

Study finds major depression increased 60% in older adults from 2010 to 2019

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The prevalence of depression is increasing among older adults, but there

has not been a proportional increase in mental health treatment, according to a study published online Sept. 9 in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*.

Kevin H. Yang, M.D., from the University of California in San Diego, and colleagues used data from 31,502 participants in the U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2010 to 2019) to examine trends in [depression](#) and [mental health treatment](#) among older adults (aged 65 years and older).

The researchers found that during the study period, the estimated prevalence of past-year major depressive episodes among older adults increased from 2.0 to 3.2%, a 60% increase. Increases were identified among men, white individuals, widows, individuals with an annual household income of under \$20,000, or from \$20,000 to \$49,000, and those with a college degree. There were no significant changes observed for any form of past-year mental health treatment among those with a major depressive episode.

"These findings call for urgent expansion of treatment services and training of mental health professionals with expertise in [older adults](#) to meet the needs of this growing, vulnerable population," the authors write.

More information: Kevin H. Yang et al, Trends in major depressive episodes and mental health treatment among older adults in the United States, 2010–2019, *Journal of Affective Disorders* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2022.09.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.09.007)

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