

Behavioral Health Effects of COVID-19: An epidemic within the epidemic

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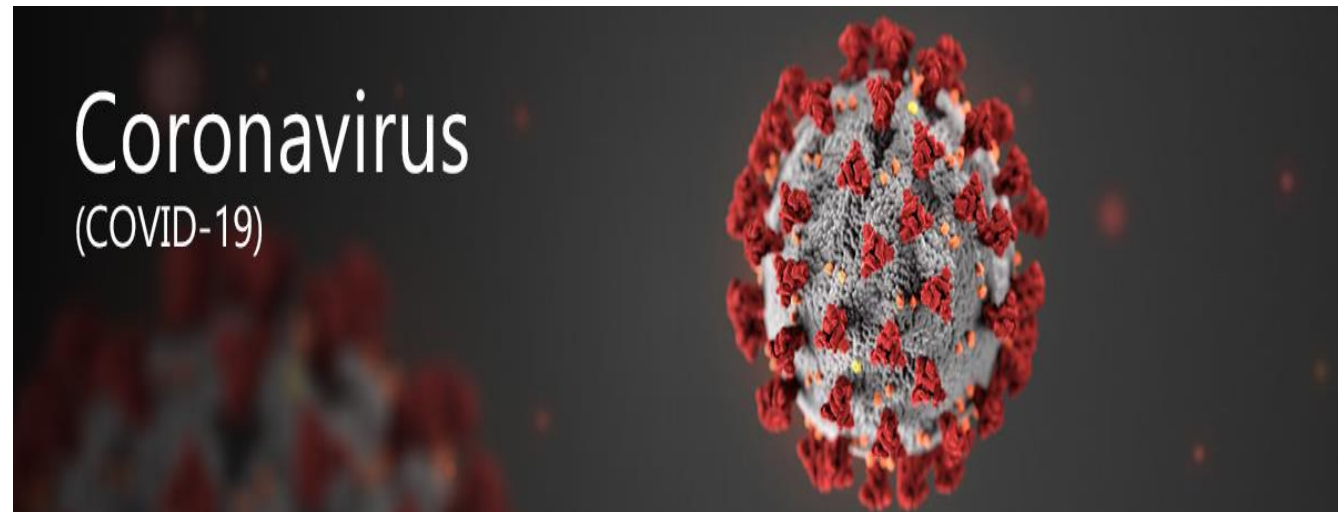
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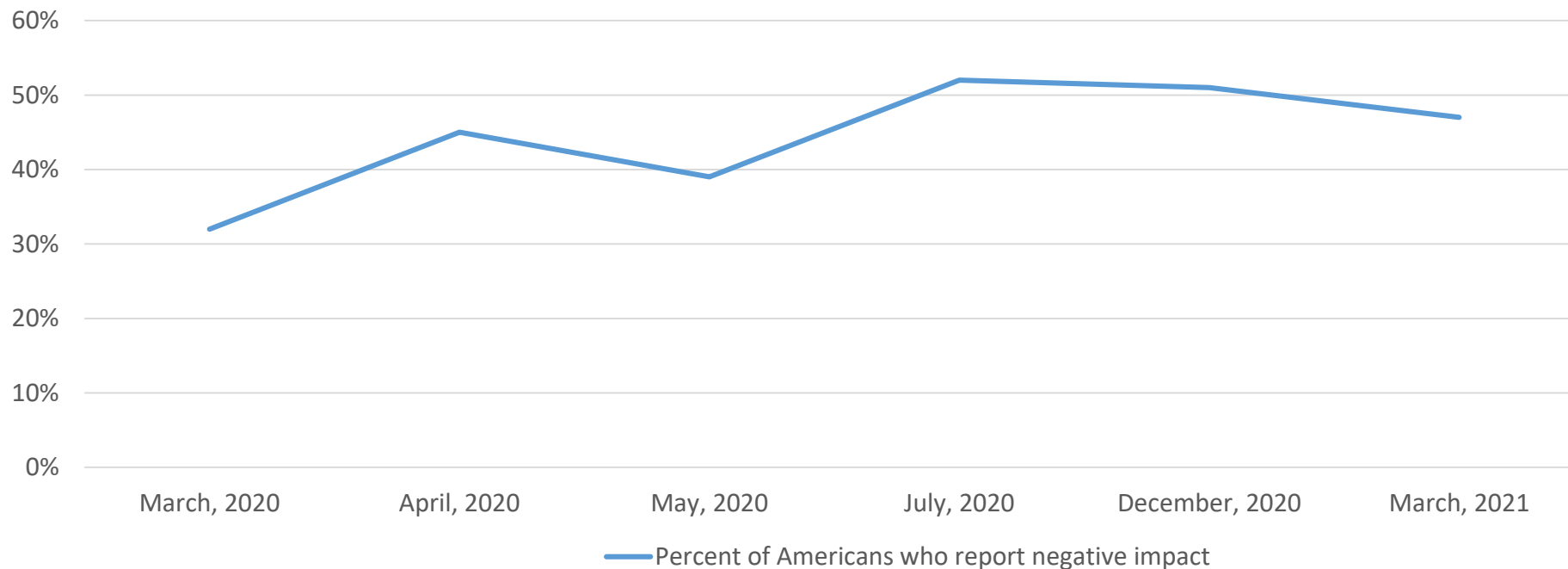
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Stress in the Time of COVID-19

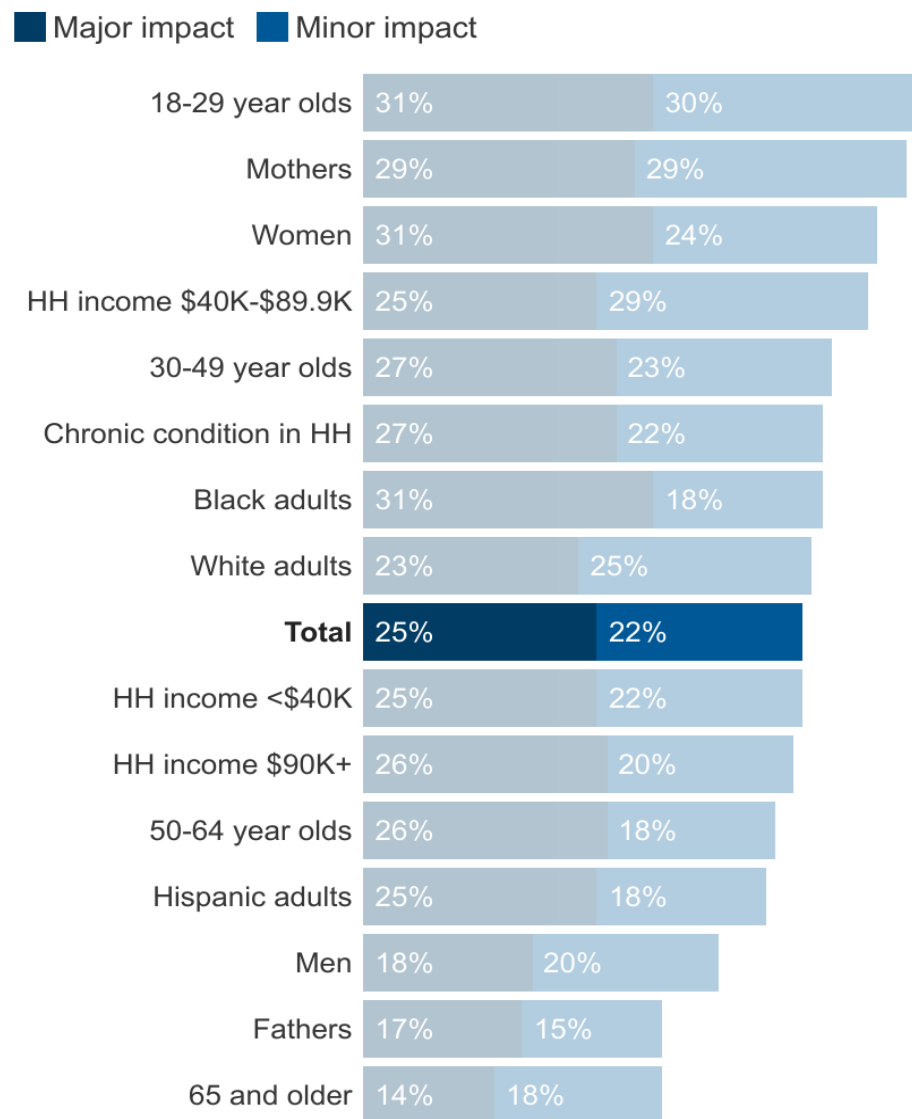
Percent of Americans Who Report Negative Impact on Mental Health from COVID-19 Stress or Worry



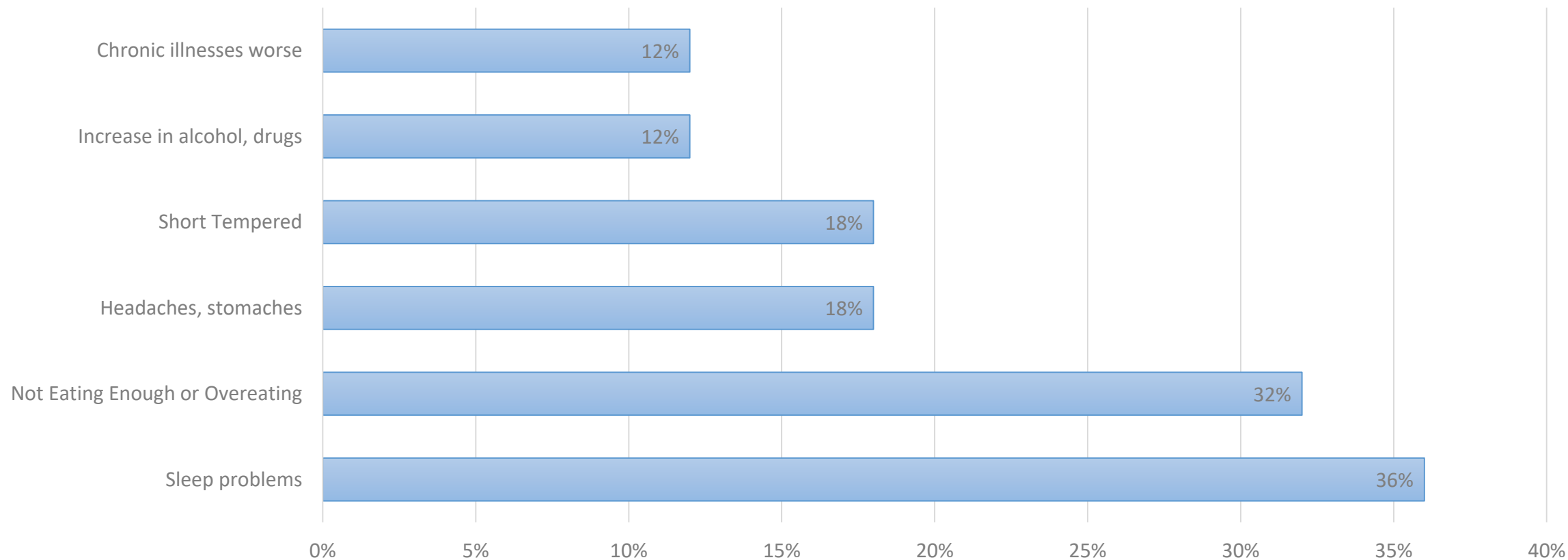
Stress in the Time of COVID-19

From: Kaiser Family Foundation Tracking Poll, April 14, 2021

Percent who say they feel that worry or stress related to coronavirus has had a **major** or **minor** negative impact on their mental health:



Stress in the Time of COVID-19: Effects



Stress in the Time of COVID-19: “Quarantine 15” (or maybe 20?)

- A small study using FitBit data found that, from February – June 2020, US adults gained 1.5 - 2 pounds per month
- Another study using data from a wellness app showed that number of steps taken by adults decreased from January 2020 – June 2020 by 27%

**When you've already
eaten all of your
quarantine snacks**

@trishapaytasmemes



Depression and Anxiety during the Pandemic

According to a JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) study, during the pandemic:

- 28% of American adults have clinical depression vs 8.5% before
- 5% of these reported severe depression vs less than 1% before

Risk factors for depression during the pandemic:


- Low income or less than \$5,000 in household savings
- More stress (e.g. job loss, healthcare worker or member of other group at high risk to contract Coronavirus)
- Hispanic or African American
- Parent of young children
- Already being treated for a psychiatric illness / substance use disorder

Increase in suicide risk during the pandemic







Many people who feel suicidal are experiencing a **treatable** mental health condition.

 AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR
Suicide Prevention | afsp.org/DidYouKnow




HEALTH NEWS FROM NPR

PUBLIC HEALTH

Child Psychiatrists Warn That The Pandemic May Be Driving Up Kids' Suicide Risk

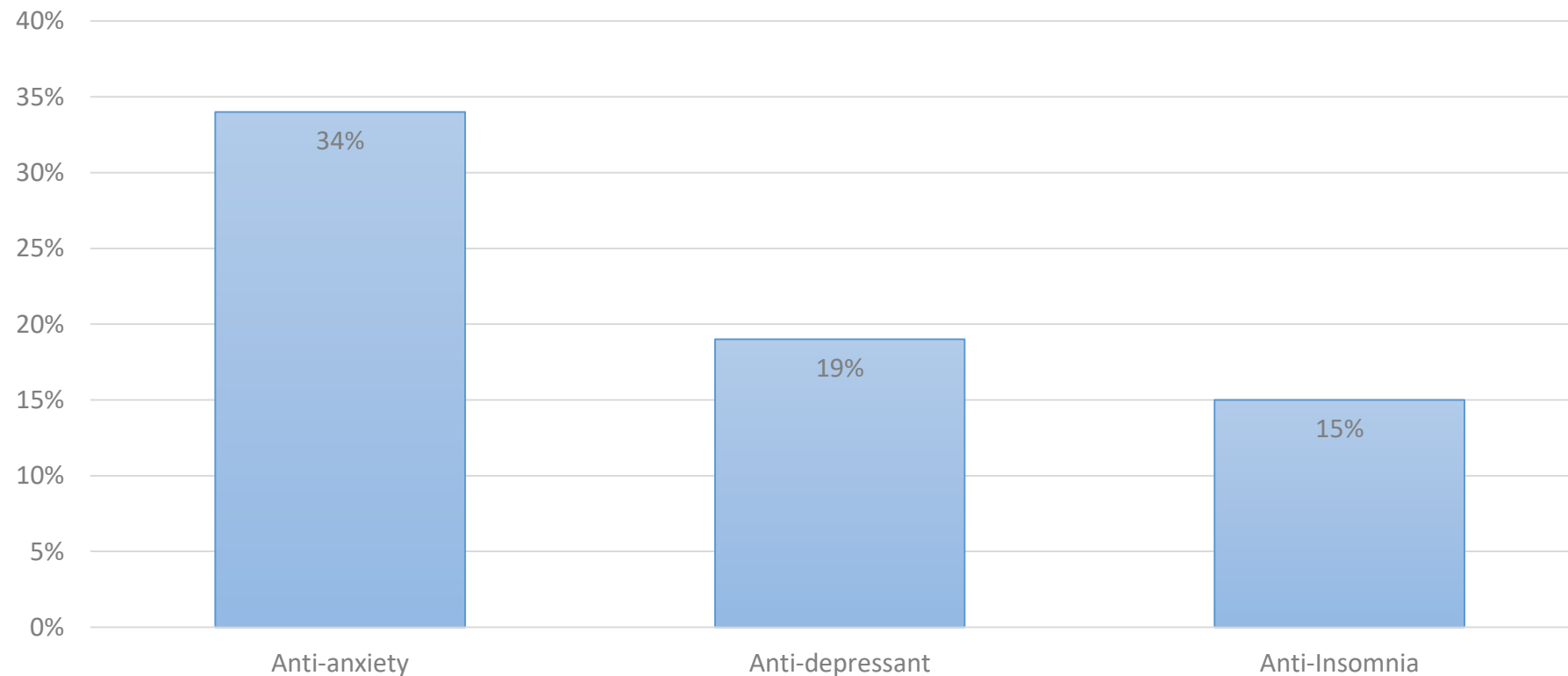
February 2, 2021 · 10:23 AM ET

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<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/02/02/962060105/child-psychiatrists-warn-that-the-pandemic-may-be-driving-up-kids-suicide-risk>

Depression and Anxiety during the Pandemic

Percent increase in prescriptions after the start of the pandemic




Alcohol Use During the Pandemic: “Quarantini”

Are you drinking more while in lockdown ?

yes

no



- A Nielsen report showed a 477% increase in online sales of alcohol in May, 2020 compared to the same time in 2019
- U of L has seen an approx. 50% increase in liver disease during the pandemic per Dr. Loretta Jophlin (Spectrum News, March, 2021)
- A national study from JAMA (Sept, 2020) found most adults reported drinking one more day per month after the pandemic compared to before. Women’s drinking increased more than men’s, and women were more likely to report alcohol related problems such as DUIs or taking foolish risks.

Substance Use During the Pandemic: Nationally

A study by JAMA (Sept, 2020) looked at Urine drug test results collected from 150,000 patients between November 2019 and July 2020.

Researchers found that, after the pandemic was declared a national emergency, patients were:

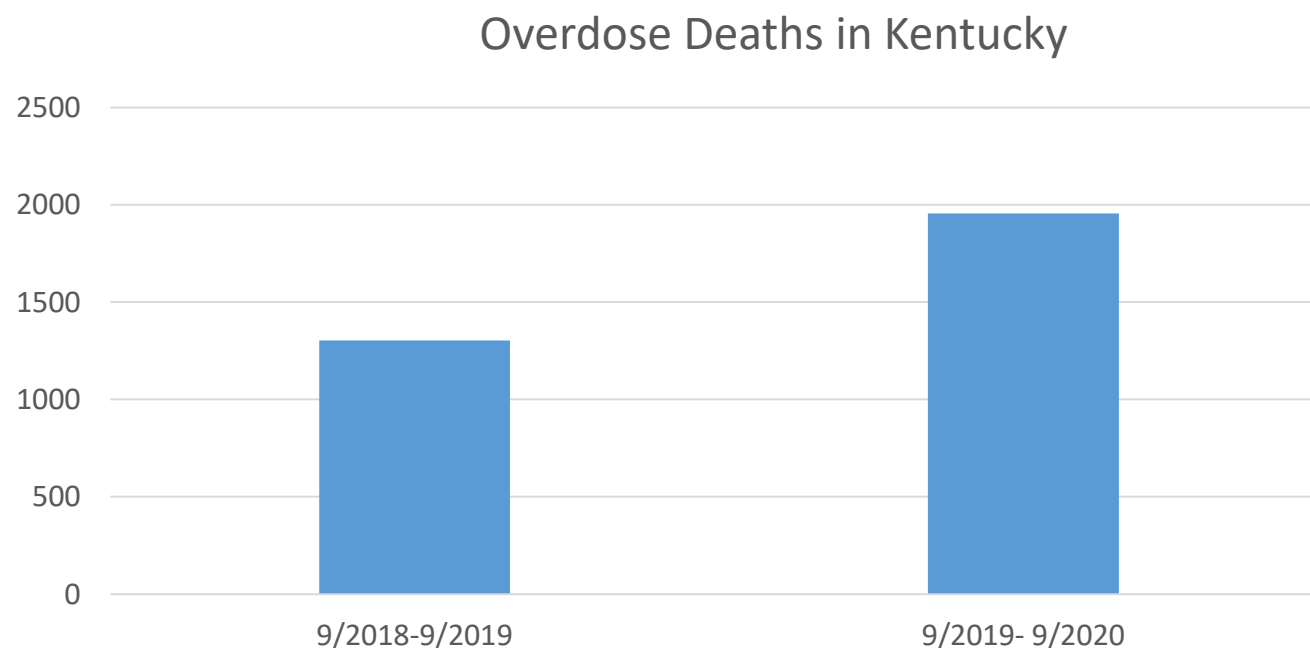
- 67% more likely to test positive for fentanyl (synthetic)
- 33% more likely to test positive for heroin
- 23% more likely to test positive for methamphetamine
- 19% more likely to test positive for cocaine

“COVID created the perfect storm. It created isolation, and addiction is a disease of isolation.”

-Matt Brown, VP, Addiction Recovery Care (Louisia, KY)

Overdose Deaths Statewide

From September 2019 – 2020, overdose deaths rose 50% compared to the previous 12 months, placing KY third in the US after Washington, DC and Louisiana.



Effects on Children and Families

According to the American Psychological Association, almost half of parents (46%) say their pandemic stress level is high (between 8 and 10 on a 10-point scale), compared with 28% of adults without children who say the same.

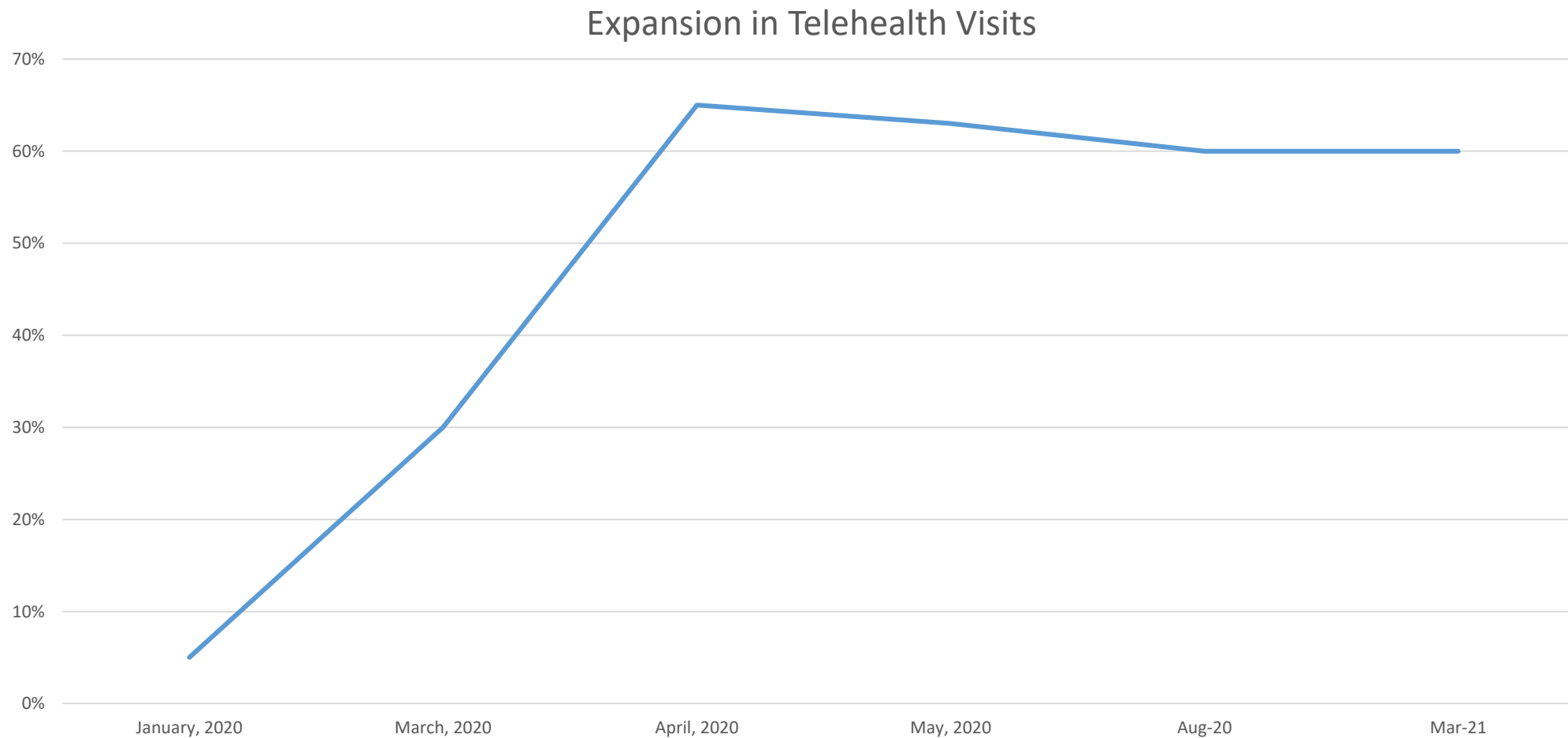
The following are stresses resulting from the pandemic and the percentage of parents reporting that they are a significant source of stress:

- A family member getting COVID (74%)
- Disruption in routines, difficulty adjusting (74%)
- Worry about getting COVID myself (73%)
- Managing online learning for children (71%)
- Worry about child's social development (71%)
- Access to healthcare; delaying doctor's appointments (66%)
- Missing major milestones (wedding, graduation) (63%)
- Children have been acting out or misbehaving more during the pandemic (55%)
- Disruption in childcare (40%)

Effect on Children and Families: other concerns

- Increase in domestic violence and child abuse
- Increase in proportion of ER visits in children related to BH
- Poor sleep, nightmares, increase in PTSD symptoms in children
- Rise in hoarding behavior in teenagers
- Increase in use of the internet, gaming and social media predisposing children to develop compulsive usage, access objectionable content, and be victims of online bullying.
- Unique challenges of children with special needs: lack of access to school services such as IEP, specially trained educators, resource materials, tutoring or speech therapy, sensitivity to disruption in routines, decrease in peer interactions, less structure, fewer extracurricular activities

Solutions: Increase access to Mental Health Treatment via Telehealth



Solutions: Increase quality treatment access for alcohol and drug abuse; decrease overdose risk

Examples:

- Improve quality Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) education and access for alcohol and opioids (pain medications, heroin)
 - Medication assisted treatment reduces cravings and intensity of relapse, increases time to relapse and cuts overdose risk by half according to the American Medical Association.
- Promote use of Naloxone rescue to prevent overdose
- Increase availability of care through telehealth, apps, allowed telephone (audio)- only telehealth), waived copays
- Virtual treatment programs (for example, Bright Heart, JourneyPure)

Solutions

Approaches to reduce chronic stress, anxiety, and prolonged grief during COVID without medication could include:

- Greater social connectedness with family and friends.
- Increased physical activity
- Showing compassion, volunteering, living with purpose
- Engaging in spirituality
- Virtual support groups; for example, for depression:
<https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/chapters-and-support-groups/online-support-groups/>
- “Manualized therapies” such as cognitive behavior therapy: [*The Feeling Good Handbook*](#) by Dr. David Burns or [*Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*](#) by Dr. Martin Seligman

These approaches have also been shown to enhance coping, promote resilience, and reduce loneliness.



Don't Forget! Take care of you...



- Exercise more (with doctor's okay)
- Get better sleep: Try going to bed earlier; avoid afternoon caffeine, before-bed stress or screen time, and too much light.
- Don't smoke or get help to quit
- Good dietary choices: more fiber, more fruits and vegetables, "Mediterranean Diet."
- Mindfulness / Meditation

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>



Resources for COVID-19

State of Kentucky Coronavirus Resource Page :

<https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>

Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy –

<https://odcp.ky.gov/stop-overdoses/Pages/default.aspx>

Anthem Resources:

<https://www.anthem.com/coronavirus/resources/#Extra-Support-for-Your-Needs>

- **Psych Hub**

Offers resources to help with pandemic-related stress such as social isolation, coping with grief and loss, and depression.

- **myStrength**

Provides evidence-based self-help tools and resources to support emotional health and well-being. Promotes resiliency and is available 24/7.

- **Aunt Bertha**

Aunt Bertha, a leading social care network, helps connect individuals and families to free and reduced-cost social services.

- **Behavioral Health Resource Center**

Behavioral Health specialists are available 24/7 to KEHP members at 1-855-873-4931

Questions

