

Adolescent in Crisis (COVID-19)

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Adolescent in Crisis

Lockdown

- ▶ Quarantine has negative and potentially prolonged effects on the psychological health of individuals, including post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion, and anger ([Brooks et al., 2020](#)).
- ▶ In children and adolescents, periods without school are associated with decreased physical activity, more screen time, irregular sleep patterns, and less appropriate diets ([Wang et al., 2020](#)).
- ▶ There are reciprocal interactions between brain maturation and social environment, and isolation may have an influence on psychiatric disorder onsets during adolescence ([Lamblin et al., 2017](#)).



Adolescent in Crisis

Lockdown

Lockdown, for some adolescents, is experienced as insufferable.

- ▶ They have to withdraw at home, whereas in normal times, excessive social withdrawal is considered as a psychiatric symptom ([Tajan 2015](#); [Lamblin et al., 2017](#)).
- ▶ Interestingly, acute isolation may cause social craving, with neural craving responses similar to hunger, even at the neurofunctional level ([Tomova et al., 2020](#)).



Adolescent in Crisis

Lockdown

- ▶ the manifestations of psychological suffering in this context may be more discreet in adolescents:
- ▶ **sleep disturbances**, problems with peers, isolation, and depression ([Douglas et al., 2009](#)).
- ▶ Moreover, schools have closed worldwide, yet **school routines** are **important coping mechanisms** for young people with mental health issues



Adolescent in Crisis.

Suicidality

- ▶ Epidemics may be linked to increased suicide rates ([Chan et al., 2006](#)).
- ▶ Stressful life events are a risk factor for adolescent suicidality ([Brent 1995](#)).
- ▶ A longitudinal study among 4978 adolescents after Hurricane Andrew observed that the following factors had **an effect on post-hurricane suicidal ideation:**
- ▶ **being female, low socioeconomic status, pre- and post-hurricane depression,**
- ▶ high stress scores, low family support and pre-hurricane suicidal ideation ([Warheit et al., 1996](#)).



Addictions

- ▶ The issue of **increased addictive disorders of adolescents** related to disasters has also been raised ([Reijneveld et al., 2005](#)).
- ▶ As **mechanisms of coping with traumatic stress**, some authors suggest that adolescents are likely to **engage in risk-behaviors** such as **drug abuse and sexual relationships** ([Hagan, 2005](#)).



Internet addiction

- **Internet addiction** is believed to be associated with **online games** and social applications ([Kuss et al., 2013](#)).
- **Internet addiction** is also associated with **depression**
- The current period of **pandemic and lockdown** brings together several factors related to **internet addiction**.
- **Internet addiction** is characterized by **excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations**, urges, or **behaviors regarding computer use** and internet access that lead to impairment or distress



Adolescent in Crisis

Grief

- ▶ For some adolescents, the numerous deaths linked to COVID-19 are their first experience with death.
- ▶ This is brutal, without the patients being accompanied in their last days, and often without the possibility to visit the hospitals' "COVID units", followed by immediate casketing **تابوت** and thus deprivation of many funeral rites. Adolescents will certainly experience this as traumatic.
- ▶ **Traumatic events** are associated **with longer grief in adolescents**, particularly in the case of a **violent death** ([Nader and Salloum, 2011](#)).
- ▶ **Parental death** is a **risk factor** for a **major depressive disorder in adolescents** ([Gray et al., 2011](#)).
- ▶ A **lower economic status** would have a **negative influence on adolescents'** intrafamilial grief ([Stikkelbroek et al., 2016](#)).



Family and intrafamily violence

- ▶ **Family confinement** may be a **trigger for intrafamilial violence** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Several countries, reported cases of **domestic violence; children are more at risk of abuse** or **neglect** when they live in a home where **domestic violence occurs** ([Campbell, 2020](#)).
- ▶ During this period, **women and girls** are reportedly **more exposed to gender-based violence**, including **sexual violence** ([UNFPA, 2020](#)).
- ▶ Although data is scarce, it can be assumed that **adolescents**, particularly **adolescent girls**, are a population **at risk of enduring violence during this crisis**.
- ▶ In the context of lockdown, and school closures, **adolescents escape the vigilance of professionals or other adults** who would have spotted their distress in normal social conditions.



Adolescents with psychiatric disorders facing the COVID-19 outbreak

- ▶ Harsh lockdown, fear of infection, and its consequences could increase the symptoms of some patients with psychiatric disorders.
- ▶ Adolescents with mental health problems may be less likely to tolerate a lockdown ([Chevance et al., 2020](#)).
- ▶ There is a concern about the continued care of patients with psychiatric disorders ([Fegert and Schulze, 2020](#)).
- ▶ Among the specific outcomes for this population, the disruption of psychological and/or institutional care could be an important adverse factor.
- ▶ A survey including 2111 adolescents with a mental health history in the UK reported that 83% of them agreed that the pandemic had worsen their mental health and 26% said that they were no longer able to access mental health support (age range: 13–25; mean: 16–17; including 61% with ongoing mental health difficulties) ([Youngminds, 2020](#)).



Adolescents with psychiatric disorders facing the COVID-19 outbreak

- ▶ Adolescents with a history of depression are exposed to prolonged psychological suffering in connection with the sudden loss of a parent ([Melhem et al., 2011](#)).
- ▶ Adolescents with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may have more difficulty adjusting to lockdown ([Cortese et al., 2020](#)).
- ▶ They can face more behavioral problems.
- ▶ Parent-focused ADHD interventions and mental-wellbeing interventions should be implemented, and risks and benefits of medications under the COVID-19 specific situation should be carefully considered ([Cortese et al., 2020](#)).



Adolescents with psychiatric disorders facing the COVID-19 outbreak

- ▶ For patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the pandemic, **disruption of care, and lockdown** have potential **negative impacts** ([Sharon, 2020](#)).
- ▶ **Lifestyle habits** are disrupted, in patients for whom inflexible behavior, habits, and rituals are often important symptoms ([American Psychiatric Association, 2013](#)).
- ▶ Among patients with **Eating Disorders**, anorexia nervosa is often complicated by immunodeficiency related to chronic malnutrition ([Allende et al., 1998](#)), generally leading to vulnerability to infections.
- ▶ Teleconsulting should be encouraged for these patients in particular).
- ▶ The anxiety due to the pandemic may increase the patients' difficulties to control their eating behavior ([Fernández-Aranda et al., 2020](#)).
- ▶ The reaction of patients with **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders**, particularly those with obsessive contamination fears, is uncertain, but there is already an expert consensus on the management to be recommended for adults ([Fineberg et al., 2020](#)).



Family and adolescent coping

- ▶ Adolescents can have efficient coping strategies during epidemics.
- ▶ A study suggested that **active coping strategies predicted life satisfaction**
- ▶ whereas the number of stressors and use of avoidant coping strategies predicted psychological symptoms ([Main et al., 2011](#)).
- ▶ Also, could the **adolescents who suffer from school attendance problems and bullying experience** a transient relief due to the **school break** that was implemented in many countries? **Avoidance behavior is not beneficial in the long term.**
- ▶ Maybe instoring a routine with family time during lockdown would have beneficial effects for some socially withdrawn adolescents



Family and adolescent coping

- ▶ The difference between adolescents and children in times of corona crisis that parents should pay attention to:
- ▶ A. Adolescents have a **better understanding of Covid issues** than children.
- ▶ B. Parents should **not tell their teenager** the **wrong sentences** like 'You know nothing, everything you need to learn from parents.'
- ▶ C- **Never judge** teenagers.
- ▶ D-Adolescents **have higher problem-solving skills** and the **ability to adapt to crisis situations**



Family and adolescent coping

- ▶ Tips parents of teens need to be aware of during a corona crisis:
 - ▶ A. Adolescents who **feel more insecure** are more prone to **risky behaviors**.
 - ▶ B. Feelings of **omnipotence** and invincibility in adolescents may cause them to **disregard self-protection** and family conditions.
 - ▶ C. **Decreasing the condition** of being with peers, which is the need of adolescents, may lead to feelings of **boredom, loneliness, sadness, aggression** and **irritability** in adolescents.
 - ▶ D- The **problem is not always related to adolescents** and it is necessary to examine the **problem in parents** as well



. Helping adolescents cope with stress

- ▶ To promote adolescent well-being and sense of security, it is advisable to promote reassurance, appropriate information, and stress-reducing actions for adolescents.
- ▶ Parents are the closest and most evident help for children and adolescents.
- ▶ dialog with the aim of enhancing comprehension and alleviating anxiety is recommended ([Wang et al., 2020](#)).
- ▶ Promoting balanced life patterns, especially sleep patterns, is also recommended ([Guichard et al., 2020](#)).



Mental health system adaptation

- ▶ Adapting the mental health system may be a challenge, stressing the need for integrated services designed for young people ([Hetrick et al., 2017](#)).
- ▶ most health care facilities now allow teleconsultations
- ▶ Also, psychiatry and psychotherapy teleconsultations increased enormously in Germany ([Fegert and Schulze, 2020](#)).
- ▶ In many countries, emergency helplines for patients and the general population were set up specifically in response to the COVID-19 outbreak or already existed as disaster distress helplines.
- ▶ Ensuring continuity of psychiatric support is essential for adolescents already under care.



Psychosocial interventions

- ▶ Psychosocial interventions can help adolescents after traumatic events.
- ▶ A 2017 meta-analysis supported that cognitive-behavioral therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), narrative exposure therapy for children and classroom-based interventions can be equally recommended for adolescents after man-made and natural disasters ([Brown et al., 2017](#)).
- ▶ Beyond the immediate consequences on mental health, one can wonder about the consequences of the pandemic on the psychological construction of adolescents, who suddenly grow up in a world where society and the economic model are dramatically transformed in order to face the pandemic and protect the population.
- ▶ If growing up in a secure family environment is a protective factor for the health of adolescents ([Schofield and Beek, 2009](#)), growing up in a stable and secure world is probably just as protective.



Conclusion

- ▶ Adolescents are vulnerable and require careful consideration by caregivers and healthcare system adaptations to allow for mental health support despite the lockdown.
- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic could result in increased psychiatric disorders such as :
- ▶ Post-Traumatic Stress, Depressive, and Anxiety Disorders, as well as grief-related symptoms.
- ▶ Home confinement is associated with an increase in intrafamilial violence.
- ▶ The link between lockdown and the consequences of excessive use of the internet and social media needs to be explored.
- ▶ Adolescents' individual, familial, and social vulnerability, as well as individual and familial coping abilities, are factors related to adolescent mental health in times of crisis

