



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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AJPH CALL FOR PAPERS SPECIAL SECTION ON ANTECEDENTS OF ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

The *American Journal of Public Health (AJPH)* invites submission of manuscripts on the important topic of adolescent mental health for a special section to be published in March 2025.

Adolescence can be a challenging time of life for developmental reasons. Social, emotional, and physical maturity increase during adolescence, and adolescent brains continue to develop. Adolescence is also a period in which new social and physical challenges emerge, including sensation seeking, risk-taking behaviors, and navigating peer influence. The ways in which adolescents experience this period changes over time. Contemporary challenges include violence (e.g., mass killings in schools, violence against racialized minorities), pressure to assume adult roles within families, exposure to technology and social media (which may include bigoted, violent, and sexualized content), social isolation, and changing opportunities to build effective and appropriate social skills. Challenges that adolescents encounter are not distributed equally across racial, social, economic, and geographic groups. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many existing problems and inequalities. According to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, 2021, more than 4 in 10 (42%) high school students felt persistently sad or hopeless, nearly one third (29%) experienced poor mental health, more than 1 in 5 (22%) seriously considered attempting suicide, and 1 in 10 (10%) attempted suicide.

We invite submission of manuscripts to address many of the current concerns related to adolescent mental health including (but not limited to):

- Evaluations of interventions to improve adolescent mental health
- Positive and negative effects of technology and social media
- Social isolation
- Substance misuse
- Suicide and self-harm
- Disruption in schools
- Violence (including gun violence in schools, violence in the community, and violence by the state)
- Positive and negative effects of medications prescribed in childhood
- Age and sex differences in vulnerabilities
- Caregiving responsibilities

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- The lasting impacts of COVID-19 and pandemic response
- COVID-19 pandemic–related anxieties among a cohort of students
- Disparities in underserved communities
- Sexual health
- Social skills and appropriate behaviors

Potential authors should visit the *AJPH* website (www.ajph.org) to review the Instructions for Authors and specific guidelines for the various types of manuscripts. Importantly, submissions must include a cover letter formatted as requested in the Instructions for Authors and should specify that the submission is for the Adolescent Mental Health special section. In all manuscripts, the number of words, references, and tables/figures must correspond to a specific *AJPH* article format.

Select manuscripts will undergo editorial review and eventual peer review by the *AJPH* editors and peer referees as defined by *AJPH* policy. Submissions are due on **September 30, 2024**, and can be submitted at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/ajph>. If you are planning to submit a research article and will not be able to meet the submission deadline, please contact Evan Mayo-Wilson (Evan.Mayo-Wilson@unc.edu) to request an extension.

***AJPH* Editors:** Evan Mayo-Wilson, Tanya Telfair Leblanc, Jihong Liu, Michelle Livings.