

**Forum:** Economic and Social Council

**Issue:** The Question of the Psychological Effects of Covid-19 Among Children and the Youth

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## Introduction

The SARS-CoV-2<sup>1</sup> Virus has unleashed tremendous amounts of panic into the fabric of our society in the last four years and has had a significant effect on the youth. The broad frenzy that overwhelmed the globe has impacted the structures that had been set up for a very long time. During recent years psychological well-being has been taken into discussions on a more regular basis, pointing towards the way that the issue is applicable to all of us. The mental impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on children and youth have been immense. The abrupt and unforeseen nature of the pandemic, as well as the vital measures taken to control its spread, significantly affect the emotional well-being and prosperity of upcoming youth.

One of the most prompt impacts of the pandemic on children and youth has been the interruption to their schooling and public activities. The temporary decision of in-school learning and the shift to internet learning has meant that numerous young people have needed to adjust to a better approach for learning and socialising, which can be testing and distressing. What's more, the absence of eye to eye cooperation with companions and instructors has left numerous children and young adults feeling disconnected and desolate.

One more mental impact of the pandemic on kids and youth has been the expansion in pressure and uneasiness. The vulnerability and dread encompassing the infection, as well as the limitations on development and social exercises, have made numerous youngsters feel restless and overpowered. Furthermore, the steady openness to news and online entertainment about the pandemic can be overpowering and upsetting for some children.

The mental impacts of the pandemic have likewise been intensified by the monetary slump and employment misfortunes, which adversely affect the emotional well-being and prosperity of numerous young people and their families. The monetary pressure and frailty brought by the pandemic can be

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<sup>1</sup> National library of medicine <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7306970/> accessed 13.12.2022

especially detrimental to the psychological well-being of youngsters, who might have a restless and unsure outlook on their future possibilities.

It is significant for guardians, educators, and different parental figures to know about the mental impacts of the pandemic on the youth and to offer help and help on a case by case basis. This can incorporate ordinary correspondence and registrations with children, giving them a strong and sustaining climate at home, and offering admittance to emotional well-being assets and administrations. By perceiving the mental effect of the pandemic and doing whatever it takes to help youngsters, we can assist with alleviating the damaging consequences and advance their psychological wellness and prosperity.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Adolescents

Adolescents are people who are going through pubescence and are in the formative stage among adolescence and adulthood. This regularly happens between the ages of 10 and 19, and is set apart by physical, mental, and social changes. Puberty is a period of change, as youngsters foster a feeling of personality and freedom, and plan for the difficulties and obligations of adulthood.

### Children

Children are people who are in the transformative phase among early stages and youthfulness. Although the exact age range can vary, this stage typically begins at birth and ends around the age of 10. Children are described by their reliance on grown-ups for care and backing, as well as their fast physical, mental, and social development.

### Mental Health

Mental health refers to a person's overall psychological well-being, including their emotional, social, and psychological functioning.

### Pandemic

A pandemic<sup>2</sup> is a global outbreak of disease that affects a large number of people, often covering a large geographic area. Pandemics are characterized by high infectious rates that can cause widespread illness, disability and death. Epidemics can have significant social and economic impacts, as they often require drastic measures by governments and health authorities to control their spread and

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<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemic> accessed 13.12.2022

mitigate their impact. The Covid-19 pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus is an example of a current pandemic.

## Explanation of the Question

The question of the mental health impact of COVID-19 on children and young people refers to the suddenness and unexpectedness of the pandemic. The measures needed to contain its spread are having a major impact on the lives of children and young people. These include disruptions in education and social activities, increased stress and anxiety, and the potential for economic insecurity. The psychological impact of the pandemic on children and adolescents is worrying and requires the attention and support of parents, carers and mental health professionals.

There are two categories: short-term effects and long-term effects. Short-term effects include increased stress and anxiety, and changes in mood and behavior. Children and adolescents may experience anxiety and concern about their own health and the health of loved ones, as well as feeling isolated and alone due to limited social interaction. These changes in emotional state can manifest in a variety of ways, including irritability, sadness, and difficulty in sleeping or concentrating.

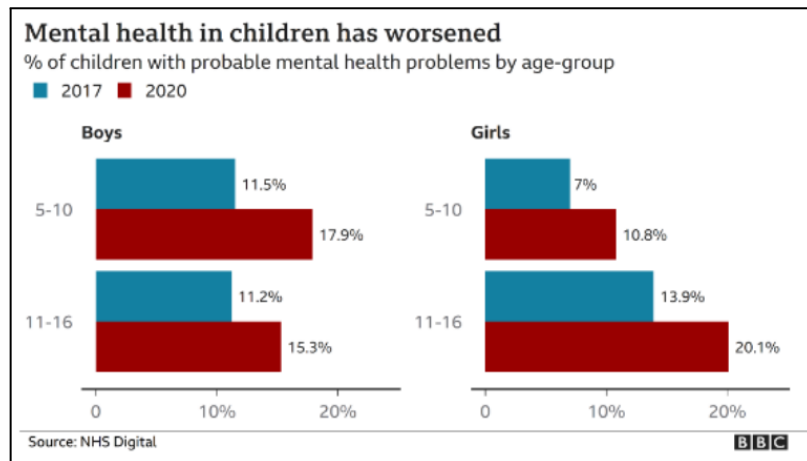
The psychological impact of Covid-19 on children and adolescents may be more pronounced in the long run. Disruption of normal routines and social support systems can lead to the development of mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. In addition, the economic downturn caused by the pandemic could lead to financial stress for families, further exacerbating mental health problems in children and youth.

It is important that parents, educators and other adults are aware of the psychological impact of Covid-19 on children and young people and provide support and resources to help young people overcome these challenges. This can include maintaining regular communication and routines, providing a safe and supportive home environment, and connecting young people with mental health resources when needed. By taking these steps, we can help lessen the psychological impact of the pandemic on the youngest members of our society.

## Causes of the mental-health decline

The inability of children being able to participate in otherwise normal freetime activities such as playing outside, going to the mall, visiting parks and attractions during the pandemic has been crippling to young minds. Even educational institutions were closed and exams had been postponed. Shopping malls, restaurants, and all areas of public gathering were under a strict lockdown. Every single one of

these subjects provided further instability and decline to the mental-health situation of the youth which lingers in children to this day.



*A graph showing the incline in mental health problems of children during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>3</sup>*

According to a study conducted by the BBC the amount of children with mental health problems has spiked<sup>4</sup> during 2020 which can be perceived as the peak of the pandemic. With this data we can theorize that there is a direct causal relationship between the worsening of children's mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic. That can stem from the fact that children and adolescents are in pivotal periods of development, making them more vulnerable to negative psychological wellness effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and reaction measures.<sup>5</sup> Children not being "mature" or "grown" enough to fully understand the situation of the world and their surroundings is a considerably large factor to take into consideration. Children will often wonder why they are in lockdown and for what reason schools and public places have been shut down which provides further instability to their mental state. The state of obliviousness can become a make-or-break factor in children and their psychological well-being.

<sup>3</sup> BBC <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55863841> accessed 17.12.2022

<sup>4</sup>The center for biosimillars <https://www.ajmc.com/view/a-timeline-of-covid19-developments-in-2020> accessed 18.12.2022

<sup>5</sup> The association for child and adolescent mental health <https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/camh.12501> accessed 18.12

## Effects

Surveillance period and indicators	Adolescents aged 12-17 yrs			
	All	Girls	Boys	Ratio <sup>6</sup> for girls to boys
<b>Spring 2020<sup>6</sup> weeks 14-17 (March 29-April 25)</b>				
Mean no. of weekly ED visits for suspected suicide attempts	540.25	408.25	131.75	N/A
% Change in mean no. of weekly ED visits for suspected suicide attempts	-26.45	-26.57	-25.56	N/A
ED visit rates <sup>6</sup> for suspected suicide attempts	2,750.03	3,766.75	1,499.25	N/A
Visit ratio (95% CI)	2.36 (2.23 to 2.49)	2.32 (2.17 to 2.47)	2.43 (2.17 to 2.72)	2.51 (2.28 to 2.77)
<b>Summer 2020: weeks 31-34 (July 26-August 22)</b>				
Mean no. of weekly ED visits for suspected suicide attempts	665.50	518.50	145.75	N/A
% Change in mean no. of weekly ED visits for suspected suicide attempts	22.33	26.16	10.84	N/A
ED visit rates <sup>6</sup> for suspected suicide attempts	1,665.09	2,360.65	812.36	N/A
Visit ratio (95% CI)	1.65 (1.56 to 1.74)	1.64 (1.54 to 1.75)	1.55 (1.38 to 1.75)	2.91 (2.65 to 3.18)
<b>Winter 2021: weeks 8-11 (February 21-March 20)</b>				
Mean no. of weekly ED visits for suspected suicide attempts	1,054.25	855.50	195.50	N/A
% Change in mean no. of weekly ED visits for suspected suicide attempts	39.13	50.55	3.71	N/A
ED visit rates <sup>6</sup> for suspected suicide attempts	2,482.32	3,600.89	1,048.00	N/A
Visit ratio (95% CI)	2.12 (2.02 to 2.22)	2.26 (2.15 to 2.39)	1.61 (1.45 to 1.77)	3.44 (3.18 to 3.71)

***The table above shows ratios of emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts among persons aged 12-17 years United States, March 29, 2020-March 20, 2021.<sup>6</sup>***

Children and adolescents all over the world have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's indirect effects, such as social isolation, financial hardship, and disruptions to education and mental health services, have had a significant impact on children, despite the virus'

<sup>6</sup> Center for disease control and prevention [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7024e1.htm#F1\\_down](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7024e1.htm#F1_down) accessed 18.12.2022

relatively mild direct effects. There is some evidence that the pandemic has increased the number of children and adolescents with mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. During the pandemic, there has been a significant rise in the number of adolescents in the United States who have had suicidal thoughts and according to the data sheet above the rate of visits to the emergency department of hospitals nearly doubled during a single year of the pandemic.

It is critical to take note of the impacts of the pandemic on adolescents between the age of 12-17 and their psychological well-being, and more examination is needed to comprehend the degree of effect the pandemic has had. Nevertheless, it is evident that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of children and adolescents, and it is essential to provide them with support and resources to assist them in overcoming the obstacles they face.

## Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous nations have taken steps to address the mental health requirements of children and adolescents. Countries and organizations that have taken steps to help children and young people with their mental health include:

### World Health Organization

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is responsible for international public health. The WHO works to promote health, prevent and control diseases, and provide medical care to those in need. WHO has provided advice on how to address the mental health requirements of children and adolescents during the pandemic after recognizing the pandemic's impact on mental health.

### The United Nations Children's Fund

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is an international organization that works to improve the lives of children and adolescents around the world. Throughout the pandemic UNICEF has been assisting children and adolescents with their mental health and well-being by promoting mental health literacy and providing mental health services.

### The International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions

The International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP) is a professional organization that brings together mental health professionals from around the world who work with children, adolescents, and their families. The IACAPAP have additionally been associated with tending to the mental impacts of Coronavirus on youngsters and youth, including by

giving assets and backing to families and by supporting for the psychological well-being requirements of youngsters and youth to be perceived and tended to.

## United States of America

Guidelines for parents, caregivers, and educators have been published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding how to support the mental health of children and adolescents during the pandemic. Additionally, advice on this subject has been provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

### The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & The American Academy of Pediatrics

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a United States federal agency under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that is responsible for protecting public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability. During the pandemic, the CDC and the The American Academy of Pediatrics have published guidance for parents, caregivers, and educators on how to support the mental health of children and adolescents. Nevertheless the USA is lacking for mental health care for the youth. There are several reasons why the United States may be lacking in mental health care for youth, including a lack of access to care due to financial or logistical barriers, and a stigma surrounding mental health that can prevent young people from seeking help. Additionally, there may be insufficient funding for mental health care and systemic issues within the mental health care system that prevent young people from getting the care they need.

## Canada

Guidance for parents, caregivers, and educators on how to support children's mental health during the pandemic has been published by the Public Health Agency of Canada.<sup>7</sup>

### National Health Service (NHS).

The National Health Service (NHS) is the publicly funded healthcare system in the United Kingdom that provides a comprehensive range of medical services to all UK residents. The NHS has released a sheet which includes guidance for parents, caregivers, and educators on how to support children's and young people's mental health during the pandemic has been published<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian government

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/resources-parents-children.html#a3> accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>8</sup> The National Health Service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#promoting-mental-wellbeing-and-helping-children-and-young-people-cope-during-the-pandemic> accessed 19.12.2022

## Australia

Strategies for parents, caregivers, and educators have been included in a publication from the Australian government<sup>9</sup> that provides advice on how to support the mental health of children and adolescents.

## New Zealand

Guidance for parents, caregivers, and educators on how to support children's and young people's mental health during the pandemic has been published by the Ministry of Health<sup>10</sup>.

These are just a few of the nations that have taken steps to address the mental health requirements of children and adolescents. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents, so it is essential that all nations place a high priority on their mental health.

## Countries with little done towards the mental wellbeing of its youth

Identifying a specific country that has done little during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is hard since the impact of the pandemic on mental health has been significant and widespread. Different countries have implemented a variety of measures to address these challenges. However, it is important to note that the pandemic has had a disproportionately negative impact on the mental health of young people, and many countries have struggled to provide sufficient support and resources to meet the needs of their youth. It is important for governments and communities to continue to prioritize the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and to take steps to ensure that they have access to the resources and support they need to cope with the challenges of the pandemic and its aftermath.

## Nepal

The government of Nepal has taken some measures to support the mental health of its citizens during this time of crisis. For example, the government may have provided funding for mental health services. Additionally, community organizations and NGOs in Nepal may have provided support to youth during the pandemic, such as through counseling services or other mental health resources.

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<sup>9</sup> Australian government

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/getmedia/e369a330-f8c3-4b9e-ab76-7a428f9ff0e3/national-childrens-mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-report-25oct2021> accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>10</sup> New Zealand ministry of health

[https://assets.learningfromhome.govt.nz/s3fs-public/2020-04/Tip%20sheet%20%20Wellbeing%20support%20for%20parents%20and%20caregivers.pdf?VersionId=V.Ww4fDgok\\_Z9hGhjuvhaMABczLdTOQM](https://assets.learningfromhome.govt.nz/s3fs-public/2020-04/Tip%20sheet%20%20Wellbeing%20support%20for%20parents%20and%20caregivers.pdf?VersionId=V.Ww4fDgok_Z9hGhjuvhaMABczLdTOQM) accessed 19.12.2022

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 2019	COVID-19, a new coronavirus, is identified in Wuhan, China.
January 2020	The World Health Organization (WHO) declares the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" <sup>11</sup> ."
March 2020	The WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic. Many countries around the world implement lockdowns and other measures to slow the spread of the virus.
April 2020	The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 surpasses one million globally.
May 2020	The WHO declares Africa as the next epicenter of the pandemic.
June 2020	The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 surpasses 10 million globally. The U.S. becomes the country with the highest number of confirmed cases.
September 2020	The World Health Organization (WHO) releases new guidelines on treatment for children and adolescents with mental disorders. <sup>12</sup>
November 2020	Multiple vaccines are developed and begin to be distributed globally
April 2021	The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 surpasses 110 million globally.

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<sup>11</sup> WHO

[https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/covid-19-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern-\(pheic\)-global-research-and-innovation-forum](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/covid-19-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern-(pheic)-global-research-and-innovation-forum) accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>12</sup> WHO

<https://www.who.int/news/item/28-09-2020-new-who-guidelines-on-promoting-mental-health-among-adolescents> accessed 19.12.2022

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF): The psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children<sup>13</sup> have been the focus of UNICEF's efforts to assist children and their families. During the pandemic, UNICEF supported the creation of online resources to assist children in coping with the stress and anxiety brought on by the pandemic and developed guidelines for mental health and psychosocial support for children and their families.
- Special session of the General Assembly in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, 5 November 2020 **(A/RES/75/4)**<sup>14</sup>
- Convention on the Rights of the Child of the United Nations **(A/RES/44/25)**<sup>15</sup>
- The World Health Organization: “Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>16</sup>” have been published by the WHO. These guidelines include specific suggestions for dealing with the psychological effects of the pandemic on children and young people.
- Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence Against Children: In 2019<sup>17</sup>, this position was created to deal with child abuse, including psychological abuse. The Coronavirus pandemic has underlined the significance of tending to the mental effects of the pandemic on children and youth, and the Unique Agent has called for expanded efforts to help the emotional wellness and prosperity of kids during the pandemic.

## Possible Solutions

### Make mental health services more accessible

By giving children admittance to psychological well-being administrations. A psychological well-being administration is an organization or program that focuses on promoting and maintaining mental health and emotional well-being through a range of services, such as counseling, therapy, and support groups. An example would be treatment of the adolescent or child, they can be assisted with adapting to the pressure and nervousness brought about by the pandemic. This could incorporate cellular services to make it simpler for kids and the youth to get access remotely.

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<sup>13</sup> UNICEF

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/impact-covid-19-poor-mental-health-children-and-young-people-tip-iceberg> accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>14</sup>UN <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/76> accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>15</sup> UNHR <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>16</sup>WHO <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf> accessed 19.12.2022

<sup>17</sup>UN <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/> accessed 19.12.2022

## Assistance for caregivers and parents

Giving support and resources to parents and caregivers can help them better support their children's mental health and help them manage their own stress and anxiety. Resources for mental health, parent support groups, and training programs are all examples of this.

## Education about mental health

Mental health literacy and education can assist children and adolescents in comprehending their feelings and learning how to manage stress and anxiety. Promoting mental health education in schools and other community settings, as well as providing educators with resources and training, could be examples of this.

## Help with socialising

It can be beneficial to children and young people's mental health and well-being to encourage them to connect with others and to maintain social connections. Promoting in-person connections when it is safe to do so as well as online social platforms and activities could be examples of this.

## Self-care

Stress management and overall well-being can be improved by encouraging children and adolescents to engage in self-care activities such as exercise, relaxation techniques, and hobbies.

Because different strategies may be required for various age groups and populations, it is essential to take a multifaceted approach when addressing the psychological effects of COVID-19 on children and youth. Additionally, it is crucial to maintain a close eye on the mental health requirements of children and adolescents and to adjust strategies as necessary.

On how to implement these solutions look towards increasing access to mental health care. This can include expanding insurance coverage for mental health services, increasing funding for mental health providers, and even making it easier for young people to access mental health care.

Addressing stigma, It is important to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and encourage young people to seek help when they need it. This can be done through public education campaigns and efforts to destigmatize mental health treatment.

Providing support in schools. Schools can play a critical role in supporting the mental health of students. Promoting resilience and coping skills, by helping young people develop resilience and coping skills can be an important way to prevent and mitigate the psychological effects of COVID-19. This can

include providing resources and support for stress management and coping with trauma. Addressing the social and economic impacts of the pandemic:

Lastly the psychological effects of COVID-19 may be more widely seen by the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, such as job loss, food insecurity, and housing insecurity. Addressing these issues can be an important part of addressing the mental health needs of young people. Overall, implementing solutions will require a complex approach that involves a large range of stakeholders, including governments, schools, community organizations, and mental health providers.

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