

The difference in event count was used to test national changes and a P-value of  $\leq 0.05$  was used to test significance. **Results:** There were 140,035 heart failure admissions in the observational period, 64,770 during the pandemic and 75,265 prior to the pandemic, all data were analysed. There were reductions in admissions (69,555 vs 80,715,  $P < 0.0000000000$ ), bed days (586,430 vs 753,985,  $P = 0.0000000000$ ) and inpatient deaths (7,650 vs 8,305,  $P = 0.0000002154$ ) during the pandemic. **Conclusions:** There were significantly fewer admissions, bed days and inpatient deaths for patients admitted with heart failure during the coronavirus pandemic. Interpretation of this change is challenging as this may reflect unmet health needs as patients 'put off' seeking care. Further research is required to analyse the change in out of hospital healthcare utilisation, deaths in other settings and to explore potential for excess and latent morbidity and mortality that may result from reduced access to hospital services during the pandemic.

## P24 TELEHEALTH ACCESS AND USE BY THE U.S. MEDICARE POPULATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

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**Objectives:** Telehealth access and reimbursement varied by payer and regionally prior to COVID-19, and its limited availability expanded in response to the pandemic. The health behavioral response by older adults to COVID-19 has varied over time with the geographic spread of the pandemic and affected access and utilization of medical services. The purpose of this paper is to examine changes in access to telemedicine in 2020 in response to the pandemic for the U.S. Medicare population. **Methods:** The first two waves in June and October 2020 of the rapid response survey fielded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to track and monitor the effects of the pandemic within the U.S. Medicare population. With a panel sample size of 9686 Medicare beneficiaries, the calculated statistics use replicate weights to adjust for the complex survey sample design and balanced repeated replication using Fay's adjustment of 0.3 for variance estimation. **Results:** Nearly 45 percent of the Medicare population reported use of a telehealth appointment between June and October of 2020. The likelihood of using telemedicine increased for those with chronic conditions, such as depression, and for those with higher incomes and education. Medical practices were more likely to encourage telehealth visits for Medicare patients between March and June with 57 percent of the Medicare population reporting that their usual provider offered a telemedicine appointment to replace a regular office visit during the spring and 48 percent reporting the suggested telemedicine replacement from July through October 2020. Overall access to telehealth increased from 60% to 64% but varied by race/ethnicity, gender, Census regions, and rural status. **Conclusions:** Access to telemedicine services expanded for the U.S. Medicare population during the pandemic but usage varied by chronic disease status, socioeconomic and demographic factors, and geography.



## Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Investigations in Populations of Interest

### P25 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY-OF-LIFE OF PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM PERSONS

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**Objectives:** To assess the impact of COVID-19 on health-related quality-of-life (HRQoL) of those who were pregnant or recently pregnant during the pandemic. **Methods:** Individuals who were pregnant any time since January 2020, the beginning of the pandemic, were invited to participate in an online, national US survey (EuroQol grant: 260-2020RA). Respondents were asked to self-report their experiences with COVID-19, to complete the EQ-5D-5L, and other measurements of HRQoL. To estimate the association between COVID-19 infection with the EQ-5D-5L outcomes, we used median regression for the EQ-5D utility and EQ-VAS scores, and ordinal logistic regressions for the EQ-5D-5L health items. Post-stratification weights were used to ensure representation by age, race and US census region. **Results:** Among pregnant or postpartum persons, the median EQ-5D-5L utility score was 0.87 and EQ-VAS was 0.80. The median EQ-5D-5L utility score increased by 0.0058 (95% CI 0.0026, 0.009) for each additional year of age of the respondent. We observed no change in EQ-5D-5L utility measures by maternal age ( $\beta = 0.00$ ; 95% CI -0.09, 0.09). On average, comparing Black pregnant persons to White, EQ-5D-5L utility values were 0.44 points lower, and EQ-5D-VAS scores were 0.31 points lower. Although median EQ-5D-5L utility values were similar for those with and without a diagnosis of COVID-19 (0.87 and 0.88), utility values declined by 0.022 (95% CI -0.040, -0.010) for each unit increase in perceived COVID-19 severity. Similar results were observed for the EQ-5D-VAS scores. When we evaluated EQ-5D-5L items individually, respondents diagnosed with COVID-19 reported more problems related to anxiety/depression compared with those who did not (OR 2.43; 95% CI 1.35, 4.40). No other items were significantly associated with COVID-19. **Conclusions:** We observed lower HRQoL measures associated with severe COVID-19 infection during pregnancy. In particular, problems with anxiety and depression contributed most strongly to lowered HRQoL during pregnancy.



### P26 THE PRACTICE OF FACE MASKING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN SOUTH INDIA: AN ONLINE CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY DURING SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19

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**Objectives:** COVID-19 pandemic urges the need for respiratory protective equipment like face masks as a public health measure to control the spread of infection. This study aimed to investigate the trends followed in the practice of mask-wearing by the South Indian population amid the second wave of COVID-19 outbreak in 2021. **Methods:** A web-based, online cross-sectional survey was conducted among the young adult population in India in late April 2021. An eight-item questionnaire was designed to assess the social perceptions and attitudes regarding wearing a face mask as a part of universal safety precautions. The social perceptions towards wearing masks were categorized as excellent, good average and poor on a scale (Social Perception Scale -SPS) scored out of 8. The details collected using a pre-designed google form are statistically analyzed using the Chi-square test with a p-value of  $< 0.05$  is considered statistically significant. **Results:** Among the 1283 participants who completed the questionnaire, 57% wore cloth masks followed by 26% wearing N95 masks and 12% wearing surgical masks. Even though the age of the study population varied from 19 – 76 years and with a male preponderance of 56.3% (n = 723), students and recent graduates participated largely in the study (71.8%, n = 922). A mean SPS score of  $5.67 \pm 1.07$  (out of 8) indicates that the social perception of the study population is good. A statistically significant association is observed between the SPS score and the age (p = 0.003), type of mask used (p < 0.001), and economic background of the study population (p < 0.001). Breathing difficulty, communication problems, additional cost incurred and dermatologic issues were commonly reported barriers against mask-wearing. **Conclusions:** Adjunctive public health measures such as mask-wearing are crucial in curbing the COVID-19 transmission. By shaping an appropriate public attitude, policymakers can ensure compliance towards mask-wearing.



### P27 VACCINATION COVERAGE TRENDS FOR HEPATITIS B IN INFANTS FROM THE BRAZILIAN AND COLOMBIAN EXPANDED IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM: A REAL-WORLD ANALYSIS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT

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**Objectives:** COVID-19 pandemic has posed major challenges for healthcare systems and societies worldwide. Mitigation measures and the fear of exposure to COVID-19 might have negatively impacted local health policies, such as pediatric immunization programs strategies. This observational study aims to analyze the vaccination coverage (VC) for hepatitis B in infants in Brazil and Colombia between 2015 to 2020. **Methods:** This is a descriptive analysis using real-world data from the Expanded Immunization Program System from Brazil (SI-PNI) and the Epidemiological Surveillance System from Colombia (SIVIGILA). We calculated the annual variation of VC for hepatitis B in infants from 2015 to 2020 for both countries. **Results:** Overall, Brazilian VC had an average annual decline of 3.6% in the pre-COVID-19 period (2015-2019), reaching the lowest coverage in 2019 (78.57%), while the Colombian VC had an increasing pattern for the same period (0.4% annually), reaching the highest coverage in 2017 (89.3%). In 2020, VC decreased by 19.8% in Brazil, compared with 2019. In Colombia, VC decrease was notably lower (1.0%). **Conclusions:** In Colombia, VC increase might be explained by the implementation of the national plan for hepatitis B elimination in infants during this period. In Brazil, VC coverages for several other infectious diseases have also faced a decrease during the last years, but no formal mitigation activity or plan was yet established. Although both countries showed a reduction of the VC coverage in 2020, the impact was considerably higher in Brazil. These trends could be explained by the distinct health strategies linked to the Expanded Immunization Programs for each country in preparation for the COVID-19 pandemic.



### P28 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUNG ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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**Objectives:** To assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in young adults in the US. **Methods:** Three waves of online surveys were designed to capture mental health status in the US (EuroQol grant: 84-2020RA): Wave1 (Apr 1<sup>st</sup> – May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (n=2,734)), Wave2 (July 4<sup>th</sup> – Sept 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (n=2,454)), and Wave3 (Jan 10<sup>th</sup> – Mar 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (n=2,252)) using the EQ-5D-5L to evaluate respondent's health-related quality-of-life (HRQoL) and the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4) to assess anxiety and depression. The EQ-5D-5L utility, VAS scores and 5 domains were stratified by age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Binary Logistic regressions were used to estimate the associations between anxiety/depression and various covariates. Chi-square tests were conducted for significant differences in mental health outcomes between age groups. **Results:** Most participants were white (68.7%) non-Hispanic

