

French study links Covid-19 to spike in depression among young

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One in five young French people reported a depressive episode in the last 12 months.

A major French mental health study has found a huge rise in the number of young people reporting depression, with the most likely cause seen as

Covid-19 and restrictions to control the disease.

Public Health France on Tuesday published the results of the latest round of a regular [mental health](#) survey which took place in 2021, a year after the most acute stage of the global pandemic.

It found that 20.8 percent of 18 to 24-year-olds reported having experienced a depressive episode in the last 12 months, compared with 11.7 percent in the previous survey conducted in 2017.

The rate among young people was almost twice as high as that reported among the whole adult population, aged 18 to 85.

"The stress caused by the Covid-19 disease and the restrictions imposed to control it appear to be one of the main hypotheses to explain this rise," Public Health France said on its website.

Experts say the impact of lockdowns, social distancing and other restrictions were felt more acutely by students and other young people because they were seen as ruining a once-in-a-lifetime period that cannot be replicated.

The uncertainty added to the regular anxiety associated with young adulthood.

"What had a large role was the uncertainty about the future, which has a very important impact at that age," said Enguerrand du Roscoat, co-author of the French study and an expert in mental health.

The [survey](#) confirms anecdotal evidence given by a host of mental health professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic who reported a surge in referrals of [young people](#) struggling with anxiety and depression.

Other international surveys have reported similar results.

US health authorities sounded the alarm on Monday about a mental health crisis among American high school students, particularly teenage girls.

Nearly three in five teenage American girls—57 percent—felt persistently sad or hopeless in 2021—double the rate of boys, the report said.

There was a nearly 60 percent increase since 2011 and the highest level reported over the past decade.

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