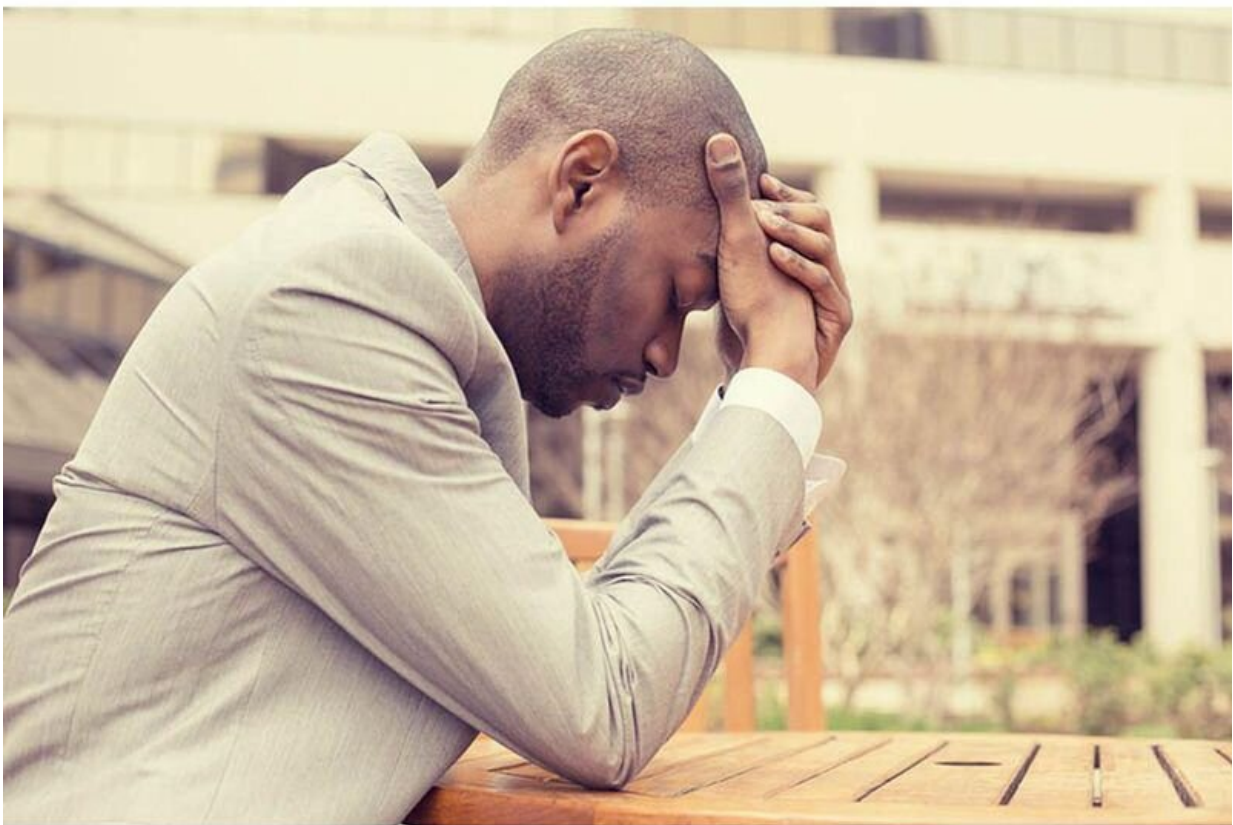


# Emergency mental health visits up after COVID-19 surges

March 23 2022

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Emergency departments may have increases in mental health (MH) visits

after COVID-19 surges, according to a study published online March 16 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Kayla N. Anderson, Ph.D., from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control in Atlanta, and colleagues examined changes in adult MH-related emergency department visits into the delta variant [pandemic](#) period and identified changes and inequities in these visits before and during COVID-19 case surges. Analysis included 107.8 million emergency visits among adults (aged 18 to 64 years) from Jan. 1, 2019, to Aug. 14, 2021.

The researchers found that MH-related emergency visit counts depended on the COVID-19 pandemic period examined, whether this was compared with other periods in the pandemic or prepandemic period, and which [mental disorder](#) was examined. Between- and within-group variation in emergency visits by race and ethnicity varied by pandemic period examined. MH-related emergency visits accounted for a larger proportion of emergency visits after a COVID-19 case peak versus during a peak (visit ratio, 1.04) and the corresponding prepandemic period (visit ratio, 1.11). After COVID-19 case peaks, there were increases noted in some disorders for adults aged 18 to 24 years.

"Public health practitioners should consider subpopulation-specific messaging and programmatic strategies that address differences in MH needs, particularly for those historically marginalized," the authors write.

**More information:** Kayla N. Anderson et al, Changes and Inequities in Adult Mental Health–Related Emergency Department Visits During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the US, *JAMA Psychiatry* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.0164](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.0164)

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