

NAPCRG 52nd Annual Meeting — Abstracts of Completed Research 2024.

Submission Id: 6827

Title

Changes in School-Age Children’s Wellbeing and School-Related Needs post COVID-19 Pandemic

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Child and adolescent health

Presenters

Rachel Spronz, BS

Abstract

Context: The importance of school environments for child health has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as emerging data suggest that pandemic-related school closures may have led to worsening child health and exacerbated racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic health disparities. Objective: To assess school-aged children’s wellbeing and characterize changes in school-related needs from 2021 to 2022. Study Design and Analysis: Longitudinal survey. Weighted regressions examined associations among child’s wellbeing, school-related needs, and socio-demographic characteristics. Setting or Dataset: Nationally representative survey conducted in the 2021-2022 academic year in June 2021 and again in June 2022. Population Studied: Surveyed a nationally representative sample of parents of children enrolled in grades K-12. Intervention/Instrument: Parents completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and reported their child’s general health and needs for school-related services. Outcome Measures: Child’s wellbeing, school related needs. Results: Follow up surveys were completed by 1,199 participants. The percentage of children with deficits in total difficulties, hyperactivity, and prosocial behavior decreased from baseline to follow up, while a high percentage of children continued to have peer problems. Almost three quarters of parents continued to have at least one school-related need following the 2021-2022 school year. Highest priority needs were for academic enrichment, socialization, physical activity, tutoring, and coping with stress. Conclusions: We observed a continued high burden of needs, particularly with respect to academic support and social-emotional wellbeing. Greatest deficits in child health were noted in social development. Improvements in child wellbeing were experienced unequally across demographic groups.

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