

Did the COVID-19 pandemic impact population's mental health?

Cécile Forgeot

C Forgeot¹, I Pontais¹, J Khirredine², I Gillaizeau³, E Du Roscoat³, A Fouillet¹, E Bauchet², C Caserio-Schonemann¹

¹DATA, Santé Publique France, Saint Maurice, France

²DMNTT, Santé Publique France, Saint Maurice, France

³DPPS, Santé Publique France, Saint Maurice, France

Contact: cecile.forgeot@santepubliquefrance.fr

Background:

Sanitary, societal and economic effects due to the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to an impact on population's mental health. Santé publique France (SpF), the French public health agency set up a specific monitoring based on emergency department (ED) and GP's associations (GPs) SOS Médecins (SOSMed) data to early assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health.

Methods:

Since 2004, SpF daily collects data from ED participating to the OSCOUR[®] network (93% of French emergency attendances) and from SOSMed network. For both data sources, visits for several mental health disorders were analyzed for different age groups in 2020 and 2021 (until Week 16) and compared to

years 2018 and 2019 (mean) with a focus on the two lockdown periods (resp W11 to W19-2020 and W45 to W51-2020)

Results:

During the first lockdown period, while a major decrease of all-cause activity was observed in both networks, the number of SOSMed visits for anxiety increased in adults with a peak of +115% in W13-2020 compared to 2018-19 and remained higher than the 2 previous years until W12-2021. An increase in ED visits for mood disorders (including depression) for children (especially 11-17yo) were also observed from W36 (back to school) and reinforced at the beginning of the 2nd lockdown period to reach +111% in W12-2021 compared to 2018-19. 11-17yo children were also concerned by an increase in ED visits for suicide ideation since W36 (peak of +170% in W12-2021) and suicide attempt from W04-2021 to W12-2021 (peaks of +45% and +41% in W05 and W10-2021).

Discussion:

ED and SOSMed visits are the most reactive data sources to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of French population. These results confirm that the impact concerns all age groups. For children, the condition seems to worsen in 2021 and highlight the need of a close follow-up of the situation and the reinforcement of preventive measures in order to prevent long-term impacts.

Key messages:

- Results confirm an impact of COVID-19 pandemic on populations mental health.
- Impact of COVID-19 on mental health: a long-term issue for children?