



COVID-19

research update

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

Mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic

A [commentary on risks to mental health and wellbeing as a result of COVID-19](#) (JAMA, June 24) observed similar patterns of anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder and depression found in almost half of surveyed survivors of the 2014-2016 Ebola virus outbreak and their contacts. They also acknowledge that misinformation through various forms of media, particularly social media, can play into individual fear and stoke anxiety, panic and psychological stress-related disorders, stating that social isolation and increased usage of social media will worsen mental health problems throughout the world. Suggestions for addressing this problem include encouraging the utilization of reliable information sources, limiting media exposure, keeping in contact with loved ones, and the facilitation of online platforms that guide healthy information consumption, highlight existing social support, continue the delivery of mental healthcare, and potentially provide individual, contact-based interventions.

A [commentary on the negative impacts that COVID-19 infection control measures may have on prisoners](#) (The Lancet: Psychiatry, July 1) states that guidance for infection control measures in prisons should be mindful of the mental health impacts that limited availability of human contact (e.g. visitation and activities) can have on prisoners. When possible, changes should be made to decrease the negative impact on mental health. The authors encourage innovations to support prisoners (e.g. increased access to telehealth, providing information on the pandemic to prisoners who may be released, etc.).

State vaccination policy recommendations

An [analysis of how state can ensure uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available](#) (NEJM, June 26) outlines six trigger criteria for states to consider COVID-19 vaccination mandates:

- 1) COVID-19 is not adequately contained in the state.
- 2) The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended vaccination for the groups for which a mandate is being considered.
- 3) The supply of vaccine is sufficient to cover the population groups for which a mandate is being considered.
- 4) Available evidence about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine has been transparently communicated.

5) The state has created infrastructure to provide access to vaccination without financial or logistic barriers, compensation to workers who have adverse effects from a required vaccine, and real-time surveillance of vaccine side effects.

6) In a time-limited evaluation, voluntary uptake of the vaccine among high-priority groups has fallen short of the level required to prevent epidemic spread.

Spread of COVID-19 from mothers to infants via breastmilk

A [systematic review of research on the spread of COVID-19 from mothers to infants via breastmilk](#) (WHO, June 23) found that the risk of transmission via breast-milk was low. Reasons for the low transmission rate included the presence of antibody sIgA in breast-milk of COVID-19 positive mothers. This antibody protects the infant against infection. One study (n=46) found that 3 out of 43 breast-milk samples were positive for COVID-19. Only one of the infants of the 3 samples was COVID-19 positive; however, feeding practices for this child were not noted. Therefore it is inconclusive if the infant was infected from the milk or being in close proximity to the mother. Furthermore, the review concluded that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any current risk of COVID-19 transmission. The risk of mortality for children who are not breastfed is 14-times higher than those that are breastfed. Close contact between mother and infant is encouraged for the health benefits.

New CDC Guidance

The CDC released new guidance documents for the following topics:

- [Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Guidance for Direct Service Providers](#)
- [Healthcare Facilities: Managing Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Guidance for Pharmacies](#)