

# Child physical abuse encounters declined during COVID-19

January 5 2021

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(HealthDay)—Declines in child physical abuse (CPA) encounters at U.S.

hospitals were seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published online Dec. 30 in *Pediatrics*.

Sunitha V. Kaiser, M.D., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues compared the volume and severity of CPA encounters in children's hospitals during the COVID-19 [pandemic](#) to those of previous years. To examine overall trends, the volume of CPA encounters was compared for Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2020, to the same timeframe in 2017 to 2019. The severity of CPA encounters was compared during the pandemic period, defined as March 16 to Aug. 31, 2020, to the same timeframe in 2017 to 2019.

The researchers found that in week 10 of 2020, corresponding to March 16, there was a sharp decline in the all-cause/overall volume of emergency department and inpatient encounters in children's hospitals. There was also a [significant decrease](#) in the volume of CPA encounters at week 10 of 2020 (–63.4 cases) compared with previous years. No significant differences in intercepts or slopes of CPA encounter trends were seen when comparing 2020 with previous years. The severity of CPA encounters was similar during the COVID-19 pandemic period and previous years.

"Our findings may reflect true decreases in CPA; or, our findings may instead reflect compromised infrastructure for detecting CPA or delayed effects of the pandemic on CPA," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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Citation: Child physical abuse encounters declined during COVID-19 (2021, January 5) retrieved

8 May 2024 from

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