

# Problems of Mental Health: Growth of Mental Illness Between Young People and the Population After the Pandemy of Covid-19

**Otamurodova Khurshidabonu Bakhtiyor qizi**

5th year student of the Faculty of Pediatrics of the State Medical University of Samarkad

**Otamurodov Azizbek Bakhtiyor o'g'li**

Samarkand State Medical University is the 2nd year student of the faculty of treatment

---

**Received:** 2025, 15, Jun

**Accepted:** 2025, 21, Jul

**Published:** 2025, 19, Aug

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and BioScience Academic Publishing. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).



Open Access

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

**Annotation:** The COVID-19 pandemic not only caused a global public health emergency but also led to profound consequences on the mental well-being of populations worldwide. Social isolation, prolonged lockdowns, economic instability, and fear of infection created unprecedented psychological stress. This study investigates the surge of mental health disorders, particularly among adolescents and young adults, during and after the pandemic. By analyzing global and regional data, the research highlights the increase in depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse, while also identifying gaps in mental healthcare services. The findings stress the urgent need for integrated mental health strategies, accessible psychological services, and public education to mitigate long-term consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic represented one of the greatest global public health crises of the twenty-first century, and its consequences extended well beyond physical illness. It significantly disrupted the mental well-being of populations across age groups and geographic regions. Young people, particularly adolescents and university students, were disproportionately affected due to academic disruptions, social isolation, excessive reliance

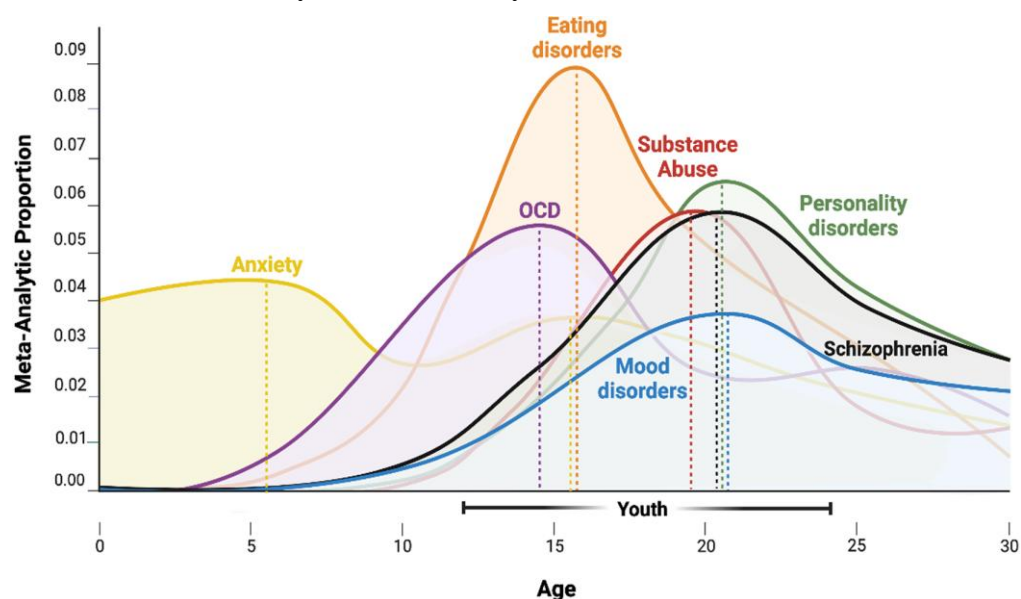
---

on digital technology, and the uncertainty of their future prospects. Adults, meanwhile, suffered heightened stress as a result of unemployment, economic instability, bereavement, and social disconnection. This article aims to analyze the multifaceted growth of mental health disorders in both young people and the broader population following the pandemic. The study synthesizes available international evidence and contextualizes findings within the regional experience of Central Asia, with a particular focus on post-pandemic psychosocial shifts, increased incidence of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and the strain on healthcare systems. Moreover, it emphasizes the pressing need for governments and institutions to prioritize mental health policy, expand access to services, strengthen resilience-building strategies, and combat stigma.

**Keywords:** mental health, COVID-19, depression, anxiety, adolescents, stress disorders, post-pandemic healthcare.

## Introduction

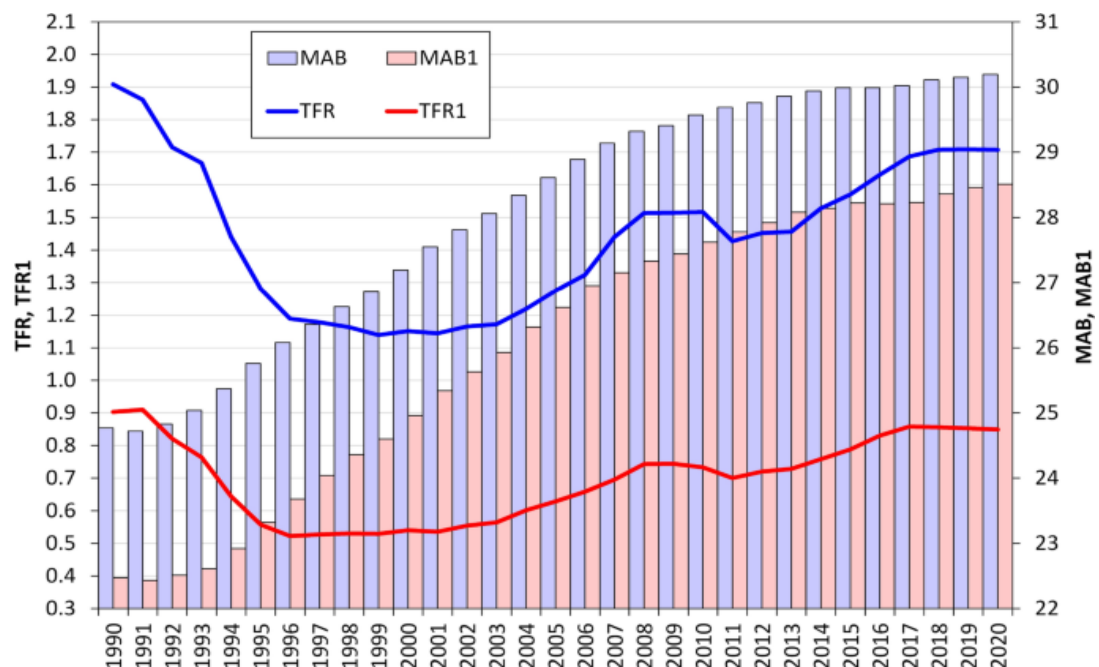
The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically altered the structure of societies across the globe. While its immediate focus was on physical health, especially respiratory complications and mortality, it quickly became clear that its psychological impact was equally severe. Quarantine measures, school closures, and the shift to online learning disrupted the social and emotional development of children and young people. Similarly, the general population faced unprecedented stress due to job losses, financial insecurity, and uncertainty about the future.



Epidemiological data collected during the pandemic revealed a sharp rise in cases of depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and stress-related disorders. Young people were particularly vulnerable, as they faced academic disruption, lack of peer support, and exposure to excessive digital media. Although healthcare systems managed to adapt to the physical consequences of COVID-19, the psychological impact remained underestimated and under-treated. Thus, understanding the growth of mental illness in the post-pandemic era is crucial for building resilient healthcare systems and healthier societies. The coronavirus pandemic altered the trajectory of modern healthcare in ways few could have anticipated. Initially understood as a respiratory illness with potential for severe complications, COVID-19 soon revealed itself as a systemic crisis encompassing not only biological vulnerability but also psychological fragility. For much of 2020, global attention centered on reducing infection rates, increasing hospital capacity, and developing vaccines. Yet, while the world was preoccupied with the physical dimension of the disease, another, more insidious crisis was quietly unfolding: a surge in mental illness. Lockdowns, physical distancing, school closures, and restrictions on movement, though necessary for infection control, deprived millions of their ordinary coping mechanisms. Social bonds weakened, educational routines disintegrated, workplaces dissolved into remote or precarious formats, and families endured prolonged uncertainty. Anxiety, depression, and insomnia became nearly universal experiences, albeit in varying degrees of severity. Adolescents faced the sudden removal of peer networks, which play a critical role in identity development. Many young individuals reported loneliness, decreased motivation, and struggles with online education.

## Materials and Methods

This study is based on a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. Data was collected from international health organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), alongside national statistics from the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan.

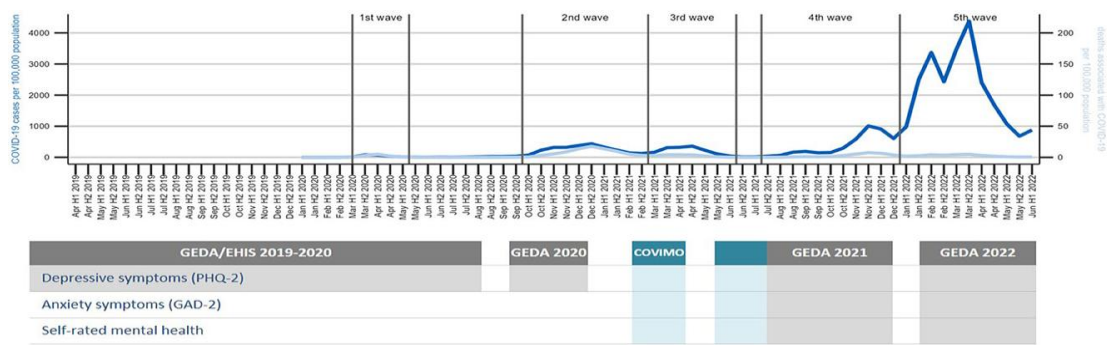


Peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2023 were analyzed to assess trends in mental health disorders related to the pandemic. Quantitative data included prevalence rates of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicide rates among adolescents and the general population. Qualitative data was derived from surveys and focus group studies on pandemic-related stressors, coping mechanisms, and access to mental healthcare services. The study compared pre-pandemic and post-pandemic statistics to identify significant changes and patterns. Meanwhile, adults confronted overwhelming stress linked to economic loss, bereavement, and fear of illness. These

cumulative pressures translated into sharp increases in mental health disorders across countries. For instance, studies revealed that the prevalence of depression nearly doubled compared with pre-pandemic levels, while anxiety disorders surged to record highs. Health systems, already overstretched by the physical burden of COVID-19, proved ill-equipped to handle the parallel psychological epidemic. Particularly in developing regions, access to psychological services was severely limited, leaving many untreated. Recognizing this reality is vital to building a holistic understanding of the pandemic’s consequences. The exploration of these dynamics forms the central aim of this research.

Results

Findings revealed a significant increase in mental health disorders during and after the pandemic. Global statistics showed that the prevalence of depression nearly doubled, with anxiety disorders affecting more than 25% of adolescents worldwide. In Uzbekistan, surveys conducted in 2021–2022 indicated rising reports of stress, irritability, and social withdrawal among university students and young professionals.



Suicide attempts among adolescents increased slightly but significantly, reflecting the compounded effects of social isolation and academic stress. The adult population also experienced higher levels of anxiety and insomnia, particularly among individuals who lost jobs or relatives to COVID-19. Furthermore, healthcare systems struggled to provide adequate psychiatric and psychological services due to the overwhelming burden of treating COVID-19 patients. Telemedicine consultations partially alleviated this gap, but limited digital literacy and unequal internet access in rural areas restricted their effectiveness. A detailed examination of data collected from various sources during and after the pandemic reveals stark patterns. International surveys consistently demonstrate elevated rates of common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, with prevalence among adolescents often exceeding 25 percent. In several countries, emergency hotlines recorded a dramatic rise in calls concerning suicidal ideation, stress, and domestic violence.

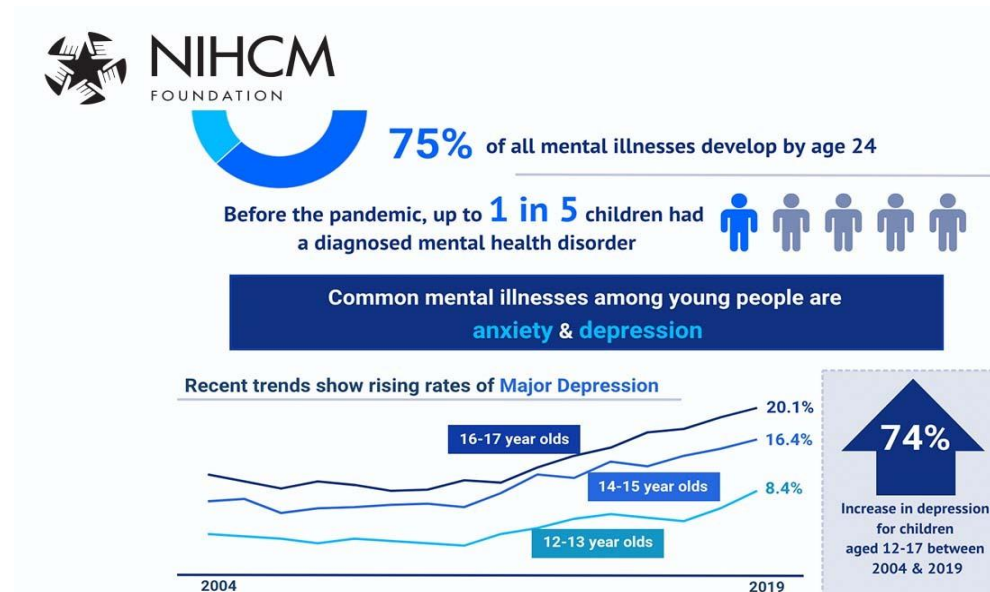




University students experienced heightened rates of burnout and emotional exhaustion. In Uzbekistan and broader Central Asia, surveys in 2021–2022 reflected similar trends, with young people reporting irritability, loss of concentration, and a sense of hopelessness about the future. Adults, particularly those employed in healthcare or service sectors, showed increased prevalence of post-traumatic stress symptoms due to sustained exposure to uncertainty, mortality, and overwork. Parents faced additional stress managing remote education for children while simultaneously navigating economic challenges. Healthcare infrastructure struggled to provide adequate psychiatric support. In rural regions, mental health services were practically inaccessible. Telehealth emerged as an alternative, offering online consultations and remote therapy, but unequal digital access limited its utility. Across the population, reliance on maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as substance use or excessive internet engagement, rose considerably, further exacerbating mental health outcomes. The cumulative data demonstrate not only the widespread growth of mental illness but also the persistence of these conditions long after lockdowns were lifted.

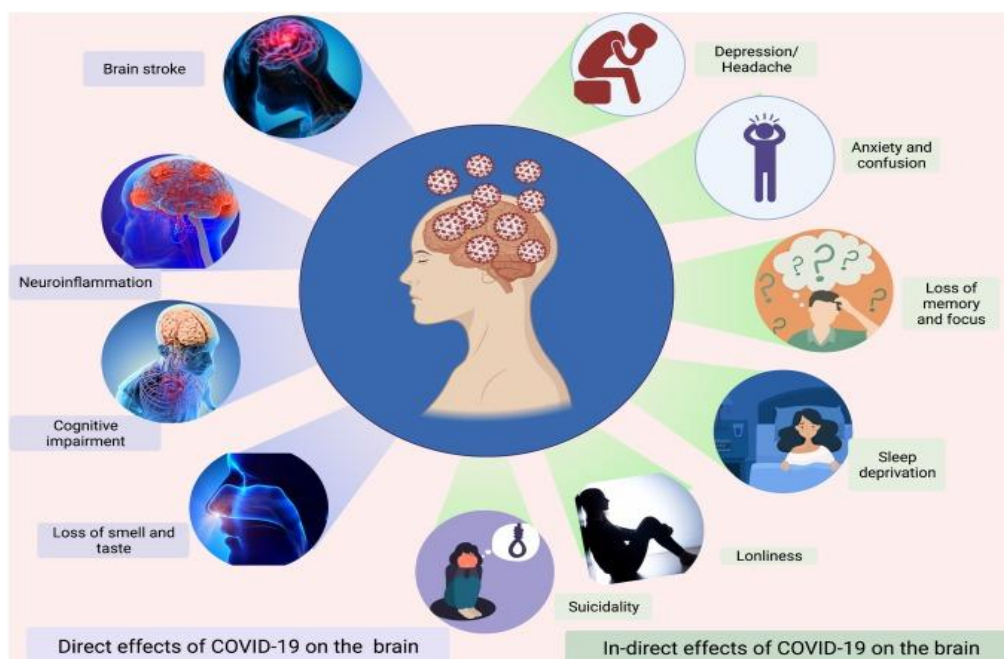
## Discussion

The results indicate that the pandemic acted as a catalyst, exacerbating pre-existing mental health vulnerabilities. Adolescents and young adults emerged as the most affected groups due to the disruption of education, limited socialization, and increased exposure to digital stressors such as misinformation and excessive screen time. Adults, on the other hand, faced economic and occupational stressors, which heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms. Importantly, the pandemic revealed weaknesses in mental healthcare infrastructure, including insufficient numbers of psychiatrists, limited access to counseling, and lack of community-based mental health programs. International comparisons show that countries with strong mental health support networks, such as community counseling centers and digital health platforms, were better able to mitigate the psychological impact of the pandemic.



The discussion also underscores the stigma surrounding mental illness, which discouraged many individuals from seeking help. Addressing this stigma through public education campaigns and integrating mental healthcare into primary health services is crucial for preventing long-term consequences. The findings confirm that the pandemic acted as a catalyst, intensifying pre-existing vulnerabilities in mental health systems and exacerbating stressors in society. For adolescents, developmental transitions were severely disrupted. Socialization, identity formation, and academic growth—all critical processes of adolescence—were undermined by prolonged isolation. The psychological scars of this disruption may continue to influence educational performance, career trajectories, and interpersonal relationships for years to come. Adults, by

contrast, bore the brunt of economic and occupational uncertainty. Fear of job loss, inability to provide for families, and exposure to grief through the loss of loved ones were common stressors.



Healthcare workers were another highly vulnerable group, with studies documenting high levels of burnout, PTSD, and even suicide risk among frontline professionals. Beyond individual experiences, structural weaknesses in mental healthcare delivery became painfully apparent. In many nations, mental health budgets comprise less than two percent of overall health spending. The pandemic highlighted how insufficient investment translates into inadequate staffing, limited counseling centers, and a near absence of community-based support networks. The stigma associated with mental illness further restricted help-seeking behavior, particularly in conservative societies where psychological suffering is often minimized or dismissed. Addressing this crisis requires a multi-dimensional approach: expanding training programs for mental health professionals, integrating psychological services into primary care, building school-based counseling programs, and leveraging technology responsibly. Public health campaigns must normalize discussions about mental health, dismantling stigma while encouraging individuals to seek support early. Furthermore, long-term resilience must be cultivated by equipping communities with stress management strategies, promoting healthy lifestyles, and ensuring social safety nets that reduce the economic shocks contributing to psychological distress.

## Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has left an indelible mark on global mental health, with young people and vulnerable populations suffering disproportionately. The increase in depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders highlights the urgent need for systemic reforms in mental healthcare. Governments and healthcare institutions must invest in expanding access to psychological services, training mental health professionals, and developing telepsychiatry platforms. Schools and universities should implement counseling programs to support students' mental well-being. Community-based awareness campaigns are essential to reduce stigma and encourage timely help-seeking behavior. Only through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach can societies address the mental health crisis and build resilience against future public health emergencies. The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the fragility of global mental health and left behind a legacy of increased psychological burden. Young people and adults alike were profoundly affected, though in different ways, by isolation, disruption, and uncertainty. The rise in depression, anxiety, stress-related disorders, and maladaptive coping behaviors underscores the

urgent necessity of systemic reforms. Mental health can no longer remain a peripheral concern; it must be integrated into the core of public health strategies. Governments must allocate greater funding, ensure widespread access to counseling and therapy, and harness digital platforms to reach underserved populations. Schools and universities should prioritize psychological well-being alongside academic achievement, while workplaces must invest in employee support systems. Community outreach, anti-stigma campaigns, and grassroots mental health education are equally essential. Ultimately, the lesson of the pandemic is that physical health and mental health are inseparable dimensions of human well-being. Building resilient societies demands an approach that treats them as equal priorities, ensuring preparedness not only for future pandemics but also for the everyday challenges that continue to test the mental resilience of populations worldwide.

### References

1. World Health Organization. Mental health and COVID-19: Early evidence of the pandemic's impact. Geneva: WHO, 2021.
2. UNICEF. The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health. New York: UNICEF, 2021.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic. MMWR 2020; 69:1049–1057.
4. Xiong J, Lipsitz O, Nasri F, Lui LMW, Gill H, Phan L, Chen-Li D, Iacobucci M, Ho R, Majeed A, McIntyre RS. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the general population: A systematic review. J Affect Disord. 2020; 277:55–64.
5. Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan. National Report on Mental Health and COVID-19 Consequences. Tashkent, 2022.