

Psychiatric Emergency Department Visits among U.S. Youth

September 06, 2019

News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark Research

From 2011 to 2015, psychiatric emergency department (ED) visits increased by 28% (from 31.3 to 40.2 per 1,000) for U.S. youth ages 6 to 24. Psychiatric ED visits may be an indicator of unmet mental health treatment needs.

Researchers used data from the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey to identify psychiatric ED visits among youth between 2011 and 2015. Psychiatric ED visits were defined as those indicating a psychiatric disorder, a psychiatric reason for a visit, or a mental health procedure through standard medical coding systems. Youth were categorized into one of three groups: children (ages 6 to 11), adolescents (ages 12 to 17), and young adults (ages 18 to 24).

The probability of a psychiatric ED visit increased significantly over time for adolescents and young adults, but not for children. The probability of a psychiatric ED visit also rose significantly for females, African Americans, and Hispanics. In addition, there was an increase in the probability of a suicide-related visit over time among adolescents.

There are growing mental health needs in [ED settings](#) [1], particularly for adolescents. This may reflect a lack of community-based mental health treatment options. Additional support is needed to help ED providers appropriately identify and treat mental health problems. Further, mental health promotion and early intervention approaches in the community can help support youth with mental health needs.

Kalb, L. G., Stapp, E. K., Ballard, E. D., Holingue, C., Keefer, A., & Riley, A. (2019). Trends in psychiatric emergency department visits among youth and young adults in the U.S. *Pediatrics*, 143(4). Advance online publication. doi: 10.1542/peds.2018-2192

Links within this resource

[1] <http://www.sprc.org/settings/emergency-departments>

Printed on 05/26/2020 from <http://www.sprc.org/news/psychiatric-emergency-department-visits-among-us-youth>

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center at EDC is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), under Grant No. 5U79SM062297.

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this product do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of CMHS, SAMHSA, or HHS.

Copyright © 2002-2019 by Education Development Center, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

EDC Education
Development
Center