



Early Release of Selected Mental Health Estimates Based on Data from the January–June 2019 National Health Interview Survey

In this release, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Early Release Program provides estimates for selected mental health indicators based on data from the January–June 2019 NHIS. The indicators are based on self-report of the frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms. They are derived from responses to the first two questions of the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and the seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale.

In the PHQ-2, survey respondents are asked about how often in the last two weeks they have been bothered by 1) having little interest or pleasure in doing things, and 2) feeling down, depressed, or hopeless. In the GAD-2, survey respondents are asked about how often the respondent has been bothered by 1) feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge, and 2) not being able to stop or control worrying. For each scale, the answers are assigned a numerical value: not at all = 0, several days = 1, more than half the days = 2, and nearly every day = 3. The two responses for each scale are added together. The NHIS indicators in the table are the percentages of adults who had reported symptoms of anxiety or depression that resulted in scale scores equal to three or greater. These adults have symptoms that generally occur more than half the days or nearly every day.

These estimates are being published prior to final data editing and final weighting to provide benchmarks for recent mental health estimates derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. The Household Pulse Survey is an experimental data system started in April 2020 to produce data on the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on U.S. households. The Pulse Survey included similar questions on mental health, but the timeframe was limited to the last 7 days rather than the last 2 weeks. Unlike NHIS, the Pulse Survey is not a health survey; rather, it is framed as a survey about changes in finances, employment, health, and education due to coronavirus specifically. The Pulse Survey is administered via an online questionnaire, and its representativeness and potential biases have not yet been fully evaluated. Based on Pulse Survey data from May 14–19, 2020, 28.2% of adults in the U.S. had symptoms of anxiety disorder, 24.4% had symptoms of depressive disorder, and 33.9% had symptoms of one or both disorders in the prior 7 days. More information on mental health estimates from the Pulse Survey are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm>.

Percentages (and 95% confidence intervals) of selected mental health indicators for adults aged 18 and over, by quarter: United States, January–June 2019

Selected mental health indicator	Quarter 1, 2019 (Jan–Mar)	Quarter 2, 2019 (Apr–Jun)	Quarter 1–2, 2019 (Jan–Jun)
Symptoms of anxiety disorder	8.3 (7.3–9.4)	8.1 (7.3–8.9)	8.2 (7.6–8.8)
Symptoms of depressive disorder	6.7 (6.0–7.4)	6.5 (5.9–7.2)	6.6 (6.2–7.1)
Symptoms of anxiety disorder and/or depressive disorder	11.0 (10.0–12.2)	10.9 (10.1–11.7)	11.0 (10.3–11.6)

NOTE: Data are based on household interviews of a sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Percentages are based on responses to the GAD-2 and PHQ-2 scales. Adults with missing responses to one or both questions in the scale are not included in the calculation of the percentages.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2019.