

Question:

Are children, who have lived through the Covid pandemic compared to children who did not at higher risk for developing a mental illness?

Summary:**Primary:**

What may have seemed to be an exciting extended spring break for students ended up being a devastating global pandemic that changed everyone's lives forever. School closures were only the beginning of the negative ripple effects that Covid portrayed to the pediatric population. For some students, school is primarily for educational or recreational activities, however, other students rely on school to provide them with safety, socialization, or guidance. "With the sudden enforcement of school closures, the inherent loss of routines and predictability may cause distress in children and exacerbate anxiety and other existing mental health conditions. Without in-person interactions with teachers, guidance counselors, and qualified mental health support staff, there are fewer opportunities to identify and support mental health concerns." (Freeman et al., 2021) Furthermore, low-class families who are unable to provide daily meals rely on schools to feed their children. "Combined with pandemic-related under- and unemployment, the loss of school-based meals may further contribute to decreased access to nutritious food for at-risk children with subsequent health risks such as obesity and micronutrient deficiencies. (Freeman et al., 2021)

Secondary:

Besides schools, other places that children valued were shut down resulting in additional health concerns. The children and adolescent population are considered the most socially active population compared to other groups. However, children were forced from personal interaction to social isolation. In addition, since areas like amusement centers or indoor and outdoor parks were closed, this caused children to spend more time on the internet than being physically active. "Problematic internet usage was seen to result in psychological distress characterized by excessive time spent gaming, on one's smartphone, and social media. This has been supported by research finding that problematic internet use is associated with depression, anxiety, and other

health problems.” (Panchal et al., 2021) Additionally, physical activity and a nutritional diet have been proven to help aid in depression and anxiety, however, children lacked these the most.

Tertiary:

Lastly, children became victims of the pressure Covid caused on their households. As a result of the stress, there was an increase in child abuse, neglect, and maltreatment around the world.

“Parenting stress, anxiety, and depression emanating from economic vulnerabilities and social isolation are established predictors of child abuse and IPV.” (Abdullah et al., 2021)

Unfortunately, government officials did not make judgments based on a child’s safety in their home. As restrictions worsened, family violence heightened since families were trapped together in their homes unable to leave. Although the quarantine did an adequate job of keeping the public from contracting Covid-19, it failed children in many areas.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is no surprise that there has been an increase in suicidal ideations among the youth since the pandemic started. “Young people, who are at higher risk of developing mental health problems than adults, may be particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of isolation, including school closures, due to the disruption lockdown causes on their physical activity and social interaction.” (Panchal et al., 2021). Furthermore, school closures took away a child’s only source of nutrition, safety, and socialization. “While school closures are necessary to help limit the spread of COVID-19, there may be unintended but significant consequences to the health and development of children and youth.” (Freeman et al., 2021) In addition, parents had to tackle the role of a teacher without the proper tools or resources to do so, causing a halt in children’s education. Additionally, there was a decrease in physical activity since children relied on PE or after-school programs for playtime. As restrictions grew tenser, children spent less time outside and more time online. “An increased social media usage was associated with a higher risk of developing anxiety symptoms or depression symptoms.” (Panchal et al., 2021) Consequently, locking the doors did not only prevent the virus from entering but locked children inside from escaping violence. Although children were the strongest population to fight off symptoms from Covid, they are losing on every front.

Work Cited:**Primary Article**

Freeman, S. J., Cohen-Silver, J., Baker, J. M., Rozenblyum, E., & Suleman, S. (2021). The ripple effects of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Canadian Family Physician*.

<https://www.cfp.ca/news/2020/05/13/05-13>

Secondary Article

Panchal, U., Salazar de Pablo, G., Franco, M., Moreno, C., Parellada, M., Arango, C., & Fusar-Poli, P. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 lockdown on child and adolescent mental health: systematic review. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-021-01856-w>

Tertiary Article

Abdullah, A., Cudjoe, E., Ryu, W., & Emery, C. R. (2021). During and beyond the frequent lockdowns: Addressing the pandemic (COVID-19)–related family violence through informal social control. *Developmental Child Welfare*, 3(3), 225-234.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/25161032211046409>