

COVID-19 existing resource response #15

(Last updated: 6 February 2022)

Question

How has the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., public health measures, such as lockdowns, and associated isolation) affected the mental health (i.e., anxiety, depression, chronic loneliness) of the general population?

What we found

We searched the COVID-END global and domestic [inventories of best evidence syntheses](#) on 2 February 2022 to identify evidence documents focused on mental health issues related to the pandemic response. The search terms used were: (“mental health” OR “mental health care”) AND (“COVID” OR “COVID-19” OR “SARS-CoV-2” OR “pandemic”).

We identified 24 evidence documents that provide insights about the question (listed in Table 1), which include:

- three living reviews;
- nine full systematic reviews;
- five rapid reviews; and
- seven protocols for systematic reviews.

In addition, a series of [knowledge mobilization products about COVID-19 and mental health](#) has been prepared that are based on projects funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

Box 1: Our approach

COVID-END in Canada responds to requests for evidence syntheses about topics related to COVID-19 that are likely to be explicitly considered by high-level decision-makers in multiple Canadian jurisdictions. This includes conducting rapid evidence profiles, living evidence profiles, rapid syntheses and living evidence syntheses. Examples of these evidence products can be viewed [here](#).

Sometimes requests are submitted about questions that have already been addressed by one or more recently updated, high-quality evidence syntheses, or will be addressed soon by work underway (e.g., through a rapid synthesis underway with or being planned by a Canadian team, registered synthesis protocol or CIHR funding to conduct a synthesis). Other times all the requestor needs is a list of available evidence syntheses undertaken by COVID-END in Canada partners or COVID-END global partners. In these situations, we prepare a response that profiles these existing resources. These responses are typically prepared by a combination of: 1) searching both the COVID-END domestic inventory and the COVID-END global inventory; and 2) contacting 40+ Canada evidence-synthesis teams to identify any additional resources or work underway that is relevant to the question posed in a request. Such an existing resource response is equivalent to a rapid evidence profile prepared with the same turnaround time.

We followed this approach to prepare this existing resource response, which was prepared in one business day (and hence the equivalent to a two-days rapid evidence profile) to inform next steps in evidence synthesis, guideline development and/or decision-making related to the question that was posed.

Table 1: Hyperlinked titles to evidence documents with insights about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of the general population

Evidence type	Evidence documents identified
Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified
Living reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of COVID-19 mental health interventions among community-based children, adolescents, and adults: A living systematic review of randomized controlled trials (AMSTAR rating 8/10; literature last searched 22 March 2021) • The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on self-harm and suicidal behaviour: Update of living systematic review (AMSTAR rating 8/10; literature last searched 19 October 2020) • A living systematic review of the psychological problems in people suffering from COVID-19 (AMSTAR rating 9/11; literature last searched 7 October 2020)
Full systematic reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from previous lockdown measures and minimizing harmful biopsychosocial consequences as they end: A systematic review (AMSTAR rating 8/10; literature last searched 12 October 2021) • Student support systems for undergraduate medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic narrative review of the literature (AMSTAR rating 6/9; literature last searched 5 April 2021) • Comparison of mental health symptoms prior to and during COVID-19: Evidence from a living systematic review and meta-analysis (AMSTAR rating 6/11; literature last searched 22 March 2021) • The prevalence of depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms and sleep disturbance in higher-education students during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis (AMSTAR rating 8/11; literature last searched 1 January 2021) • Systematic review on the mental health and treatment impacts of COVID-19 on neurocognitive disorders (no AMSTAR rating available; literature last searched December 2020) • Impacts of school closures on physical and mental health of children and young people: A systematic review (AMSTAR rating 8/10; literature last searched 1 September 2020) • Repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of pregnant and puerperal women: A systematic review (AMSTAR rating 5/9; literature last searched 1 July 2020) • Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the general population: A systematic review (AMSTAR rating 6/10; literature last searched 29 May 2020) • The impact of infectious disease-related public-health emergencies on suicide, suicidal behaviour, and suicidal thoughts (AMSTAR rating 8/10; literature last searched 16 May 2020)
Rapid reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and adolescents' mental health in the context of pandemic and confinement: A scoping review of repercussions, interventions and ethical challenges (AMSTAR rating 6/9; literature last searched 1 September 2020) • Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and well-being of caregivers and families of autistic people: A rapid synthesis review (AMSTAR rating 7/10; literature last searched 6 August 2020) • Rapid evidence and gap map of virtual care solutions for youth and families to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pain, mental health, and substance use (AMSTAR rating 5/9; literature last searched 18 June 2020) • Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations (AMSTAR rating 4/9; literature last searched 1 June 2020) • Evidence synthesis of digital interventions to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public mental health: A rapid meta-review (AMSTAR rating 4/9; literature last searched 1 April 2020)
Protocols for reviews*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living systematic review on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the general populations' mental health, alcohol/substance abuse and violence (anticipated completion date: 1 October 2022)

Evidence type	Evidence documents identified
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 related information consumption on social media and its impact on mental health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis of current evidence (anticipated completion date: 31 December 2021) • Interventions to foster mental health, psychosocial support, resilience and/or stress management in patients with COVID-19 and patients with mental disorders in face of the COVID-19 pandemic – Protocol for a living systematic review (part of German Evidence Ecosystem CEOsys) (anticipated completion date: May 2021) • Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of patients with COVID-19 and patients with mental disorders as well as risk and protective factors for mental health – Protocol for a living systematic review (part of German Evidence Ecosystem CEOsys) (anticipated completion date: May 2021) • Effectiveness of psychological online interventions on mental health during COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review (anticipated completion date: 31 March 2021) • Remote delivery of mental health services: A rapid review of COVID-19 specific literature with recommendations for clinical practice and research (anticipated completion date: 20 February 2021) • The impact of eHealth group interventions on the mental, behavioural, and physical health of adults: A systematic review protocol (anticipated completion date not stated)
Titles/ questions for reviews that are being planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified
Single studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified
Other types of documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified

Al-Khateeb S, Bain T, Mansilla C, Lavis JN, Wilson MG. COVID-END in Canada existing resource response #15: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the mental health of the general population? Hamilton: McMaster Health Forum, COVID-END in Canada, 6 February 2022.

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