID-19 National Parents Survey.

It findings show that 68% of parents were concerned about contracting COVID-19. Among those who did access healthcare for their child, 56% had a face-to-face consultation with a GP and 49% had a video or telephone consultation.

Only 13% attended the emergency department, with 5% saying they accessed another service.

Of the 1044 parents surveyed, nearly one in five misunderstood official public health advice and thought the Government had told them to stay away from [health services](#).

Preliminary results from our survey of parents on experiences of seeking healthcare for their children during COVID funded by [@hrbireland](#) [@ThereseMcDonn](#) [@UCDHealthSystem](#) [@PEMDublin](#) [@conorhensey](#) [@REDSPoT_IE](#) More info here: <https://t.co/9b3IQPMLTq> pic.twitter.com/7SWWh5jAZQC

— Emma Nicholson (@EmmaNich97) [June 30, 2020](#)

Asked about where they found healthcare information during the lock-down, 66% of parents said they relied on official government sources, while 29% said they sought information from experts on social media or other online resources.

The survey was conducted at the end of May and forms part of a wider 12 month study being carried out to assess the impact of COVID-19 on

accessing pediatric emergency healthcare in Ireland.

Project leads Dr. Emma Nicholson and Dr. Thérèse McDonnell, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, said: "The results indicate parents' felt hesitant about using healthcare services for their children during the lock-down period, and a proportion avoided accessing necessary healthcare. This has implications for public health messaging as the COVID-19 pandemic plays out. Decision makers will need to ensure messaging is clear and does not encourage avoidance behavior, which can have severe consequences for the health of [children](#), particularly those with complex conditions or particular health needs."

Provided by University College Dublin

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