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The disruption of regular healthcare because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns has had catastrophic effects on patients with other acute or chronic illnesses. They were turned away from public hospitals, private healthcare facilities, and even primary health centers because COVID-19 had been given priority almost to the exclusion of all other healthcare.

### Collateral Damage of COVID-19: Dialysis

A [study](#) surveyed 19 major hospitals in India to determine the effect of lockdown on the care of patients with kidney disease. 28.2% of patients missed one or more dialysis sessions, in many cases requiring emergency dialysis. Many patients struggled just to get to dialysis units with the imposition of national and state-level lockdowns. Tele-consultation was started but was accessed by only a small number of patients. The study concluded that the pandemic had an immediate adverse effect on the care of dialysis patients while the long-term effects on their health remained unknown.

## The adverse effect of COVID pandemic on the care of patients with kidney diseases

**Aim:** to analyze the effect of lockdown imposed due to COVID pandemic on the care of patients with kidney diseases in India

### METHODS



Surveyed 19 major tertiary care institute, public and private hospitals in India



Care of kidney disease patients during first three weeks of lockdown



Effect on dialysis, outpatients, inpatients and transplant services

### FINDINGS



- Dialysis patients decreased from 2517 to 2404



- 710 patients (28.2%) missed one or more HD sessions
- 104 (4.13%) stopped reporting for dialysis till end of survey



- 69 (2.74%) required emergency dialysis sessions



- 9 (0.36%) dialysis patients died

- Tele-consultation was started but accessed by only a small number

### CONCLUSION:

Lack of preparedness before lockdown resulted in an interruption in health care services and posed an immediate adverse effect on the outcome of dialysis and kidney disease patients.

### Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal health.

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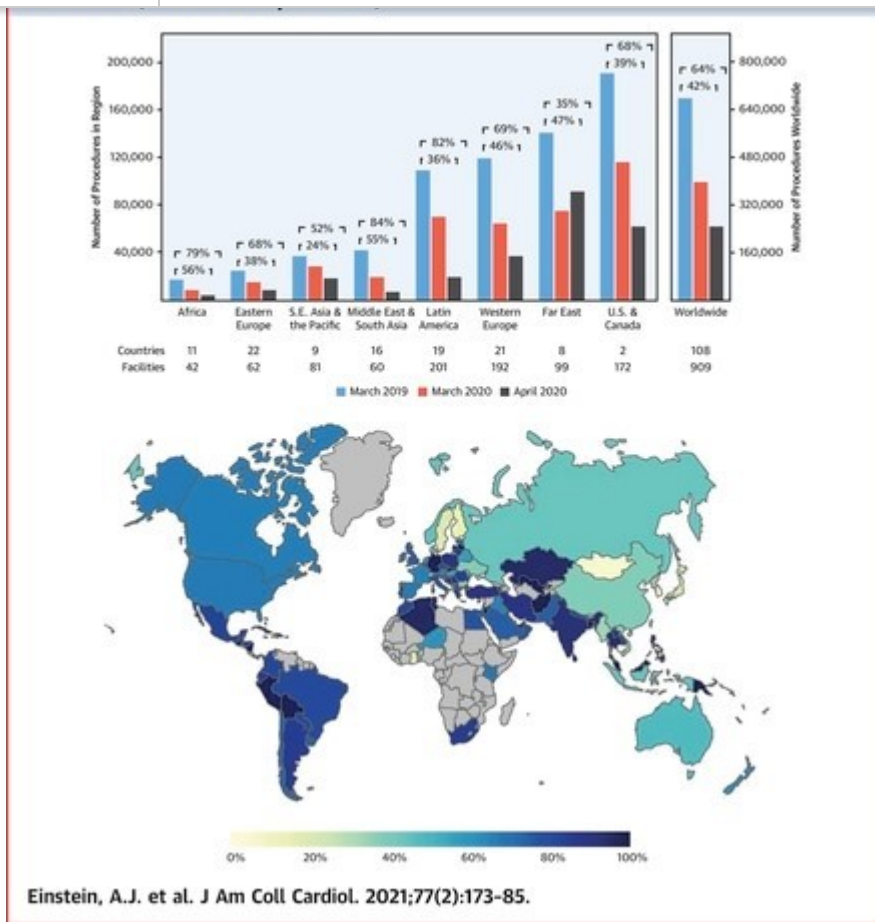
compared with data from the pre-COVID period of October 2019 to February 2020. There was a reduction of 45.1% in institutional deliveries, a percentage point increase of 7.2 in high-risk pregnancy, and a 2.5 fold rise in admission to the intensive care unit of pregnant women during the pandemic. One-third of women had inadequate antenatal visits. The delayed health-seeking due to lockdown and fear of contracting infection resulted in 44.7% of pregnancies with complications.

### **Pandemic and Children's Screen time.**

A year into the pandemic and parents across the world are watching their children slide down an increasingly slippery path into an all-consuming digital life. When the COVID-19 outbreak hit, many parents relaxed restrictions on screens as a stop-gap way to keep frustrated and restless children entertained and engaged. But, often, remaining limits have vaporized as computers, tablets, and phones became the centerpiece of school and social life, and weeks of stay-at-home rules. The situation is alarming parents, and scientists too, because, more screen time and increased online use are associated with anxiety, depression, obesity, aggression, and addiction to the medium itself. A large number of children under 10 are giving enormous hours to games like Fortnite, and apps like TikTok and Snapchat. According to "[Qustodio](#)", a company that tracks usage on tens of thousands of devices used by children, aged between 4 to 15 years worldwide - in the United States alone children spent on average 97 minutes a day on YouTube in March and April, up from 57 minutes in February, and nearly double the use a year prior. Similar trends were found in Britain and Spain. Scientists say though children's brains are considered "plastic", meaning they can adapt and shift to changing circumstances. That could help younger people again find satisfaction in an offline world but it becomes harder the longer they immerse themselves in rapid-fire digital stimulation.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic and Heart Disease Tests.**

A worldwide [survey](#) conducted by International Atomic Energy Agency assesses alterations in cardiovascular procedure volumes and safety practices resulting from COVID-19. It includes responses from over 900 institutions in 108 countries, comparing data from March-April 2020 with the same period in 2019 on a range of standard procedures to evaluate heart health, such as echocardiograms, angiographies, and exercise stress tests. Location in a low-income and the lower-middle-income country was associated with an additional 22% reduction in cardiovascular procedures and less availability of personal protective equipment and telehealth. Cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death worldwide, and like many chronic diseases, treatment is linked to early diagnosis and treatment. "We don't want people with heart diseases to miss out on timely diagnosis and treatment or to develop serious life-threatening complications that could have been avoided," said co-author Dr. Michelle Williams from the University of Edinburgh.



### COVID-19 has set back Sustainable Development Goals 2030 ambitions

SDG 3 aspires to ensure health and well-being for all, including a bold commitment to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other communicable diseases by 2030. COVID-19 pandemic has impeded the path towards SDGs. India is one of the most severely affected countries by the pandemic and has particularly struggled to meet its health-related SDGs 2030. [According to the National Health Data Mission](#), there has been a 64% fall in immunization sessions and about 50% drop in BCG, oral polio, and hepatitis B vaccination in April as against pre-Covid-19 January. Also, 72% of children missed their Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccination in April 2020 as compared to January 2020. Moreover, institutional deliveries (including C-sections) dropped by 35% in the month of April from the previous month. A survey by the Indian Psychiatry Society found that the number of mental health cases had [risen by 20%](#) since the lockdown. Although the full extent of the damage is hard to estimate at present, goal 3 of the seventeen SDGs has been derailed for the moment.

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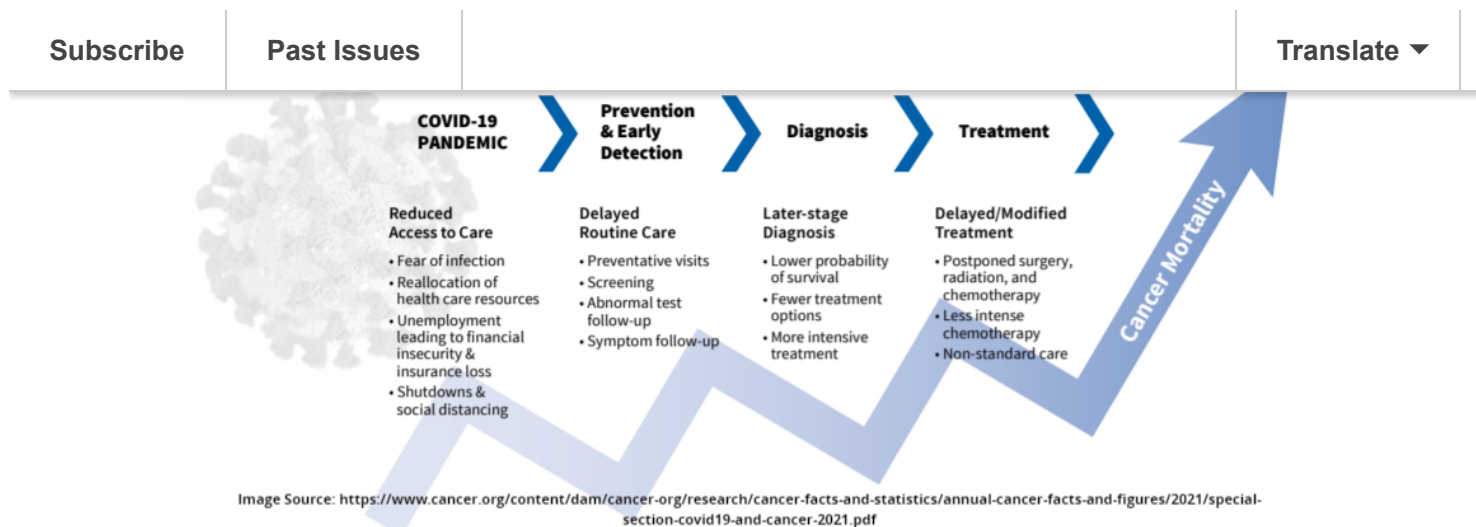
Image Source: <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/blog/impact-covid-19-and-sustainable-development-goals>

### **Tuberculosis still remains India's biggest health crisis.**

Tuberculosis (TB) patients are among the worst affected by the pandemic as the TB program and its services have been badly hit. With similar clinical symptoms, TB and COVID-19 present a deadly mix for India's health system. TB patients are unable to access medicines as lack of transportation has restricted the ability to access health centers. [The worst affected are drug-resistant TB patients](#) who are on regimens containing injections that have to be administered by health workers who are either unavailable or not easy to reach with limited transport facilities.

### **Effect of COVID-19 on cancer care.**

In general people with cancer are more susceptible to infectious agents because of their fragile immune system due to cancer itself and/or its treatment (could be surgery or chemotherapy or both). [Studies](#) have also suggested that individuals with cancer are at higher risk of complications and or death due to COVID-19 than those without cancer. In addition, the pandemic had put an unprecedented obstacle in cancer care in terms of both screenings as well as treatment. On one hand delays in screening, diagnosis, and treatment due to reduced health care access will likely result in a short-term drop in cancer diagnoses followed by increases in late-stage diagnoses and preventable cancer deaths. On the other hand, some individuals may continue to delay preventive care and symptom follow-up due to fear of exposure or loss of employment and/or employer-based health care.



## Hospitals without walls: The future of digital healthcare

The pandemic has accelerated some trends, such as the one to a “hospital without walls” - hospitals to provide services in locations beyond their existing walls. With the move to digital healthcare, we will see medicine becoming more preventive, as well as more personalized and precise, says James Kinross, a surgeon from London. In China, for example, the care pipeline for infectious disease starts at the airport, with routine temperature checks (even outside a pandemic), while the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, considered one of the most technologically advanced in the US, offers services through its [web portal](#) and in 2019 [launched](#) a pilot telehealth program in schools. The goal is to prioritize surveillance and early intervention. This is the hospital without walls - the hospital that is everywhere, embedded in our lives. And since some medicine will always require patients and medical personnel to meet, it will inevitably shape the places where that happens, too. Hospitals don’t just reflect the evolution of medicine, Annmarie Adams, a historian of hospital architecture at McGill University in Montreal Hospitals says. They are also shaped by wider cultural influences. Hospitals now look more like hotels, shopping malls, or airports, reflecting a more consumerist culture. She further says that adaptability will be the axiom in the post-COVID-19 world.

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Image Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/02/hospitals-without-walls-the-future-of-digital-healthcare>



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