



## Racial and Ethnic Differences in Encounters Related to Suicidal Behavior Among Children and Adolescent with Medicaid Coverage During the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Material Religion*

Available at: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2806204>

**One-Sentence Summary:** The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the mental health needs among young people, leading to a rise in suspected suicide attempts, and this study aims to investigate racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare encounters related to suicidal behavior among youth in American Indian (AI) or Alaska Native (AN) communities covered under Medicaid or CHIP during the first year of the pandemic.

**Reviewer:** Alicia Evan

**Methods:** This study analyzed Medicaid and CHIP data from multiple states and regions to examine rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among children and adolescents, considering various demographic and eligibility groups.

### Main Findings / Recommendations:

- AI or AN youth had double the rate of encounters related to suicidal ideation and suicide attempts compared to other racial and ethnic groups
- There was a temporary decrease in suicidal ideation and suicide attempts during March-May 2020 followed by an overall increase during the pandemic
- Combining claims data with medical charts or electronic health records can be valuable for future analysis in identifying suicidal behavior.

### Potential Issues:

- The author notes that there may be instances where suicidal behavior is not accurately reported in medical claims records.
- The policy initiatives targeting suicide prevention in AI/AN communities appear to be effective, but further research is needed to understand why the pandemic's impact on this group differs from others in this regard.

### Useful Summary Stats, Quotes:

- Compared to pre-pandemic levels, the rate of encounters for suicidal ideation was lower and for suicide attempts was higher, except for a 6% decline in suicide attempts among AI or AN youth.
- “Compared to pre-pandemic levels, the rate of encounters for suicidal ideation was lower (1.23 vs 1.07 encounters per 1000), but the rate for suicide attempt or intentional self-harm was higher (0.31 vs 0.33 encounters per 1000).”

### Reviewers Opinions:

	Strongly Disagree (1)			Strongly Agree (5)	
	1	2	3	4	5
Impactful for Indian Country?				x	
Novel?		X			
Trustworthy?			X		

### Reference:

Ali, M. M., West, K. D., & Dubenitz, J. (2023). Racial and Ethnic Differences in Encounters Related to Suicidal Behavior Among Children and Adolescents With Medicaid Coverage During the COVID-19 Pandemic. JAMA Network.  
<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.1934>

