



London, UK

v.sornarajah@nhs.net

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2021;374:n2324

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n2324>

Published: 24 September 2021

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELLBEING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Consider internet use when assessing young people's mental health

Vaishnavi Sornarajah *core psychiatry trainee*

Having worked in child and adolescent mental health services, I recognised many of the approaches described by Rider and colleagues for assessing the mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in the covid-19 pandemic.¹ But they didn't discuss internet use.

While working with young people, I was struck by just how much of their current lives are spent online and how unprepared I was to explore this. I found myself asking about social media use around pro-anorexia and self-harm forums. The number of visits to these websites has exploded over the pandemic as we were forced to be inside with our thoughts and mirrors, and this is now reflected in the numbers of young people presenting to services.

Clinicians need to be more aware of patients accessing of harmful material online, as well as being open to the possibilities of the digital phenotype. By considering not just the patient in front of me but also the phone in their pocket, I was able to gather a fuller picture of each person.

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Rider EA, Ansari E, Varrin PH, Sparrow J. Mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents during the covid-19 pandemic. *BMJ* 2021;374:n1730. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n1730 pmid: 34429302

This article is made freely available for use in accordance with BMJ's website terms and conditions for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic or until otherwise determined by BMJ. You may use, download and print the article for any lawful, non-commercial purpose (including text and data mining) provided that all copyright notices and trade marks are retained.