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jointly with European Confederation of Primary Care Paediatricians ECPCP

Jointly held with
14th Congress of Croatian Paediatric Society
13th Congress Paediatric Section of the Croatian Nurses Association

Changes in the practice of primary care:
lessons learned from the COVID-19
pandemia

The effects of the pandemic on child and adolescent mental health



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Pandemic impact on children and adolescent

Pandemic direct impact on children and adolescent's **physical health** was low

they were forced at home mainly **to protect their parents and grandparents**

the health strategies adopted for **social distancing** heavily impacted on their psychological **well-being**

Risks to children during the covid-19 pandemic: some essential epidemiology. *BMJ* 2020;369:m2290

Recenti Prog Med 2021;112(5):347-359 | DOI [10.1701/3608.35872](https://doi.org/10.1701/3608.35872)

Recenti Prog Med 2021;112(5):360-370 | DOI [10.1701/3608.35873](https://doi.org/10.1701/3608.35873)

Child and adolescent mental health during Covid pandemic

- the **impact of school closure and social distances measures on psychological wellbeing** of youths during pandemic is a **relevant topic**
- 18 systematic reviews published in the last 12 months
- **we need to assess carefully the balance between harms and benefits** of such measures
- in terms of actual reduction of transmission and youths' psychological and physical harm, to generate robust evidence to inform policy decision.

COVID-19 **global** health effects on children and adolescent

less
vaccinations

more
postponed
medical visits

more inactivity
and poor diets

more sleep
disturbances

more anxiety
and
depression

more social
media misuse



**Prevalence of mental health
problems among children and
adolescents during the COVID-
19 pandemic**

Prevalence of mental health problems among children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

J Affect Disord. 2021
Oct 1;293:78-89.

Symptoms	pPrevalence*%	95% CI
depression	29	17 - 40
anxiety	26	16 - 35
sleep disorders	44	21 - 68
posttraumatic stress	48	21 - 68

*pPrevalence: pooled prevalence

- the **subgroup meta-analysis**: adolescents and **females** exhibited **higher prevalence** of **depression** and **anxiety** compared to children and males, respectively.
- 23 studies, conducted in **China** ++ and **Turkey**, 57,927 children and adolescents

Impact of social distancing for covid-19 on the psychological well-being of youths.

Recenti ProgMed. 2021
May;112(5):360-370

Symptoms

Prevalence %

13-18 yrs old

5-12 yrs old

depression

22-44

6.3-23

anxiety

19-64

19-78

- Among **pre-school children**: some studies found worsening of behavioural and emotional problems, while others did not
- among **adolescents** mainly a relevant worsening of the psychological wellbeing was found
- 27 studies, mostly the first wave of pandemic, mostly in **UK** (37,6%) and **China** (27%)



BAMBINI E LOCKDOWN: LA PAROLA AI GENITORI*

Report di ricerca a cura di: Mantovani, S.; Picca, M.; Ferri, P.; Bove, C.; Ripamonti D.; Manzoni P.; Cesa Bianchi A.; Mezzopane A.

On line questionnaire

3443 families from Lombardia (Italy)

age 1-5 years 49,8%

age 6-10 years 50,2%

Period of observation: July-August 2020

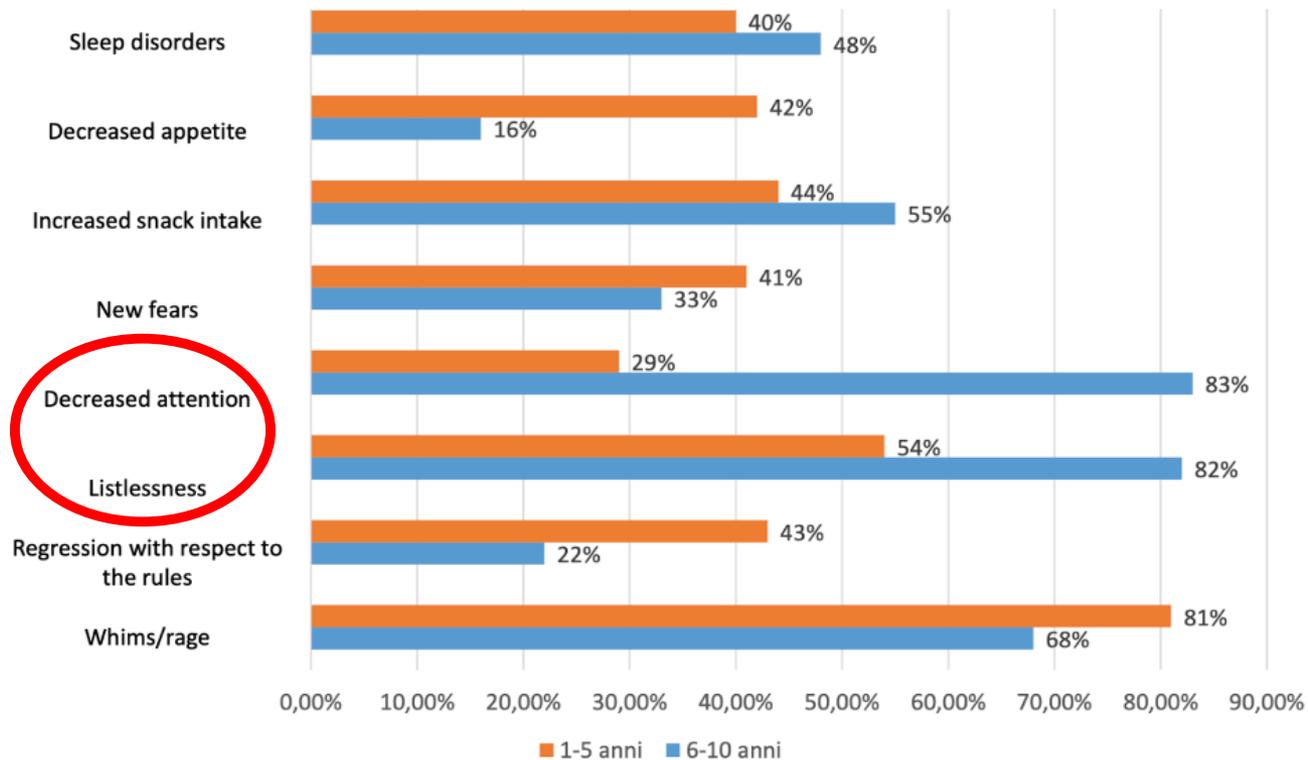
(end of first lockdown)

1 parent in smart working 39%

Both parents in smart working 29%

None in 31% of the families

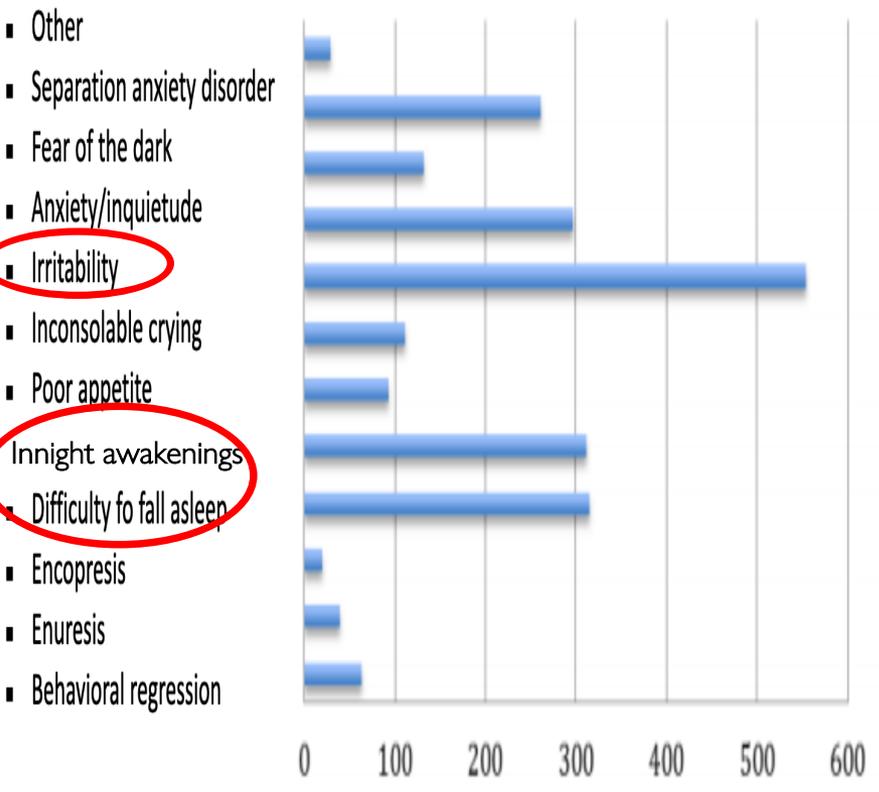
Behavioral indicators



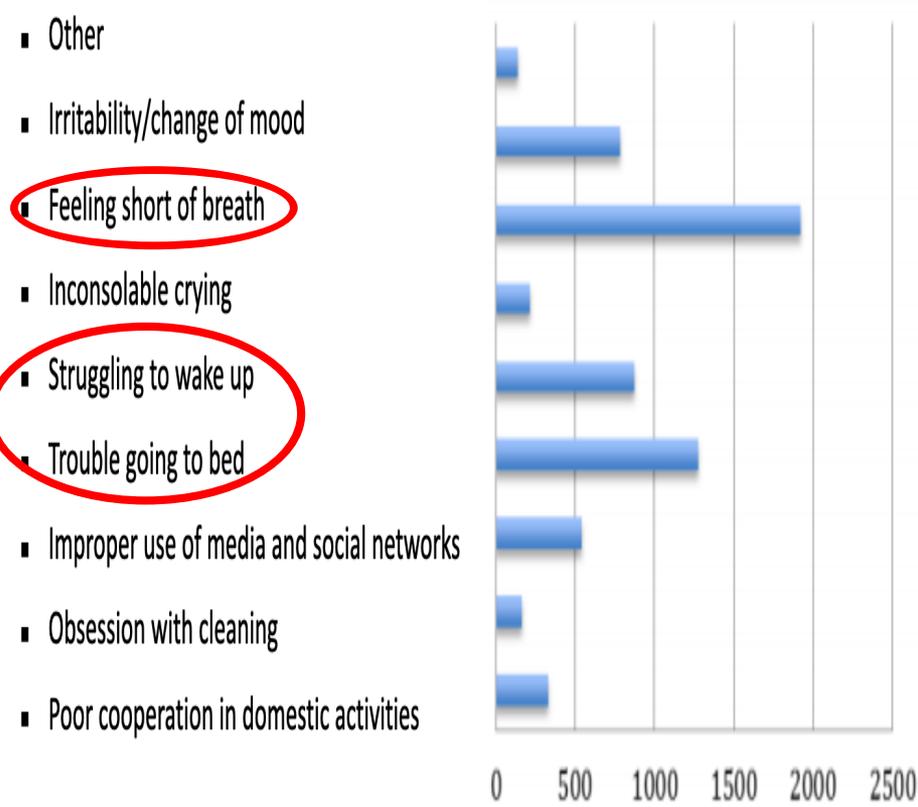
Behavioral disturbance or regression symptoms in 3251 children > 18 years



children under 6 years of age **65%**



children over 6 years of age **71%**



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- It's a Syndemic not a Pandemic

Impact of social distancing for covid-19 on the psychological well-being of youths.

Recenti ProgMed. 2021
May;112(5):360-370

- impaired social interactions, increased anxiety, depression, sleep and eating disorders, increased self-destructive behaviors and social media misuse, worsened **especially in boys disadvantaged or who already had a disorganized attachment or**
- **obese and depressed** adolescents worsened in both respects
- not only immediately after stress exposure, but **also later**, they must be followed over time

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- Family and caregiver's role

The potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child growth and development

J Pediatr (Rio J). Jul-Aug 2021;97(4):369-377.

- social restrictions, shutdowns, and school closures contribute to stress in parents and children and can become risk factors that threaten child growth and development
- epidemics can lead to high levels of stress in **parents** and children, which begin with concerns about children becoming infected
- **severe anxiety or depression among parents can produce acute stress disorder, anxiety and depression among children and elevated risk of toxic stress**

Review: The mental health implications for children and adolescents impacted by infectious outbreaks - a systematic review

Child Adolesc Ment Health. 2021
May;26(2):157-166.

- Children's psychological response to the outbreak appeared to be largely attributed to how their **parents**, healthcare providers and the media communicated the events.
- However, they were also able to demonstrate **resilience** during outbreaks with the right support.
- 11 articles, most of all qualitative or retrospective hospital record data.

Psychological and Behavioral Impact of Lockdown and Quarantine Measures for COVID-19 Pandemic on Children, Adolescents and Caregivers

J Trop Pediatr. 2021
Jan29;67(1):fmaa122

Symptoms	pPrevalence %	
	children	caregivers
Anxiety	34.5	52.3%
Depression	41.7	27.4
Irritability	42.3	
Inattention	30.8	
Boredom	35.2	
Fear of Covid-19	22.5	
Sleep disturbance	21.3	
Negative behavior / psychol. state	79.4	

- Children with pre-existing behavioral problems like autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder have a higher probability of their behavioral symptoms worsening.
- 15 studies, 22996 children/adolescents, mostly in **India**

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- Interventions

A qualitative analysis: Mental Health of Children and Adolescents Amidst COVID-19 and Past Pandemics

Int J Environ Res
PublicHealth.2021
Mar26;18(7):3432. ph1
8073432.

- There is a paucity of studies on effectiveness of psychosocial interventions employed during previous and the current pandemic to promote children's and adolescents' mental health
- **pandemics effects** detected, according to a qualitative data analysis method, are stress, worry, helplessness, social and risky behavioral problems
- **Helpful interventions:** art-based programs, support services, and clinician-led mental health and psychosocial services, effectively decrease mental health issues among children and adolescents
- **18 studies:** experimental randomized and nonrandomized controlled trials, observational studies, and qualitative studies

Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health in Adolescents

Int J Environ Res Public
Health. 2021 Mar
3;18(5):2470.

- **adolescents** experienced not only high rates of anxiety, depression, stress, but also higher frequency of alcohol and cannabis abuse
- **Positive impact:** social support, positive coping skills during home quarantining, and parent-child discussions
- The whole of the available resources and therapies are needed to help adolescents to mediate the adjustments caused by the pandemic
- 16 quantitative studies, conducted in 2019-2021, 40,076 participants.

Conclusions

- children and adolescents hardly suffered the consequences of social distancing and lockdown
- the highest levels of stress (toxic stress) are especially in low-income families
- rehabilitation of the most affected ones consists in understanding the vulnerable people needs
- Primary care pediatricians are the forefront, obviously linked to the hospital setting, but
- the sanitary work must be integrated to social interventions towards the people at high risk, to concretely intervening on families, at schools and local contexts



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PRIMARY CARE PAEDIATRICIANS

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Thank you for your attention