

Mental health ED visits in children up mid-March to October 2020

November 13 2020



(HealthDay)—From mid-March to October 2020, there was an increase

in the proportion of mental health-related emergency department visits among children and adolescents, according to research published in the Nov. 13 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Rebecca T. Leeb, Ph.D., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues examined changes in mental health-related emergency department visits among U.S. children aged younger than 18 years using data from the CDC National Syndromic Surveillance Program from Jan. 1 through Oct. 17, 2020, compared with 2019.

The researchers found that compared with 2019, in 2020, the average reported number of children's mental health-related emergency department visits overall was higher during weeks 1 to 11 (Jan. 1 to March 15, 2020), while there was a similar proportion of children's mental health-related visits. The number of mental health-related emergency department visits decreased 43 percent among children, beginning in week 12 (March 16), concurrent with widespread implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures. Beginning in mid-March and continuing into October (weeks 12 to 42), the proportion of mental health-related emergency department visits increased sharply, with increases of 24 and 31 percent among children aged 5 to 11 and 12 to 17 years, respectively, compared with the same period in 2019.

"Ongoing collection of a broad range of children's mental health data outside the [emergency department](#) is needed to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and the effects of public health emergencies on [children's](#) mental health," the authors write.

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