

COVID-19 and Mental Health

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Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During
the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020
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Summary

What is already known about this topic?

Communities have faced mental health challenges related to COVID-19-associated morbidity, mortality, and mitigation activities.

What is added by this report?

During June 24–30, 2020, U.S. adults reported considerably elevated adverse mental health conditions associated with COVID-19. Younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation.

Overall, 40.9% of respondents reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder (30.9%),

symptoms of a trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic (26.3%), and

having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19 (13.3%).

The percentage of respondents who reported having seriously considered suicide in the 30 days before completing the survey (10.7%)

was significantly higher among respondents aged 18–24 years (25.5%), minority racial/ethnic groups (Hispanic respondents [18.6%], non-Hispanic black [black] respondents [15.1%]),

self-reported unpaid caregivers for adults (30.7%), and

essential workers (21.7%).

Characteristic	All respondents who completed	Weighted %*						
		Conditions				Started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions¶	Seriously considered suicide in past 30 days	≥1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom
		Anxiety disorder †	Depressive disorder †	Anxiety or depressive disorder †	COVID-19-related TSRD§			
All respondents	5,470 (100)	25.5	24.3	30.9	26.3	13.3	10.7	40.9
Gender								
Female	2,784 (50.9)	26.3	23.9	31.5	24.7	12.2	8.9	41.4
Male	2,676 (48.9)	24.7	24.8	30.4	27.9	14.4	12.6	40.5
Other	10 (0.2)	20.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	30.0

Overall 40.9 % of the 5470 who completed survey reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition

Suicidal ideation was more prevalent among males than among females.

	All respondents who completed surveys (100)	Anxiety disorder† (25.5)	Depressive disorder† (24.3)	Anxiety or depressive disorder† (30.90)	COVID-19-related TSRD§ (26.3)	Started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions¶ (13.3)	Seriously considered suicide in past 30 days (10.7)	≥1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom (40.9)
Age group (yrs)								
18–24	731 (13.4)	49.1	52.3	62.9	46.0	24.7	25.5	74.9
25–44	1,911 (34.9)	35.3	32.5	40.4	36.0	19.5	16.0	51.9
45–64	1,895 (34.6)	16.1	14.4	20.3	17.2	7.7	3.8	29.5
≥65	933 (17.1)	6.2	5.8	8.1	9.2	3.0	2.0	15.1

All symptoms (including suicidal ideation) more common in persons aged 18-24 years

	All respondents who completed surveys (100)	Anxiety disorder† (25.5)	Depressive disorder† (24.3)	Anxiety or depressive disorder† (30.90)	COVID-19-related TSRD§ (26.3)	Started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions¶ (13.3)	Seriously considered suicide in past 30 days (10.7)	≥1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom (40.9)
Race/ Ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic	3,453 (63.1)	24.0	22.9	29.2	23.3	10.6	7.9	37.8
Black, non-Hispanic	663 (12.1)	23.4	24.6	30.2	30.4	18.4	15.1	44.2
Asian, non-Hispanic	256 (4.7)	14.1	14.2	18.0	22.1	6.7	6.6	31.9
Other race or multiple races, non-Hispanic**	164 (3.0)	27.8	29.3	33.2	28.3	11.0	9.8	43.8
Hispanic, any race(s)	885 (16.2)	35.5	31.3	40.8	35.1	21.9	18.6	52.1
Unknown	50 (0.9)	38.0	34.0	44.0	34.0	18.0	26.0	48.0

1. Hispanic respondents reported higher prevalences of symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder, COVID-19-related TSRD,

increased substance use, and suicidal ideation than did non-Hispanic whites (whites) or non-Hispanic

2. Black respondents reported increased substance use and past 30-day serious consideration of suicide

	All respondents who completed surveys (100)	Anxiety disorder† (25.5)	Depressive disorder† (24.3)	Anxiety or depressive disorder† (30.90)	COVID-19–related TSRD§ (26.3)	Started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions¶ (13.3)	Seriously considered suicide in past 30 days (10.7)	≥1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom (40.9)
Employment status††								
Employed	3,431 (62.7)	30.1	29.1	36.4	32.1	17.9	15.0	47.8
Essential	1,785 (32.6)	35.5	33.6	42.4	38.5	24.7	21.7	54.0
Nonessential	1,646 (30.1)	24.1	24.1	29.9	25.2	10.5	7.8	41.0
Unemployed	761 (13.9)	32.0	29.4	37.8	25.0	7.7	4.7	45.9
Retired	1,278 (23.4)	9.6	8.7	12.1	11.3	4.2	2.5	19.6
1. Symptoms of a COVID-19–related TSRD, increased substance use, and suicidal ideation were more prevalent among employed than unemployed respondents		2. Also increased among essential workers than nonessential workers						

	All respondents who completed surveys (100)	Anxiety disorder† (25.5)	Depressive disorder† (24.3)	Anxiety or depressive disorder† (30.90)	COVID-19 –related TSRD§ (26.3)	Started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions¶ (10.5)	Seriously considered suicide in past 30 days (10.7)	≥1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom (40.9)
Unpaid adult caregiver status§§								
Yes	1,435 (26.2)	47.6	45.2	56.1	48.4	32.9	30.7	66.6
No	4,035 (73.8)	17.7	16.9	22.0	18.4	6.3	3.6	31.8
1. Adverse conditions also were more prevalent among unpaid caregivers for adults than among those who were not						2. Particularly large differences in increased substance use (32.9% versus 6.3%) and suicidal ideation (30.7% versus 3.6%)		

	All respondents who completed surveys (100)	Anxiety disorder† (25.5)	Depressive disorder† (24.3)	Anxiety or depressive disorder† (30.90)	COVID-19-related TSRD§ (26.3)	Started or increased substance use to cope with pandemic-related stress or emotions¶ (13.3)	Seriously considered suicide in past 30 days (10.7)	≥1 adverse mental or behavioral health symptom (40.9)
Know someone who had positive test results for SARS-CoV-2								
Yes	1,109 (20.3)	23.8	21.9	29.6	21.5	12.9	7.5	39.2
No	4,361 (79.7)	26.0	25.0	31.3	27.5	13.4	11.5	41.3
Knew someone who died from COVID-19								
Yes	428 (7.8)	25.8	20.6	30.6	28.1	11.3	7.6	40.1
No	5,042 (92.2)	25.5	24.7	31.0	26.1	13.4	10.9	41.0

Knowing someone who has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 or died from COVID-19 is associated with less suicidal ideation.

Implications

What are the implications for public health practice?

The public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic should increase intervention and prevention efforts to address associated mental health conditions.

Community-level efforts, including

health communication strategies, should prioritize

1. young adults,
2. racial/ethnic minorities,
3. essential workers, and
4. unpaid adult caregivers.

Implications

What are the implications personally?