

Mental Health, Addiction, and COVID-19

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ENGAGE Digital Learning

Evergreen Council on PG

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Goals And Objectives

- Impact of COVID on
 - Mental Health Conditions
 - Addiction
 - Forecast for 2021 and beyond. . .
- Impact of COVID on
 - Gambling Disorder

The U.S. National Pandemic Emotional Impact Report

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Harvard Medical School



Findings of a nationwide survey assessing the effects of the COVID-19
pandemic on the emotional wellbeing of the U.S. adult population.
June 2020

Results

- On the emotional side, half of the entire population sample reported experiencing at least eight specific types of pandemic-related emotional impact to a moderate or greater extent over the past month
- nearly everybody (over 90%) had experienced one of those types of emotional effects to that extent.

Results

- Adults under the age of fifty and people of racial and ethnic minorities, and especially Hispanics/Latinos, seem to have been more affected by the pandemic compared to others on average.

COVID and Mental Health

- March – October 2020
 - The UCLA Experience
 - Outpatient:
 - Instant shift to digital services
 - Even IOPs
 - Now, increases in revenue and number of office visits BUT is it sustainable?
 - Patient satisfaction?
 - Quality of care

COVID and Mental Health

- The UCLA Experience
 - Psychiatric Hospital Services
 - March / April – Down to 25%
 - Since May 2020: FULL CAPACITY
 - Less Treatment , More Containment
 - No COVID + patients allowed

COVID and Mental Health Reflections from the Virtual Office

- Demand for New Calls – emphasis has been on “instant appointments”
- No set “COVID Curriculum”
 - Treat it as trauma, grief counseling, misery?
 - Should there be some set specific guidelines?

COVID and Mental Health

New Areas in Treatment

- Massive and multiple losses
 - Financial, personal, moral
- Demoralization
- Shared hopelessness
- Uncertain future
 - “The Terminator”
 - “The *future is not set*. There is no fate but what we make for ourselves

COVID and Mental Health Reflections from the Virtual Office

- Majority of sessions are focused on:
 - Sleep
 - Nutrition: "what are you or aren't you putting into your body?"
 - Physical activity
 - Managing screen time
 - Loneliness
 - Answering questions about COVID-19

COVID-19 Mental Health Tasklist

- Guns and weapons discussion
- Prescription pill management and disposal
- COVID-19 management plan
 - Testing, quarantining, comfort levels of engagement
- General health screening

COVID AND ADDICTION

COVID-19 and Addiction

- COVID-19 will increase incidence and prevalence of all SUDs
 - physical and emotional stress,
 - rise of co-occurring disorders,
 - availability / access,
 - lack of prevention treatment
 - lack of usual coping outlets

COVID-19 and Addiction

- SUDs will increase the risk of complications from COVID-19
 - Increased medical co-occurring disorders (e.g. pre-existing damage)
 - Less likely to have healthcare
 - Takes longer to heal?
 - Sleep impacts

COVID-19 and Addiction

- Compromised lung function or lung disease related to smoking history, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), could put people at risk for serious complications of COVID-19.
 - Anyone who smokes, regardless of substance type is at increased risk

Wang Q, Kaelber D, Xu R,
Volkow ND. COVID-19 risk
and outcomes in patients
with substance use
disorders: Analyses from
electronic health records in
the United States(link is
external). *Molecular
Psychiatry*. September 14,
2020.

COVID-19 and Addiction

- By analyzing the non-identifiable electronic health records (EHR) of millions of patients in the United States, the team of investigators revealed that while individuals with an SUD constituted 10.3% of the total study population, they represented 15.6% of the COVID-19 cases

Since March 2020

- Alcohol use increased significantly
 - Sales increased immediately
 - Bars closed but deemed essential
 - Even DELIVERY!
 - Use - Excessive – Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol consumption has increased by 14% compared with a year ago, including 17% for women, according to a report published in the JAMA Network Open.

The study also showed a 41% increase in heavy drinking for women. Heavy drinking is defined as four or more drinks for women within a couple of hours and five or more for men.

Cannabis and COVID-19

- In March 2020 recreational sales dropped almost 50% in late March in the four states – at least until federal stimulus checks started hitting consumers' bank accounts in April and sales rebounded.
- Now -- spending more money per visit to recreational retail outlets but shopping less often, perhaps for safety, or scheduling, reasons.

COVID-19 and Opioids

- Preliminary data from CDC
- overdose deaths have increased by about 10%, with the CDC estimating that the country could see more than 75,500 drug-related deaths this year. (For context, in 2019, overdose deaths in the country rose 4.6% to 70,980.)

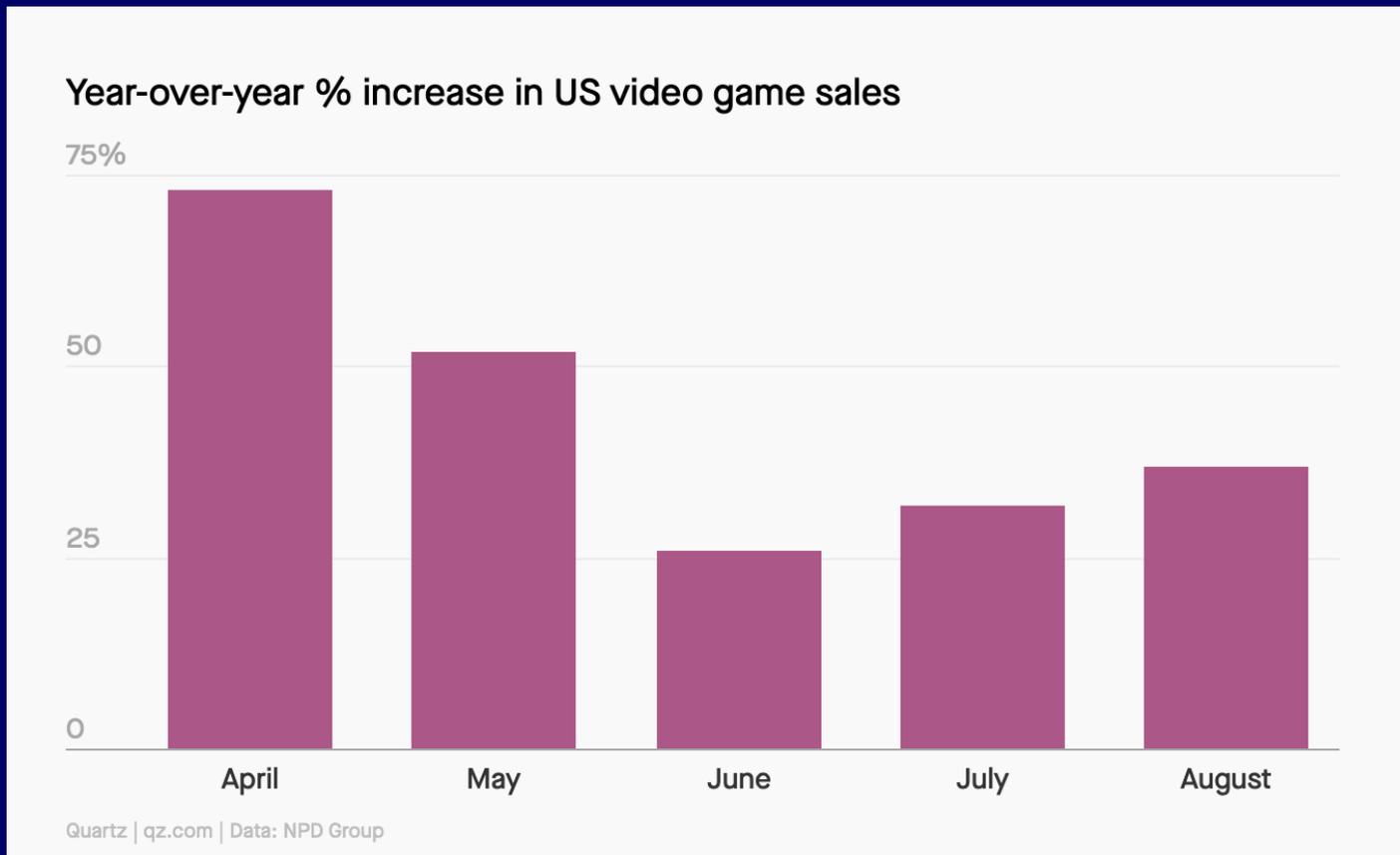
COVID-19 and Stimulants

- Drug prices fluctuate rapidly
- As incomes drop, likely to use less expensive drugs (MDMA to cannabis/K2) and/or drop in purity of drugs bought and sold
- Methamphetamine is perfectly setup for a rapid explosion in growth

COVID-19 and Smoking

- Global surveys report increased sales in tobacco and vaping products BUT also increased interest in smoking cessation because of the risks associated with COVID-19
- MAJOR opportunity for providers / behavioral health

COVID-19 and Video Games



How COVID-19 Impacted CALGETS



Timeline of Events

- March 2020: Annual Symposium (SD)
- March 2020: Safer-At-Home
- April 2020: Casinos shut down, sports shut down, transition to telehealth, Alcohol / Cannabis / Tob = ESSENTIAL
- Summer 2020:
 - Casinos return (awkwardly)
 - Working from home

Current Impact of COVID

- Residential Program: Shut down but then reopened at ½ capacity
- IOP: 100% Digital
- Outpatient: A fascinating mixture
- Telephone / Helpline: Intact!
- Trainings and Supervision: All virtual – fine for now but what happens later?

Guidance from OPG For Outpatient Providers

- OPG Issues Telemedicine Guidance (March 2020)
 - Informed consent can be done remotely (fillable PDF, snail mail, verbally)
 - Tele-video services not authorized by CDPH (at this time) (proposal being submitted)
 - Follow practice guidelines of parent licensing board
 - Email, texting, etc. . .

Emerging Clinical Issues During COVID For Gamblers

- Gambling withdrawal
- Identifying and managing co-occurring disorder
 - ESPECIALLY ADHD
 - What is the antidote to boredom and lost sense of meaning?
 - Substance Use Disorders
- Discuss financial literacy
 - NO ONLINE LOANS

Emerging Clinical Issues During COVID For Gamblers

- Sudden unemployment
 - EDD and Unemployment Insurance
 - CARES Act Support
- Increased time at home
 - Potential for abuse/ violence/neglect
- Processing / naming this as grief
- Trauma work is essential now

Emerging Clinical Issues During COVID For Gamblers

- Enhance connection
 - Pets?
- Coping with the “heaviness”
 - Structure, meaning and usefulness
- Do we ask our clients to be of service?
 - Donations, blood, time?
- Virtual referrals (e.g. yoga, TED talks)

Coping with COVID-19

Provider Toolkits

- Prepare office with best technology
- Reduce distractions
- Contact client ahead of time and ensure that they are going to be in a quiet, confidential space (NOT DRIVING)
- Respect boundaries, even though technology eliminates barriers

Example of a Pre-Session Communication

- We are scheduled for at 10 am session, please make sure that you are in secure, quiet space and can talk uninterrupted

Coping with COVID-19

COVID-19 Provider Toolkits

- Adopt telehealth standards of practice
- Use SHARED SCREEN Features
- Shorten visits to reduce Zoom Fatigue?
- Strengthen Body's Defenses against COVID-19
- Focus on building up sense of "usefulness"
- Integration not Separation

Share your thoughts,
experiences, suggestions and
questions!

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