

# Emergency help for suicide-related issues up during pandemic for some youth

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(HealthDay)—Some youth subpopulations had a higher risk for suicide-

related emergency department encounters during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, but after shelter-in-place, overall rates were similar to those in 2019, according to a study published online Sept. 1 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Kathryn K. Ridout, M.D., Ph.D., from Kaiser Permanente Northern California in Oakland, and colleagues assessed emergency department encounters in 2019 and 2020 at a large, integrated, community-based [health system](#) for youth aged 5 to 17 years.

The researchers found that there were 2,123 youth with suicide-related emergency department encounters in 2020 versus 2,339 in 2019. The visits were most common among girls (69.9 percent in 2020 and 65.9 percent in 2019) and among youth aged 13 to 17 years (84.7 and 85.4 percent, respectively). In March through May 2020, suicide-related emergency department encounter incidence rates were significantly lower versus the same period in 2019 (incidence rate ratio [IRR], 0.57) but then returned to prepandemic levels. Among girls, suicide-related [visits](#) from June 1 to Aug. 31, 2020, and Sept. 1 through Dec. 15, 2020, were significantly higher than in 2019 (IRRs, 1.19 and 1.22, respectively). From September to December 2020, relative to all youth ED encounters, [youth](#) with no history of outpatient [mental health](#) or suicide encounters had a 129.4 percent higher risk for presenting with suicide-related problems versus 2019.

"As suicide-related encounters have made up more emergency department volume during the pandemic, increasing [emergency department](#)-based interventions, staff trained in addressing emergency mental health needs, and aftercare resources may also be valuable in addressing the needs of this population," the authors write.

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

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