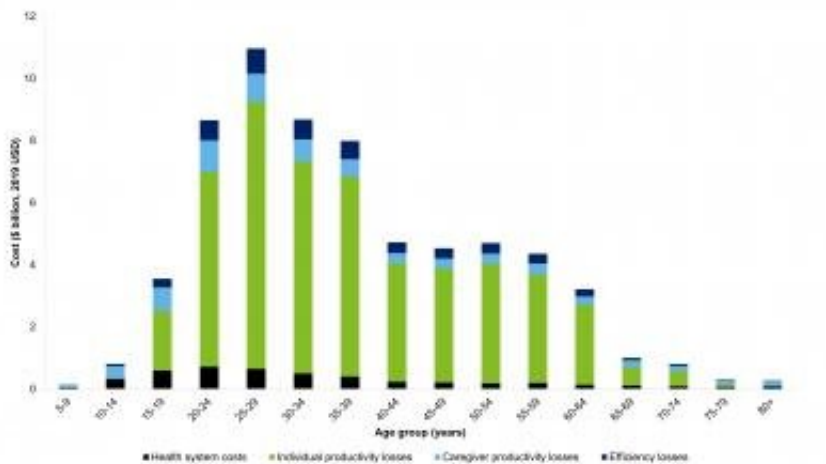


The social and economic cost of eating disorders in the United States

March 3 2021



Economic costs (2019 US dollars) of eating disorders by age group and gender. Credit: J Streatfeild et al., *International Journal of Eating Disorders* (2021)

The impact of eating disorders in the United States was nearly \$400 billion in 2018-19 when considering both economic costs and reduced wellbeing, according to a study published in the *International Journal of Eating Disorders*.

Investigators estimated that the total economic cost associated with eating disorders in 2018-19 was \$64.7 billion, equivalent to \$11,808 per affected person, and the substantial reduction in wellbeing associated with eating disorders was valued at \$326.5 billion.

"Our study lays bare the devastating economic impact that eating disorders have in the United States, a country where the majority of people affected suffer alone and never receive appropriate treatment because of barriers to healthcare and lack of training for [healthcare providers](#)," said co-author S. Bryn Austin, ScD, director of STRIPED (Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders) and a professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Boston Children's Hospital. "With our study, we now have the critical data we need to begin to estimate the [cost-effectiveness](#), improved quality of life, and, most importantly, lives to be saved by scaling up effective prevention, early detection, and treatment interventions for eating disorders."

More information: Jared Streatfeild et al, Social and economic cost of eating disorders in the United States: Evidence to inform policy action, *International Journal of Eating Disorders* (2021). [DOI: 10.1002/eat.23486](#)

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