The Effects of COVID-19 on Children, Youth & Families Across Populations

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COVID-19 has significantly impacted children and adolescents physical and mental health.

Black, Latinx and Native American youth have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Poverty and financial inequality have further exacerbated the effects of the pandemic among poor youth.
Background

- Depression and anxiety have been noted with H1N1, Ebola, and prior flu epidemics.
- Black, Latinx, and Native Americans were 2-5x more likely to be hospitalized or die.
- The contagious nature of Delta has led to increased fear, especially in minority communities.
- Pandemic overlapped with a collective outcry against racism and inequality.
- Until the Delta variant, this was primarily a disease that was limited to the adult population.
Trending COVID in Youth

Cases
May 21 Aug. 20
+720% Children
+270% All

Hospitalizations
May 21 Aug. 20
+356% Children
+122% All

Deaths
May 21 Aug. 20
+229% Children
+115% All

American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021
Psychological Challenges

- Increased domestic violence
- Increased family psychological distress
- Increased demand for mental health services
- Increased parental distress
Educational Challenges

- Significant negative impact on school readiness
- Virtual learning increased distress
- Increasing educational gaps
- Family loss (death, jobs, family)
- Loss of skills
  - White students 1-3 months behind
  - Students of color 3-5 months behind
MIS-C more common in child cases

Pediatric disparities are similar to those of adults

Essential workers and public facing jobs are more at risk

AA and Latinx youth are more likely in multigenerational homes
Social Isolation

- Social isolation for extended time is linked to increased mental health issues
- Worsening of current symptoms (PTSD, ADHD, Developmental Disorders)
- Lack of peer interaction – decreased cognition, developmental changes, and emotional changes
- Increasing use of technology
Institutionalization

- Juvenile Justice communal settings increased risk of outbreaks
- Frequently overlooked pediatric populations
- Shuttering or programs that cater to institutionalization of youth
- Limiting population which have an impact on care that is available
Other Issues

- Financial inequality
- Economic instability
- Technology barriers
- Community health carriers
Future Recommendations

- School systems must think creatively to encourage ongoing learning over the summer.
  - Summer School
  - Summer Camps
  - Volunteerism

- Health systems must engage with other systems (school, social welfare, juvenile justice) to educate and empower youth and families.

- Advocate for full funding of social welfare programs for youth and families to create an adequate safety net.