See Us, Hear Us 1.0: Mental Health Impacts of Children, Youth and Families in Saskatchewan during the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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1 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic and all the changes it has caused have been hard for many children, youth, and families in Saskatchewan (SK). Therefore, we aimed to estimate mental health (MH) effects on children and youth (8-18 years) in Saskatchewan during the end of first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to identify the risk and protective factors for these mental health outcomes. The second objective was to further examine if these impacts were exacerbated or buffered among equity-deserving groups.

The results of this study provide useful data to enhance mental health services to children and youth, and support families in Saskatchewan.

2 METHODS

Data collection

Who? 510 dyads of children (8-18 years) and their parent/caregiver dyads

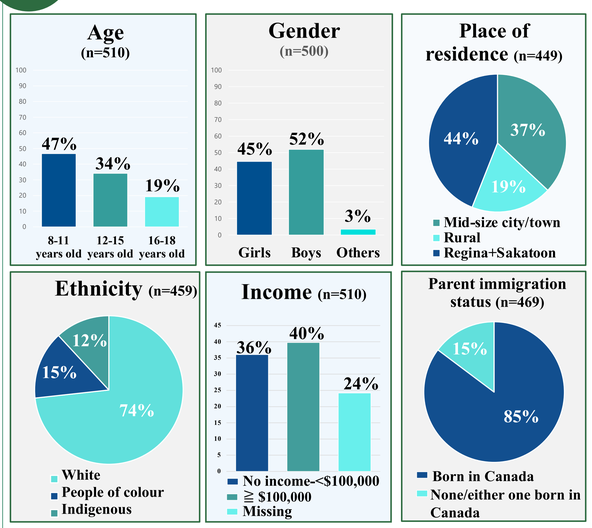
When? March-July 2021

How? Online survey; recruitment via CHASR Community Panel, SK public and Catholic school divisions, First Nations-administered and independent schools

Data analysis

Sample was weighted by age, gender, residence in SK using 2016 Canadian Census data. Descriptive and logistic regression analysis were performed.

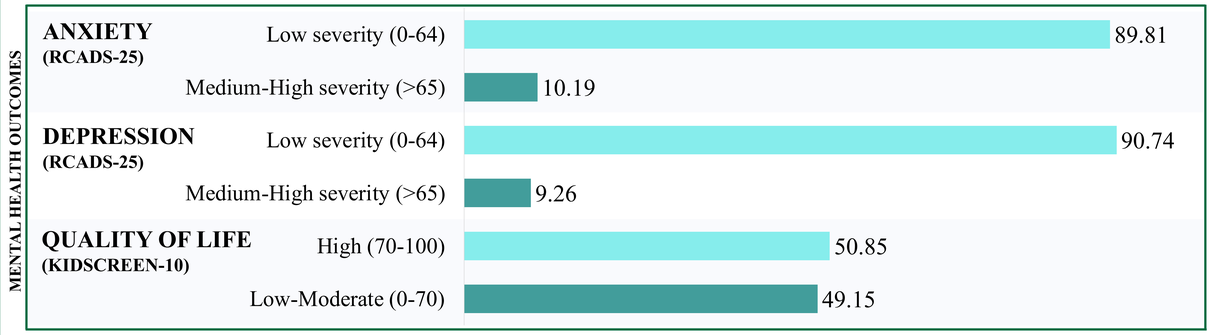
3 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS



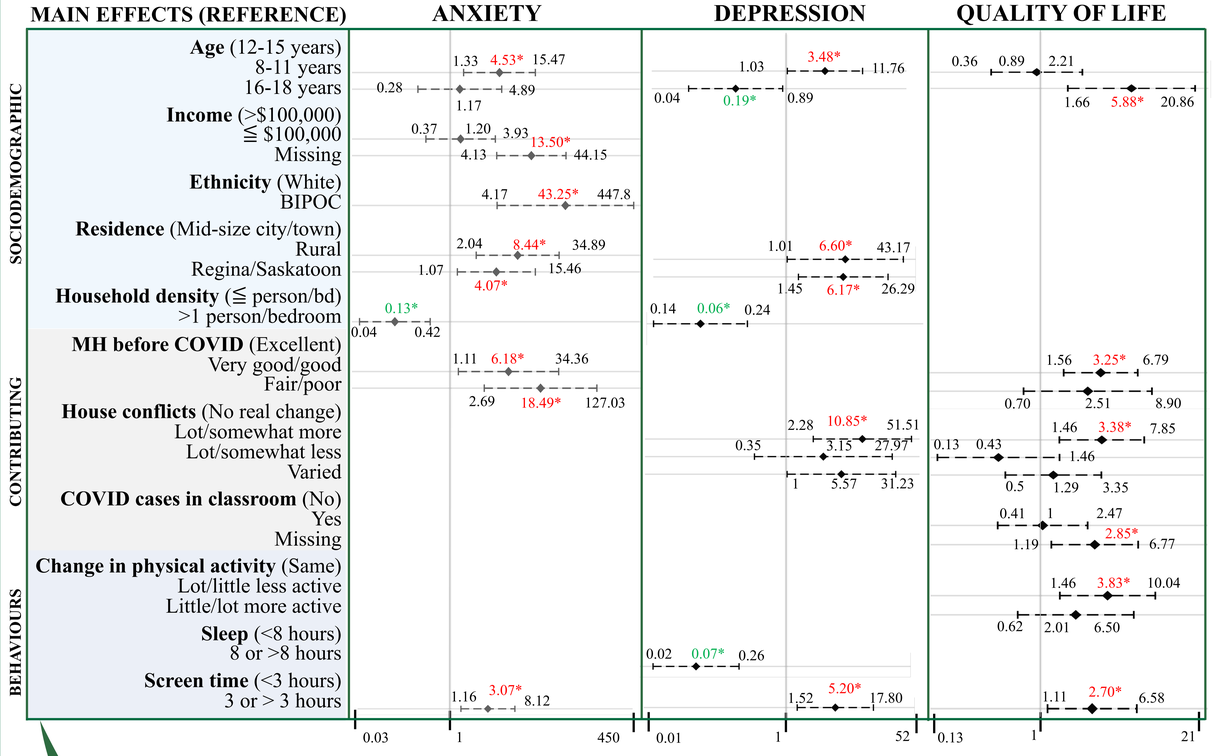
4 RESULTS

Prevalence of anxiety, depression and quality of life

(Point prevalence in the last 7 days)



Factors associated with anxiety, depression and quality of life (Modeling results)



Odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals, *p<.05

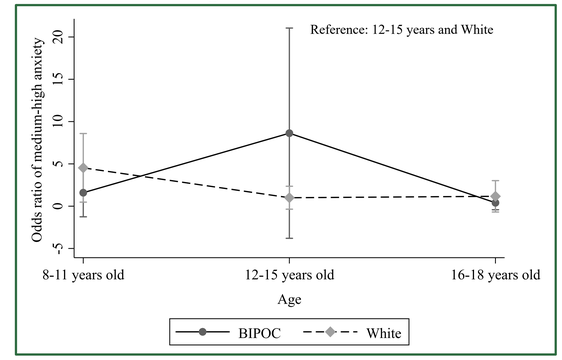
Summary

Risk was **higher** for (in **red,** above): Children who self-identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC vs. White), lived in rural and urban areas (vs. mid-size city), had good/fair MH before COVID (vs. excellent), had household conflicts (vs. no change), saw change in physical activity (less vs. no change) and had ≧3 hours of recreational screen time (vs. <3 hours). Risk was **lower** for (in **green,** above): Those who lived in household density of >1 person/bedroom (vs. ≦1 person/bedroom) and had ≧8 hours of sleep (vs. <8 hours).

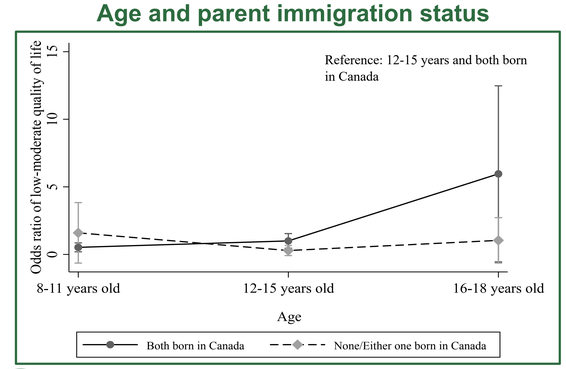
4 RESULTS, contd.

Interactions (Modeling results)

Age and ethnicity



Age and parent immigration status



5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Interaction analysis have shown children from equity-deserving families: immigrant, BIPOC and low-income did not fare too well with mental health.
- Children living in rural and urban areas of SK were more likely to experience anxiety and depression.
- Children who were in homes with greater household density, i.e., with more than one person per bedroom, were less likely to have anxiety or depression.
- 3 or more hours of recreational screen time was associated with worsened anxiety, depression and quality of life.
- In contrast, children who had 8 or more hours of sleep were less likely to experience depression.

6 CONCLUSION

Interventions are needed to address existing mental health challenges experienced during COVID-19 among children and youth in Saskatchewan.

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For more information on the research study and findings, scan the QR code