

stress at home at wave 1 (OR=3.04, 95%CI:1.62-5.71), and at wave 2, the size of this difference increased (OR=4.57, 95%CI:2.60-8.03). At wave 1, SGM youth were likely than non-SGM youth to seriously consider attempting suicide within the last year (OR=4.62, 95% CI:2.50-8.52), and the size of this difference increased at wave 2 (OR=6.53, 95%CI:3.26-13.08).

Conclusions: Findings indicate that the pandemic may have exacerbated mental health and suicide related disparities between SGM and non-SGM youth, especially stress at home and suicidal ideation. Findings provide insight for mental health professionals, educators, and communities regarding the mental health needs of SGM youth during the pandemic and can inform innovative clinic-, school-, and family-level strategies among adolescents.

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8.

“IT WAS SUFFOCATING”: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS ENGAGED IN CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Purpose: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a decline in the physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being for many adolescents and young adults (AYA) in the United States. Early research suggests that AYA with existing mental health conditions may be susceptible to adverse mental health effects from pandemic-related disruptions. However, the impact of COVID-19 risk mitigation interventions (e.g., school closures and social gathering restrictions) on mental health outcomes among AYA remains poorly understood. The purpose of this analysis was to qualitatively examine the perspectives of AYA on the impact of COVID-19 disruptions in order to develop strategies for promoting and improving mental health outcomes.

Methods: From April – August 2021, we enrolled 19 AYA who were engaged in care at the Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital Adolescent Health Specialty Clinic prior to COVID-19. Eligibility criteria included being between the ages of 12-21 and having documented worsening mental health based on medical chart review. In-depth phone interviews were conducted by clinical staff and interview transcripts were auto-generated by Microsoft Teams software. Three research team members listened to the recorded audio files and edited the transcripts for accuracy. An initial coding guide was developed by senior investigators which was piloted and refined. After finalizing the coding guide, research assistant double-coded each transcript using Atlas.ti software. Upon completing the coding, the transcripts were compared to ensure agreement. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion among all the coders until reaching consensus. We then linked and classified the codes across transcripts to identify emergent themes. All study procedures were approved by the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Institutional Review Board.

Results: The study sample was mostly non-Hispanic White (n=13, 68%), female (n=16, 84%), with a median age of 16 (interquartile range: 15-17). Five key themes were identified. AYA consistently described negative mental health changes during the pandemic, including declining or new onset of depression, anxiety, and eating

disorders. Adverse mental health outcomes among AYA were provoked by experiences of loneliness and social isolation, especially due to school closures which disrupted routines, access to educational and social support, and key cultural milestones. AYA reported negative effects to their physical health (e.g., sleep, hygiene, physical activity, and diet) caused by a loss of motivation linked to mental health decline. The increased use of illicit substances was a notable strategy for coping with worsening mental health symptoms among AYA. Given the rapid changes in COVID-19 risk mitigation policy, AYA identified consistent support from parents, teachers, and clinicians as an approach to offset the potentially harmful mental consequences of the pandemic.

Conclusions: COVID-19 risk mitigation interventions have precipitated adverse mental health outcomes among AYA. Findings from this study deepen our understanding of the key factors influencing the psychosocial well-being of AYA during the pandemic. Our results may help inform researchers, clinicians, and policymakers to develop guidelines and community-based strategies for mitigating the potentially negative effects of pandemic-related disruptions to mental health among AYA.

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9.

ADHERENCE TO PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS IN TIKTOK CONTENT DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE SARS-COV-2 PANDEMIC

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Purpose: At the beginning of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended widespread shutdowns of schools, businesses, and other activities. Internet use increased dramatically, with the short-form video social media platform TikTok gaining popularity among adolescents and young adults (AYA). Displays of health behaviors on social media have been shown to impact actual health behaviors in AYA, yet the scope of prevention behaviors related to the current global pandemic is unprecedented. Therefore, the objective of this study was to evaluate adherence to CDC infection prevention guidelines and information about COVID-19 as represented by TikTok content creators, or influencers, at the beginning of the pandemic in the United States.

Methods: The study sample included content posted by the 150 most-followed influencers on TikTok between March 1, 2020 and April 27, 2020. Study team members identified and extracted all posts within the specified dates that referenced COVID-19 and/or pandemic precautions (e.g., social distancing, school closures). A codebook was developed based on the CDC Guidelines for COVID-19 prevention as of March 1, 2020 and included displays of behavior that either followed (e.g., staying home, washing hands) or did not follow (e.g., wearing a mask incorrectly) the guidelines at the time. Posts were also coded for the presence or absence of TikTok’s “learn the facts about COVID-19” banner, which had been implemented by the platform to combat misinformation. Rounds of 20-40 posts were used to train coders against a master coder, and coders began reviewing posts independently once agreement was over 80%. We performed descriptive statistics on content metadata and code frequency.