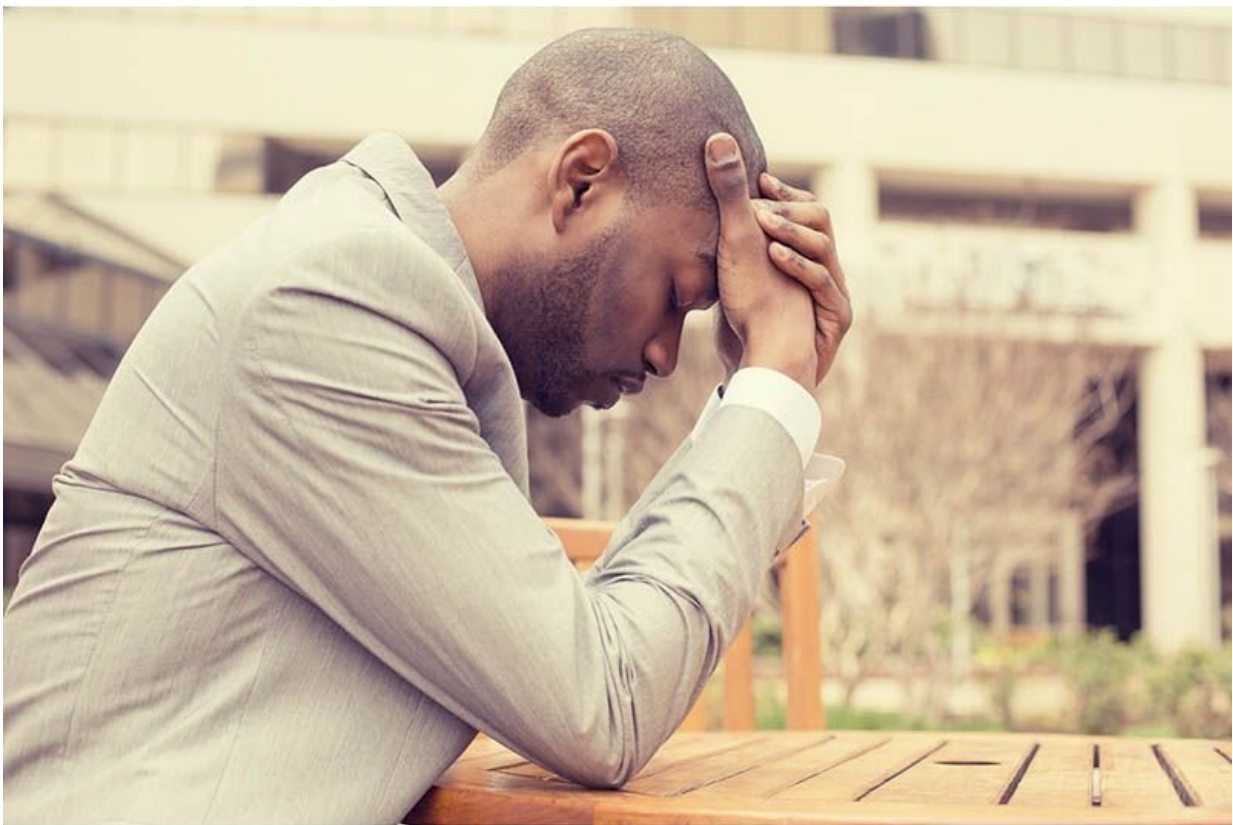


ED visit volume dropped for mental health, substance use early in pandemic

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(HealthDay)—Emergency department visits for mental health, substance

use, and violence decreased in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published online Feb. 3 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Kristin M. Holland, Ph.D., M.P.H., from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and colleagues examined changes in U.S. emergency department visits for [mental health](#) conditions, suicide attempts, overdose (all drugs and opioids), and violence outcomes ([intimate partner violence](#) and suspected child abuse and neglect) for Dec. 30, 2018, to Oct. 10, 2020. A total of 187,508,065 total emergency department visits were captured; at least one study outcome was captured in 6,018,318 visits.

The researchers found that after implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures beginning March 16, 2020, total emergency department visit volume decreased. Between March 8 and 28, 2020, weekly emergency department visit counts for all six outcomes decreased. However, beginning the week of March 22 to 28, emergency department visit rates increased. The 2020 counts were significantly higher for [suicide attempts](#), all overdoses, and [opioid overdoses](#) when comparing the median emergency department visit counts between March 15 and Oct. 10, 2020, with the same period in 2019. Counts were significantly lower for intimate partner violence emergency department visits and suspected child abuse and neglect visits. During the same period, median rates were significantly higher in 2020 versus 2019 for all outcomes except intimate partner violence.

"Past research on public health crises suggests it is likely that COVID-19 and associated mitigation measures will have impacts that far outlast the short-term emergency period," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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