Quality of life in Swiss children before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: the SOPHYA study

Bettina Bringolf-Isler MD PhD MPH
Covid in Children and Youth

Anxiety disorder

Youth riots
Anxiety disorder

Majority of children and youth:

Health related quality of life

Youth riots
Previous Studies: HRQoL & COVID-19

- No inclusion of children
- No representative studies (possible participation bias)
The SOPHYA Study
Strength of the SOPHYA Study

- National inhabitant registry data for recruitment
- Focus on physical activity, not on COVID-19
- Comparison group is available
- Large sample size
- Measurement over more than one year (each group)
- Use of validated questionnaire to assess health related quality of life
The Validated KINDL-R HRQoL-Questionnaire

- Physical wellbeing
- Emotional wellbeing
- Self-esteem
- Family
- Friends
- School
Study Population

-> Proxy report (parents) for children aged 5/6 to 11 years

Study sample 2014/2015: n=799 (participation rate: 35.6%)
Study sample 2020: n= 913 (participation rate: 33.1%)
Total sample: n= 1712

Significant differences between characteristics in 2014/15 an 2020:
Age (younger in 2020)
Income (more families without information in 2014/15)
Language region (more Italian speaking people 2020)

No significant difference between samples for sex, parental education, nationality, urbanicity
Conclusion 1

- HRQoL and especially emotional well-being was lower in 2020 compared to 2014/5
- The score was lowest at the maximum of the COVID-waves and its restrictions
- It cannot be distinguished whether the fear from the disease itself or the restrictions caused this decrease in HRQoL
Conclusion 2

- Policies should keep the COVID-19 infections as low as possible, but to still enable children to profit from protective factors (sport and leisure activities; avoid school closure)
- Parents should be supported if they feel stressed as parental and children’s stress are intertwined
- More research is needed to better understand the factors contributing to the decrease in HRQoL and to investigate whether or not HRQoL recovers to the pre-pandemic level
Thank you for your attention!

SOPHYA Team Swiss TPH:
Prof. Dr. Nicole Probst-Hensch
Dr. Bettina Bringolf-Isler
Johanna Hänggi

Members SOPHYA Team:
Prof. Dr. Bengt Kayser
Prof. Dr. Suzanne Suggs

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