

Depressions Rate More than Triple During the Pandemic

The pandemic has been stressful for Americans, especially those who are working class, and a new study finds that stress reflected in our mental health. Available on JAMA Network Open, the study finds that rates of depression have tripled in the United States, rising from 8.5% before the pandemic to 27.8%. The data was collected from a survey with 1,441 participants conducted in April of 2020.

Spikes in depression are common during and after large scale trauma events. Researchers also evaluated the impact of stressors on the survey takers' mental health. Lower-income individuals with less than \$5,000 in savings who were exposed to a greater amount of stressors were most at risk for depression. This group was the most vulnerable before the pandemic and experienced a 50% increase in depression risk.

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While further data will be needed to assess the trajectory of depression in the US population and potential treatment for affected populations, it seems important to recognize the potential for the mental health consequences of COVID-19 to be large in scale, to recognize that these effects can be long-lasting, and to consider preventative action to help mitigate its effects.²⁸ In particular, this burden is being borne by economically and socially marginalized groups, suggesting that individuals with low income and with fewer resources may benefit from particular policy attention in coming months

Prevalence of Depression Symptoms in US Adults Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic