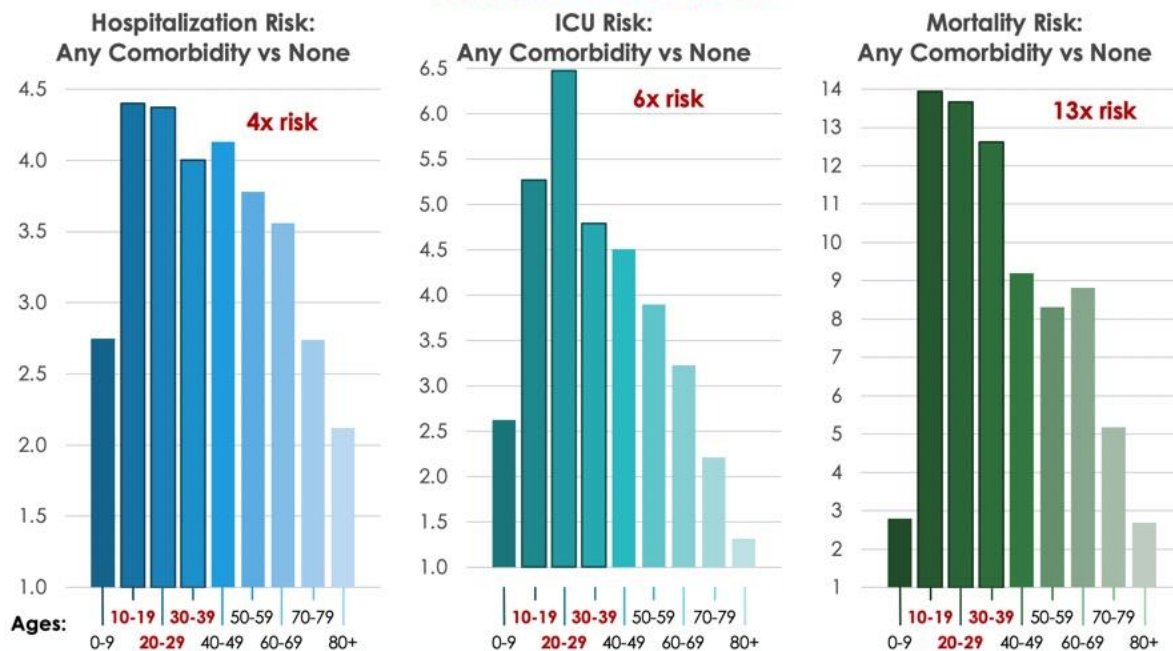


COVID-19 ALERT: Impact on Young Adults with Chronic Conditions

PROBLEM

Contrary to current thought, young adults are not spared by Covid-19. A recent [Op-Ed by the incoming CDC director](#) and [two new studies](#) call for attention to the deadly impact of Covid-19 in young adults. A recent analysis of CDC’s Covid-19 data by the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine shows that the increase in risk for hospitalization, ICU admission, and death among individuals with any comorbidity was greatest for adolescents and young adults. Young people, 10-39 years, with chronic conditions who contract Covid-19 have a hospitalization rate four times higher than their peers and an ICU admission rate six times higher. Alarming, their death rates are thirteen times higher compared to young adults who do not have pre-existing conditions.

Using data on over **3.6 million** cases of COVID-19 reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 case surveillance system database between January 1 and August 30, we identified that **the increased risk for hospitalization, ICU admission, and death due to underlying chronic conditions was greatest for young adults (ages 10-39 years).**



Wisk, Bhagat, Sharma. Manuscript under review. 2020.

Covid-19 is highlighting longstanding disparities that this population faces. Young adults who grew up with or acquire chronic conditions comprise a historically overlooked population, estimated at 20 million.¹ Just as we have seen tremendous progress in extending longevity for older people, medicine and

¹ Prevalence of 19.96 million derived from rate of [26.2%](#) adolescents with special health care needs and population of [76.2 million](#) 18-34 year olds



technology now enable over 90% of young adults to survive previously fatal childhood conditions. However, medicine and government have not kept adequate pace. Young adults are often combined with adolescents or older adults in studies, preventing a clear picture on their health and welfare. Many continue to receive care in pediatric clinics and hospitals while others struggle to find young adult care in adult health systems that are designed for older people and the elderly. According to [The National Academy of Medicine](#), *“Policy makers should ensure that outcomes are measured specifically for young adults and that programs take account of relevant differences between young and older adults.”*

RECOMMENDATIONS

As transmission rates increase among young adults, it is critical to implement public health interventions targeted to their age group (e.g., consistent uniform messaging tailored to young adults; a system to ask questions and address isolation and mental health issues, as well as strategies for colleges and work; etc.).

The Biden Coronavirus Task Force should immediately investigate the impact of Covid-19 on young adults with chronic conditions to prevent further avoidable morbidity and mortality by taking the following steps:

1. Review the evidence of Covid’s impact on young adults with chronic conditions – ensure that childhood onset conditions are analyzed - and update CDC’s risk designation.
2. Include childhood-onset conditions in assessing young adult comorbidities, in public health surveillance and medical assessments, and in prevention, treatment and research guidelines.
3. Prioritize young adults with chronic health conditions for Covid-19 vaccinations.
4. Tailor messaging to young adults to inform them about the risk for those with chronic conditions.
5. Provide specific guidance to young adults with chronic conditions about their risks and vaccinations.
6. Include young adults with chronic conditions in [CDCs Covid-19 Health Equity Strategy](#) to ensure data collection and leadership driven prevention and guidance.

BACKGROUND

1. June 17, 2020 - [PPC Op-Ed](#) calls for leaders to provide specific guidance for young adults with underlying conditions and ensure appropriate data is collected
2. September 16, 2020 – [Senator Van Hollen requests that CDC assess risk](#) for young adults with chronic conditions and update their risk designations, citing heightened risks of 6 times hospitalizations, 9 times ICU admissions and 18 times mortality
3. October 14, 2020 – CDC response states that they will analyze young adults with chronic conditions. No CDC update as of January 7, 2021
4. December 5, 2020 – [PPC Summit event](#) with PBS NewsHour Anchor Judy Woodruff, Senator Van Hollen, and Drs. Kavita Patel and Lauren Wisk, which highlights new evidence on the disproportionate risk of morbidity and mortality for adolescents and young adults ages with chronic conditions
5. December 16, 2020 - [Senator Van Hollen requests that CDC consider prioritizing](#) young adults with chronic conditions for Covid-19 vaccinations

[Physician-Parent Caregivers](#), PPC, is a voluntary non-profit dedicated to advancing quality health care and quality of life for young adults with chronic conditions. Contact: santi@physicianparent.org

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