

## Adolescent Mental Health During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Dear Editor,

while physical health is understandably the top priority during a pandemic, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent mental health safeguards should be a top concern, particularly for adolescents. Indeed, previous research has indicated that, compared to the mental health of adults, the mental health of young people is often disproportionately affected by disasters [1].

Furthermore, the developmental characteristics of adolescence along with the psychological vulnerabilities of this stage [2], make adolescence particularly important to study in light of the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From a worldwide estimate, in the year 2020 between 10-20% of adolescents would have suffered from mental health problems for the first time [3], but in our opinion, few studies have taken into consideration any changes in psychopathological aspects, quality of life, hospitalizations due to psychiatric emergencies or suicide attempts in adolescents already suffering from psychiatric disorders. Indeed, research has focused mainly on the use of substances [4-6], on anorexia nervosa [7-9], and on obsessive-compulsive disorder [10]. Only one study reported that during the pandemic, pre-pandemic abused adolescents experienced higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and higher rates of anxiety [11].

Furthermore, there are no studies on how psychotherapy already underway could have attenuated or stabilized psychopathological conditions or quality of life. New research is needed to fill the gaps in current research.

Due to dramatic and sudden changes in their lives during the pandemic, thousands of teenagers around the world could still be at risk for psychopathological disorders creating a mental health "pandemic" scenario. We believe they deserve an inclusive response in terms of global health measures to avert potentially serious and long-lasting effects in terms of marginalization, stigma and psychopathological developments. In this sense, we believe that shared care between services for adolescence and services for adult life is essential, in order to offer

the best possible support in such a delicate phase of life.

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