

Emerging Research on Population Health & the Impact of COVID-19 for People with Mental Health Conditions



A recent population health study reviewed electronic health records (EHR) for about 20% of the U.S. population.



Higher risks for COVID-19 infection, hospitalizations, & mortality in people with mental health conditions.

Data include over 61 million adult Americans, from 360 hospitals, and over 317,000 healthcare providers.

Wang, Q., Xu, R., & Volkow, N. (2021). Increased risk for COVID-19 infection and mortality in people with mental disorders: Analysis from electronic health records in the United States. *World Psychiatry*, 20, 124-130

Several factors affect this, including diagnosis, race, gender, and age.

- **Diagnosis:** Strongest effects/risks are among those experiencing depression & schizophrenia
 - **Race:** Higher impact among African Americans, especially African American people experiencing depression
 - **Gender:** Stronger impact among women, especially women with attention deficit and hyperactivity (ADHD)
 - **Age:** Stronger impact on older individuals, especially those living with schizophrenia
-
- **Having a mental health condition was the strongest predictor of COVID-19 even when accounting for other medical health issues like diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD), or cardiovascular diseases.**



People with mental health conditions were more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19.

Hospitalizations related to complications of COVID-19 were significantly higher among those with mental health conditions (27% v. 18%).

For people with mental health conditions, rates of hospitalization were highest among African Americans (34% v. 25%) and men compared to women (36% v. 24%)



People with mental health conditions were more likely to die as a result of COVID-19.

Mortality rates related to COVID-19 among people with mental health conditions also are significantly higher (8% vs. 5%).

These rates were highest among men compared to women (7% v. 3%)

Rates of death also were highest among individuals living with depression, particularly among men (14% v. 6%).



Depression continues to be the most prevalent mental health condition among individuals infected with COVID-19.

WHO announced in 2021 that depression continues to be the most disabling condition worldwide, and is surging in relation to COVID-19.

42% of people surveyed by the U.S. Census Bureau (2020) reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in December, an increase from 11% the previous year.

Data from other surveys suggest that the picture is similar for global mental health[i]

[i] Abbot, A. (2021). COVID's mental-health toll: how scientists are tracking a surge in depression *Nature* 590, 194-195. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-00175-z>



Why depression?

- Studies show the common thread between mental health and COVID-19 is inflammation.
- **Inflammation** is more common among people with depression, but also people who experience schizophrenia.



Thresholds Health Literacy Center

[1] Wang, Q., Xu, R., & Volkow, N. (2021). Increased risk for COVID-19 infection and mortality in people with mental disorders: Analysis from electronic health records in the United States. *World Psychiatry*, 20, 124-130.

[1] Abbot, A. (2021). COVID's mental-health toll: how scientists are tracking a surge in depression *Nature* 590, 194-195. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-00175-z>

