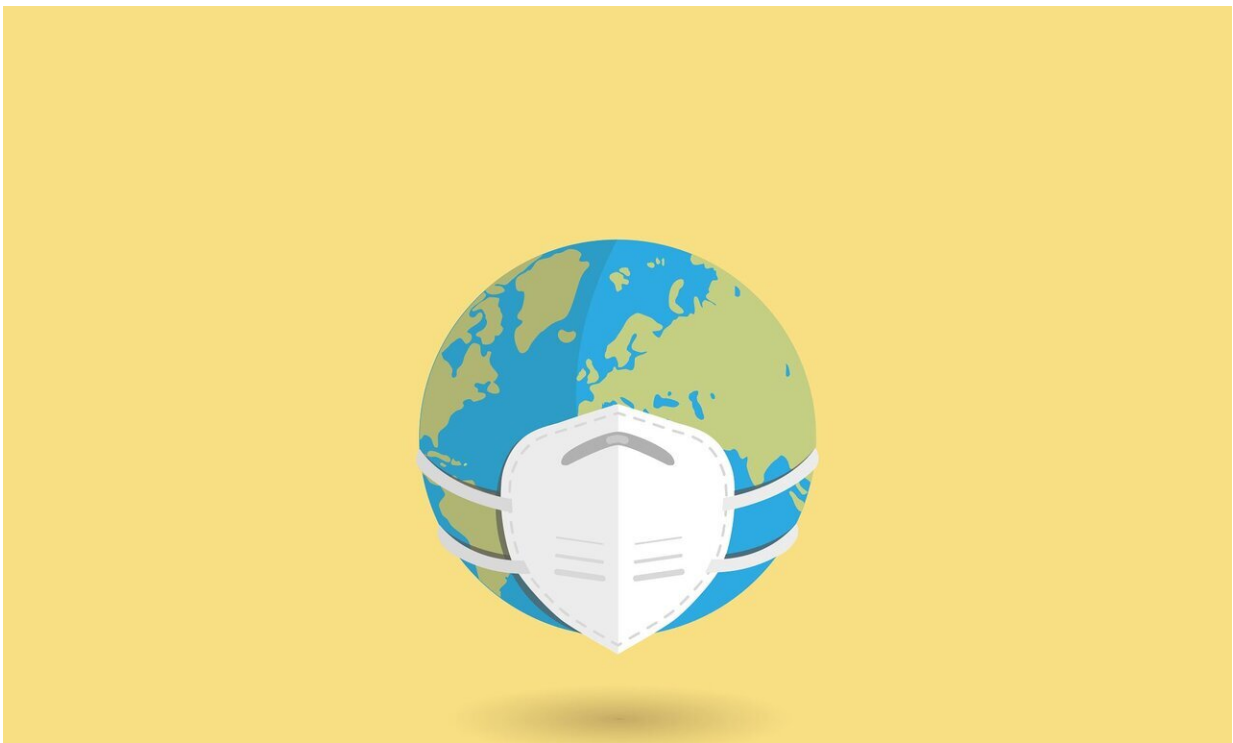


# How has emergency department use for children's mental health changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

February 24 2022

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The early COVID-19 pandemic brought overall declines in children's mental health–related emergency department visits, according to a study in *Psychiatric Research and Clinical Practice* that analyzed electronic

health records from four U.S. academic health systems.

Children's [mental health](#)–related emergency department use declined from the spring through the fall of 2020 (–25.5%) compared with 2019, with substantial variation by season, sex, race, ethnicity, age group, and diagnosis.

When controlling for demographic shifts, visits among children with intellectual disabilities, [developmental disorders](#), and childhood-onset disorders (including attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder) were especially reduced during the early pandemic.

"Early pandemic-associated shifts in use of emergency mental health services among children were highly variable and may have differentially affected children and families particularly vulnerable to loss of school-based resources," said lead author Juliet Beni Edgcomb, MD Ph.D., of the UCLA-Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. "Going forward, we need to better understand the longitudinal impacts of instructional disruptions and other COVID-19–related changes on children's mental health use."

**More information:** Juliet Beni Edgcomb et al, Mental Health-Related Emergency Department Visits Among Children During The Early COVID-19 Pandemic, *Psychiatric Research and Clinical Practice* (2022). [DOI: 10.1176/appi.prcp.20210036](https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.prcp.20210036)

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