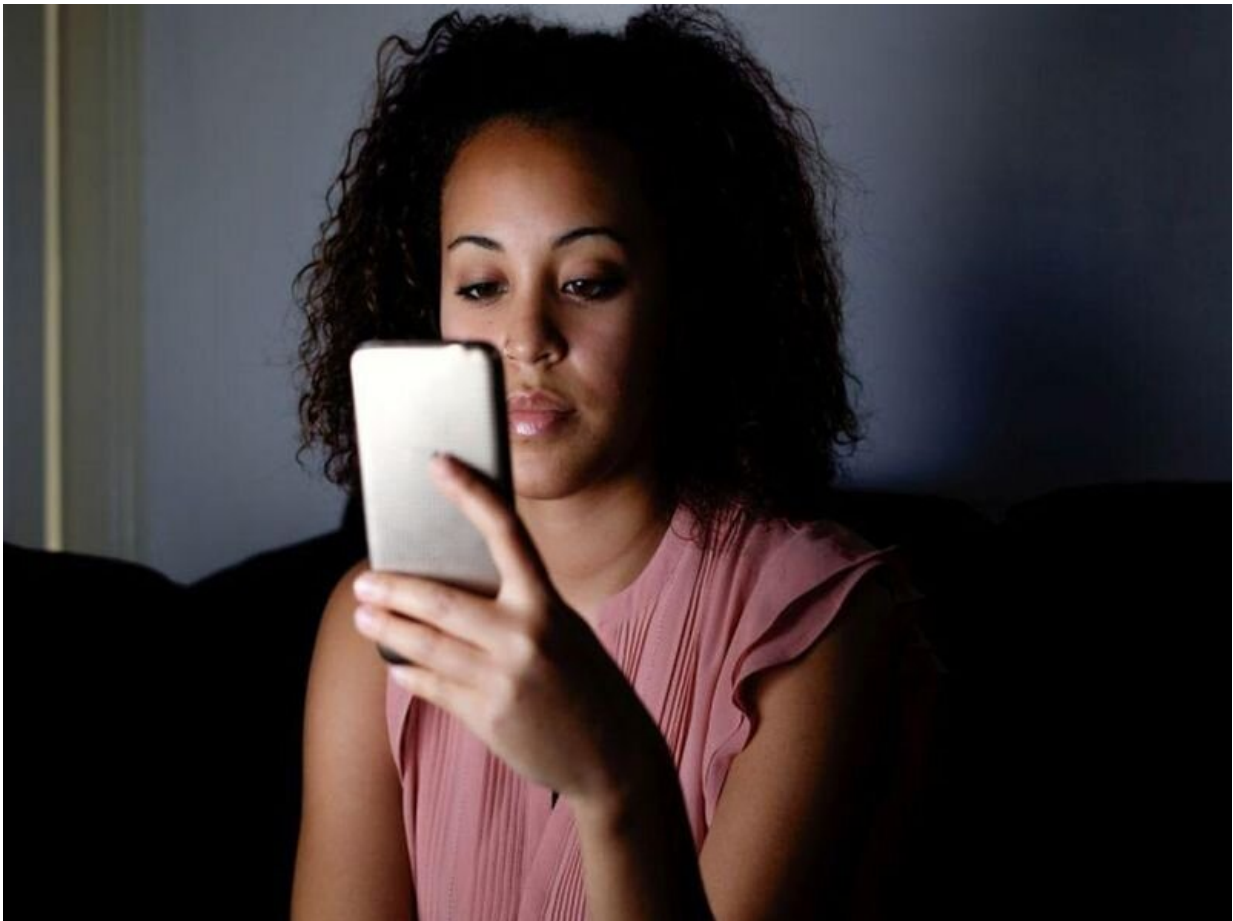


Gaps exist in studying impact of mental health hotlines

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Few studies evaluate the impact of mental health hotlines on caller

outcomes, according to a review published online Oct. 18 in *Psychiatric Services*.

Samantha Matthews, M.P.A., from the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review to identify studies characterizing mental health emergency hotlines in the United States (telephone, text, and chat).

Based upon 53 included studies, the researchers found that most callers were female, younger adults, and White, while veteran hotlines typically reached older men. Suicidality, depression, and interpersonal problems were common reasons for calling. Few studies (20) examined intervention effects and only six assessed hotlines as interventions. Four studies evaluated caller behavioral outcomes, which reported reduced distress and suicidality among callers after hotline engagement. Identified areas for improvement included reaching underrepresented high-risk populations, as well as implementation needs, such as investments in [data collection](#) and evaluation, [staff training](#), and sustainable funding.

"Despite the broad reach of mental [health](#) hotlines in the United States and the rollout of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we found that few of the reviewed studies analyzed hotlines' impact on certain high-risk populations, assessed capacity of responders, or evaluated the effects of local chat- and text-based hotlines," the authors write.

More information: Samantha Matthews et al, Mental Health Emergency Hotlines in the United States: A Scoping Review (2012–2021), *Psychiatric Services* (2022). [DOI: 10.1176/appi.ps.20220128](#)

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