

Myopia up in children confined to home during pandemic

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(HealthDay)—For children aged 6 to 8 years, home confinement during

the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with a significant myopic shift, according to a study published online Jan. 14 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Jiaxing Wang, M.D., Ph.D., from Emory University in Atlanta, and colleagues examined refractive changes and prevalence of myopia in [school-aged children](#) during the COVID-19 home confinement in a prospective cross-sectional study. School-based photoscreenings were included for 123,535 [children](#) aged 6 to 13 years from 10 [elementary schools](#) in China. The study was performed during 2015 to 2020.

The analysis included 194,904 test results for 389,808 eyes. The researchers identified a substantial myopic shift in the 2020 school-based photoscreenings versus 2015 to 2019 for children aged 6, 7, and 8 years (-0.32, -0.28, and -0.29 diopters, respectively). In the 2020 photoscreenings, the prevalence of myopia was higher than the highest prevalence within 2015 to 2019 for children aged 6 (21.5 versus 5.7 percent), 7 (26.2 versus 16.2 percent), and 8 (37.2 versus 27.7 percent) years old. For children aged 9 to 13 years, minimal differences were seen between 2020 and previous years for spherical equivalent refraction and the prevalence of myopia.

"The quarantine measures were and still are important and our best bet to reduce the spread of the virus," write the authors of an accompanying editorial. "Nevertheless, an intelligent lockdown might need to consider careful planning of indoor activities and preferably not restrict outdoor play in young children. That may help control a wave of quarantine [myopia](#)."

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