

Study examines prevalence of mental health disorders in childhood

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The prevalence of mental health disorders exceeds 11 percent for children and youth aged five to 24 years, according to a [study](#) published online Jan. 31 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Christian Kieling, M.D., Ph.D., from the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and colleagues used data from the

2019 Global Burden of Disease study to estimate the global prevalence and years lived with disability (YLDs) associated with mental disorders and [substance use disorders](#) (SUDs) across four age groups (ages 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, and 20–24 years).

The researchers found that globally, 293 million of 2,516 million individuals aged five to 24 years had at least one mental disorder in 2019; 31 million had an SUD, with a mean prevalence of 11.63 and 1.22 percent for mental disorders and SUDs, respectively.

For those aged 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, and 20–24 years, the prevalence of mental disorders was 6.80, 12.40, 13.96, and 13.63 percent, respectively. There was variation observed by age groups in the prevalence of each individual disorder; there was also some variation seen in sex-specific patterns by age.

Of 153.59 million YLDs, mental disorders accounted for 31.14 million YLDs and SUDs accounted for 4.30 million YLDs (20.27 and 2.80 percent of YLDs from all causes, respectively). Overall, 24.85 percent of all YLDs attributable to mental disorders during the entire life course were recorded before age 25 years.

"Mental health disorders deserve special attention in terms of prevention and intervention in the first decades of life and that one-fifth of the disease-related nonfatal burden in this age range is attributable to [mental disorders](#)," the authors write.

More information: Christian Kieling et al, Worldwide Prevalence and Disability From Mental Disorders Across Childhood and Adolescence, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.5051](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.5051)

David C. Saunders et al, Age—Not Just a Number in Youth Mental Health, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2024). [DOI:](#)

[10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.4993](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.4993)

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