

Study finds ED visits for schizophrenia spectrum disorders up after pandemic onset

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The number of emergency department visits for schizophrenia spectrum disorders increased after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published online Dec. 27 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Parvati Singh, Ph.D., from The Ohio State University in Columbus, and colleagues examined monthly patterns of emergency department visits for [schizophrenia](#) spectrum disorders after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in an observational cohort study using time-series analyses.

Emergency department visits for schizophrenia spectrum disorders and all other psychiatric emergency department visits were identified from January 2016 to December 2021 at five University of California campuses.

Data were included for 377,872 psychiatric emergency department visits, of which 37,815 visits were for schizophrenia spectrum disorders.

The researchers found that for schizophrenia spectrum disorders, the pre-pandemic monthly mean number of emergency department visits was 519.9, which increased to 558.4 after COVID-19 pandemic onset.

Controlling for monthly counts of emergency department visits for all other psychiatric conditions, the results from time series analyses indicated 70.5 and 74.9 additional [visits](#) for [schizophrenia spectrum disorders](#) at one and three months, respectively, following the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic draws attention to the vulnerability of patients with schizophrenia to macrosocial shocks, underscoring the importance of social policies related to income support, housing, and [health insurance](#) for future emergency preparedness and the need to strengthen mental health care systems," the authors write.

More information: Parvati Singh et al, ED Visits for Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders During the COVID-19 Pandemic at 5 Campus Health Systems, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.49305](#)

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