

# The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health in Adolescents

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### Introduction

Many individuals including adolescents with existing mental health illness have experienced increased anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mood disorders, and behavioral disorders due to the pandemic. Fergert et al<sup>1</sup> reported that pandemics cause stress, worry, helplessness, and social and risky behaviors among children and adolescents. These emotion and behaviors stem from unusual routines outside their normal living like shutting down of schools where adolescents were able to access essential resources.

### Objectives

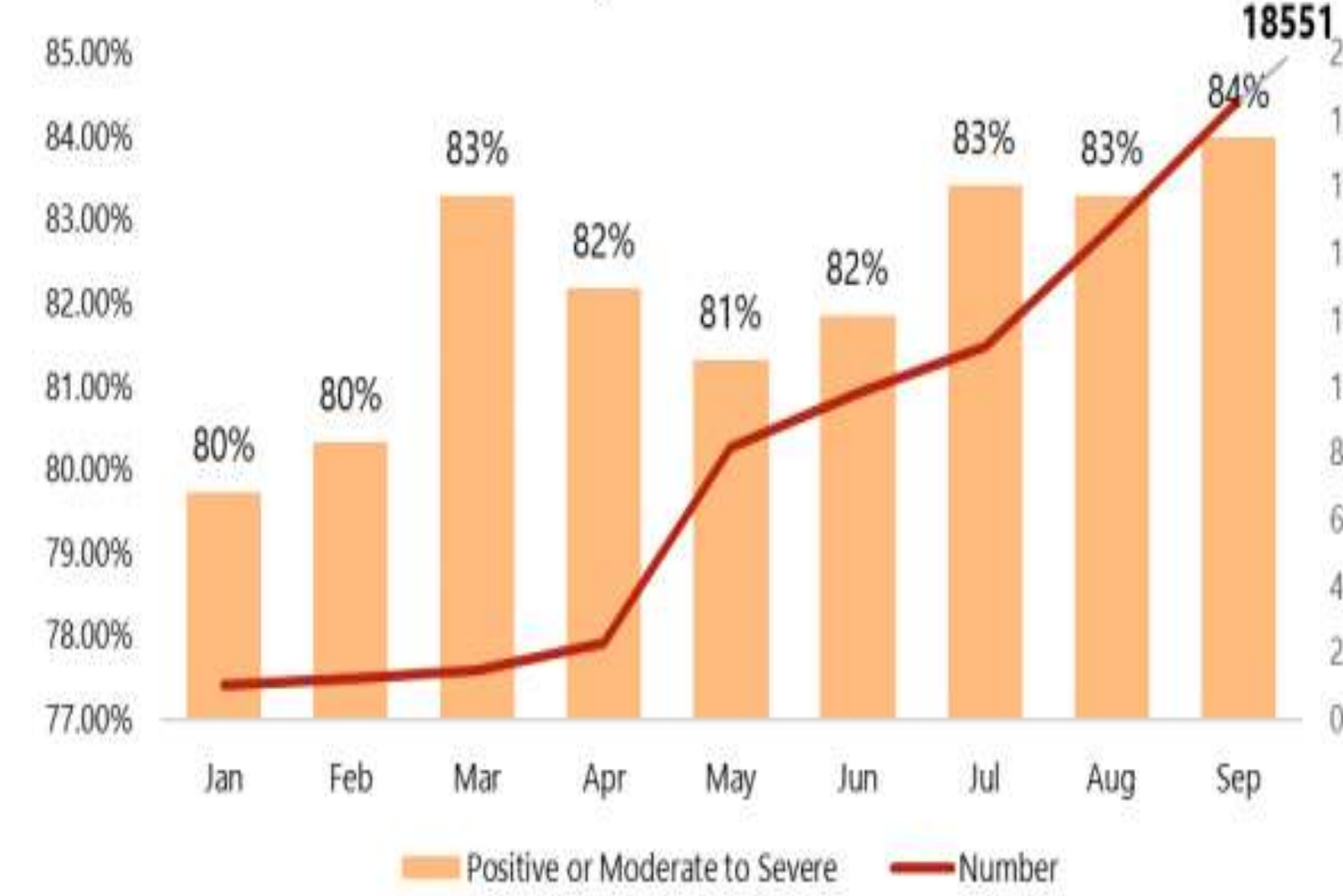
1. To introduce the importance of mental health in adolescents
2. To discuss the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent mental health on a global scale
3. Propose recommendations for New York City on how to address mental health concerns in adolescents presently and post-pandemic.

### Methods

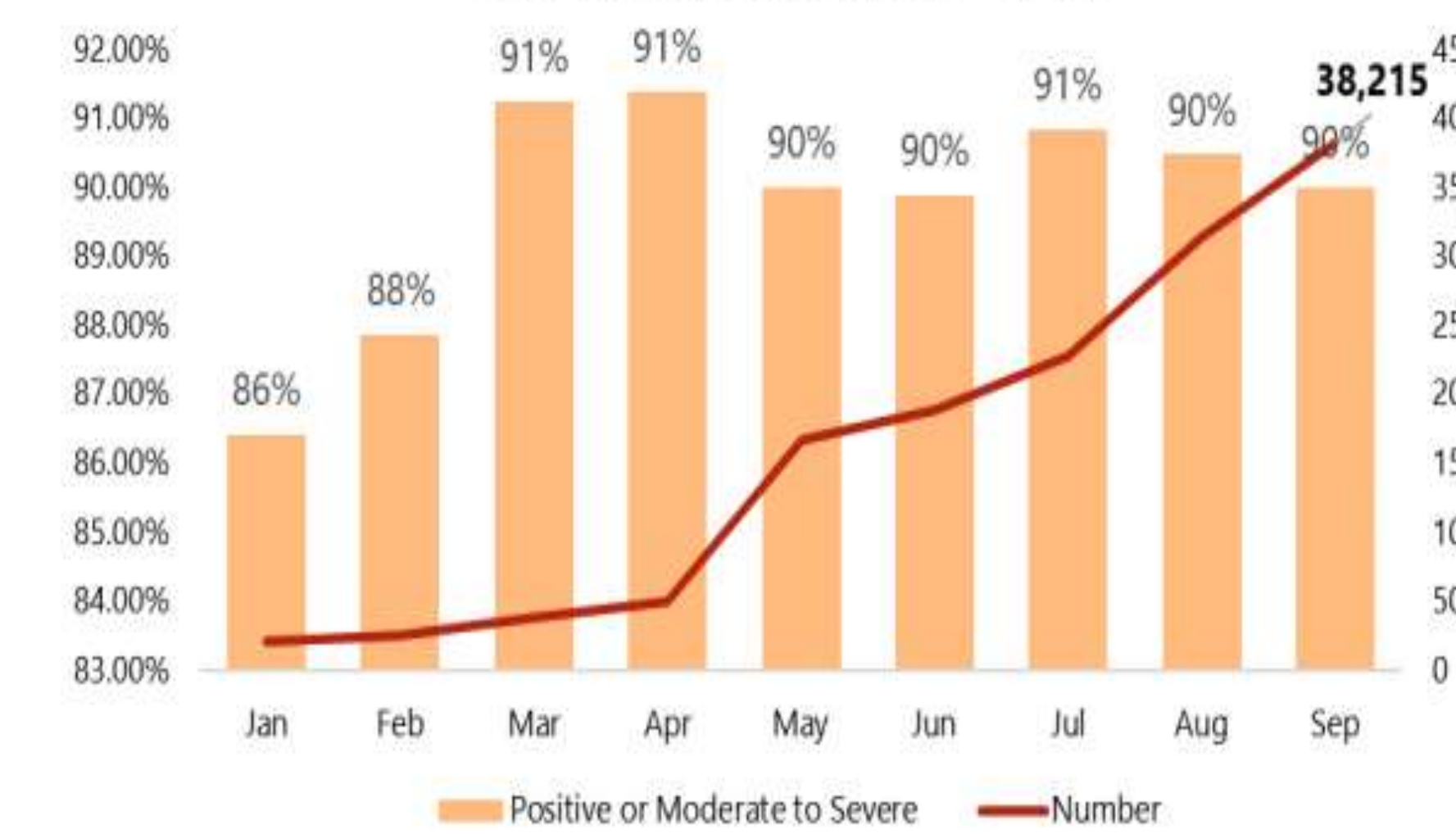
Data related to this topic was obtained through a comprehensive literature review using search engines like PubMed, Google Scholar, Google. Research also included literature from the websites of organizations like Mental Health America, The American Psychiatric Association, Centers for Disease Control and WHO. Articles were also retrieved from other referenced articles. Keywords such as “mental health,” “COVID-19,” “adolescents,” “anxiety,” “depression” were used in the research. Other keywords used were “alcohol,” “physical activity,” “suicide,” and “behavioral health”. Fifty-five articles were retrieved, in which only thirty-four met the inclusion criteria for this paper.

### Results

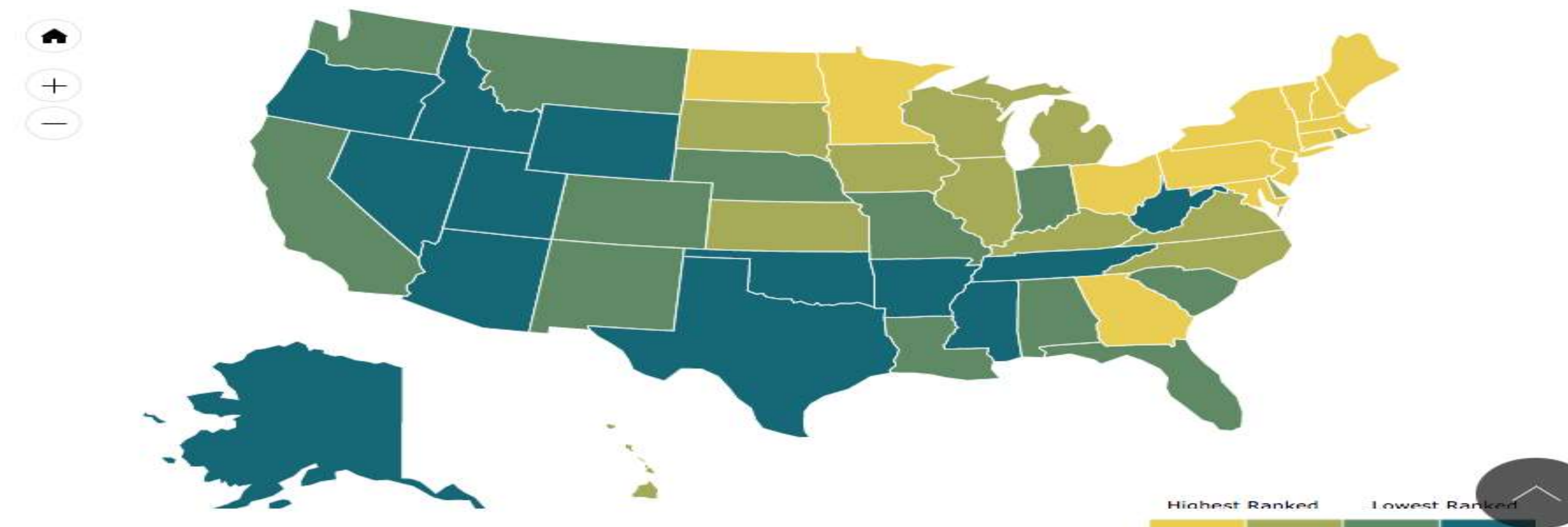
Over 8 in 10 Youth Screening Moderate to Severe Anxiety Since March 2020



Over 9 in 10 Youth Screening Moderate to Severe Depression Since March 2020



### Youth Ranking 2020



### Results

- According to Mental Health America, in 2021, 9.7 percent of youth (over 2.3 million) cope with Severe Major Depression (MDE). The number of youths experiencing Severe Major Depression increased by 126,000 from last year’s dataset. 59.6 percent of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment. Furthermore, 1,560,288 people took a screen from January to September of 2020 and found interesting data related to mental health in different groups. In particular, youth ages 11-17 who accessed screening was 9 % higher than the average in 2019.<sup>11</sup> Not only are the number of youth searching for help with their mental health increasing, but throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, youth ages 11-17 have been more likely than any other age group to score for moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety and depression.<sup>11</sup>

### Discussion/Conclusion

There are many factors that contribute to the mental health of adolescents during the pandemic. Mental health services for youth is largely unexplored. As we face many different phases of the pandemic, mental health counselors and psychiatrists must ensure children and adolescents are receiving ongoing care. There also needs to be more research pertaining to accessibility to mental health services to better treat this vulnerable population.

- **Protective Factors:**
  - Social Connection
  - Mental Health Services
- **Risk Factors:**
  - Physical Inactivity
  - Child Abuse and Maltreatment
  - Screen Time
  - Lower socioeconomic status
  - Pre-existing Mental Health Conditions
  - Gender
- **Social and Risky Behaviors:**
  - Substance and alcohol abuse
  - Suicide

### Faculty Advisor

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