

NIHR Greater Manchester PSTRC

Plain English Publication Summary

Publication: [Temporal trends in annual incidence rates for psychiatric disorders and self-harm among children and adolescents in the UK, 2003-2018](#)

Publication details (Vancouver format)

Cybulski L, Ashcroft DM, Carr MJ, Garg S, Chew-Graham CA, Kapur N, Webb RT. Temporal trends in annual incidence rates for psychiatric disorders and self-harm among children and adolescents in the UK, 2003-2018. *BMC Psychiatry* 2021; 21(1): 229.

What are the most important findings/conclusions in this paper? Why are they important?

The number of young people seeking help for common mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety, seems to have increased in recent years. Changes to how these illnesses are diagnosed, more awareness among GPs, parents and teachers, and people being more willing to talk about mental health could partly explain why more young people are seeking help for mental illnesses. But, the rise in demand for healthcare services means that it may be more challenging for young people who are affected to access the care and support they need when they need it.

What did you do?

Using information collected in GP practices from all parts of the UK, we looked at how many young people see their GP with concerns about mental illnesses (depression, anxiety disorder and eating disorders) and neurodevelopmental disorders (autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, also called ADHD) between 1st January 2003 and 31st December 2018.

Why did you conduct this research?

Before we did this study, there weren't many complete and up-to-date studies showing how many young people in the UK are affected by mental illnesses, and whether this number has changed in recent years. But, in order to plan healthcare services properly, we need to have this information.

What was known before your paper was published?

Studies from the last decade showed that more and more young people had been seeking help for mental illnesses, such as depression. However, many of these studies were out-of-date, and so it was impossible to know if the number of young people seeking help for mental illnesses had changed.

What is next? What is the potential impact of the work in this paper? What will change as a result of this paper (or the study it describes)?

Our study shows that the number of young people seeking help for mental illnesses is rising steeply. This information could be used to inform the planning and funding of mental health services. For example, service providers may use the findings to show that more funding is needed to meet the increase in demand for mental health treatment.

Does this paper link in to a particular study / project? If so, please summarise the study and explain how this paper has improved understanding, or will move the study forward.

N/A