



Global Leadership Exchange

Presentation:

IIMHL Infant, Child, Youth and Family Group: International impacts of COVID-19; Initiatives and Innovations

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**IIMHL Infant, Child, Youth and Family
Group: International impacts of
COVID-19;
Initiatives and Innovations**

Presenters and Topics:

Bron Dunnachie and Karin Isherwood (Whāraurau, New Zealand):

- Overview of Global Impacts

Danielle Maloney (Inside-Out, NSW, Australia):

- Eating Disorder; an Australian focus

Ruth Repchuck (Mc Master University School of Mental Health, Ontario, Canada):

- An Educational focus

Trecia Wouldes (University of Auckland, New Zealand):

- An Infant focus

The global impacts of COVID-19 on infants, children, youth and families:

The Literature

- Many studies across many countries since March 2020. Includes (at least) 2 systematic reviews
- Consistent findings
- Changing landscape with changes in variants...
- Discussion in some papers re: the need to consider the long-term impacts; current focus has mainly been on 'getting through'. Needs to be considered as a 'disaster' with long term impacts
- Further research needed with specific communities; main focus being on Western European, however several important papers from China

The global impacts of COVID-19 on infants, children, youth and families:

General Impacts

- Impacts related to social relationships:
 - social isolation from peers
- Impacts related to poverty:
 - food poverty
 - space
 - inadequate access to internet / devices
 - overcrowding
- Impacts related to existing physical illness:
 - links to increases in anxiety
- Impacts related to family disruption:
 - family violence
- Impacts related to existing mental health concerns

The global impacts of COVID-19 on infants, children, youth and families:

Mental Health Impacts

- Increases in incidence of depression
- Increases in incidence of anxiety
- Impacts greater with age; increasing incidence in young women and more emergent studies also identify impacts on younger children
- Increases in behavioural issues for children experiencing neuro-developmental concerns, autism and ADHD
- Increases in incidence and acuity of Eating issues/Eating disorders (based on increasing numbers of referrals to services, anecdotal reports).

Opportunities;

Positive impacts: for some

- Reduced access to substances
- Reduced academic and social-stress (not consistent...)
- Reports of increases in family connection
- Increasing access to on-line healthcare (Telehealth)
- Increasing access to on-line interventions Apps...

What works?

- Positive family environments
- Predictability: routines
- Interventions that focus on resilience building
- Family interventions/parenting support
- Positive connection with school environments: returning to on-site schooling

Conclusions

- Mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents are significant and should be of tremendous concern to policymakers and practitioners globally.
- As the pandemic continues, innovative approaches that increase access to mental health services, as well as promote resilience and mental well-being such as maintaining social connection despite isolation and renewing social ties during the recovery phase may be explored.
- Similarly, increasing identification and supports for children, adolescents, and families experiencing disproportionate impacts as well as implementation of preventive measures more broadly may reduce long-term mental health effects in children and adolescents.
- The pandemic may offer opportunities to identify prepandemic gaps in mental health service provision, adapt systems, and ‘build it back better’
(Moreno et al. 2020).

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