

Seizure-related emergency visits dropped in early pandemic period

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During the early pandemic period, there was a decrease in seizure-

related emergency department visits, which almost returned to prepandemic levels for almost all age groups by the end of 2020, according to research published in the May 27 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Sanjeeb Sapkota, M.B.B.S., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues analyzed data from the National Syndromic Surveillance Program to examine trends in weekly seizure- or epilepsy-related emergency department visits before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researchers found that during the early pandemic period, seizure-related emergency department visits decreased abruptly. For persons of all ages, except children aged 0 to 9 years, seizure-related emergency department visits returned almost to prepandemic levels by the end of 2020. This age group gradually returned to baseline by mid-2021. The reasons underlying the decrease in seizure-related emergency department visits in 2020 and slow return to baseline for children aged 0 to 9 years are unclear, but may have been associated with fear of COVID-19 infection exposure.

"These findings reinforce the importance of understanding factors associated with emergency department avoidance among persons with epilepsy or seizures, and any alternative care approaches among persons with epilepsy or seizures and the need to encourage persons to seek appropriate care for seizure-related emergencies," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the [pharmaceutical industry](#).

More information: Sanjeeb Sapkota et al, Seizure- or Epilepsy-Related Emergency Department Visits Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic—United States, 2019–2021, *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (2022). [DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7121a2](https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7121a2)

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