

# Symptoms of depression more prevalent during COVID-19

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(HealthDay)—The prevalence of depression symptoms in the United

States was higher early in the pandemic than before COVID-19, according to a study published online Sept. 2 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Catherine K. Ettman, from Boston University School of Public Health, and colleagues estimated the prevalence of and [risk factors](#) associated with depression symptoms among U.S. adults during versus before the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates were derived from the COVID-19 and Life Stressors Impact on Mental Health and Well-Being study conducted from March 31, to April 13, 2020, and from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted from 2017 to 2018. The final during-COVID-19 sample included 1,441 participants and the pre-COVID-19 sample included 5,065 participants.

The researchers found that the prevalence of depression symptoms was higher in every category during COVID-19 versus before (mild: 24.6 versus 16.2 percent; moderate: 14.8 versus 5.7 percent; moderately severe: 7.9 versus 2.1 percent; and severe: 5.1 versus 0.7 percent). There were association noted for higher risk of [depression symptoms](#) during COVID-19 with having [lower income](#), having less than \$5,000 in savings, and exposure to more stressors (odds ratios, 2.37, 1.52, and 3.05, respectively).

"The increase in depression symptom prevalence is higher than that recorded after previous mass traumatic events, likely reflecting the far more pervasive influence of COVID-19 and its social and [economic consequences](#) than other previously studied mass traumatic events," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the health care industry.

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