

Peer Review File

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Reviewer Comments

Comment 1: The background of the Abstract could include more information about the context and the main reasons for your research, rather than just the aims of the study.

Reply 1: Thanks for your comments, we revised the background of the abstract as advised (see Page 2, line 30-34).

Changes in the text: Public restriction and school closure policies during the pandemic may have long-term effects on adolescents' mental health, and adolescents' feelings and needs may change as the pandemic progresses. This study was conducted to explore the network structure and differences in emotional and behavioral problems (EBPs), loneliness, and suicidal thoughts in adolescents during different pandemic periods in China.

Comment 2: In methods of the Abstract, please add information about how the EBPs, loneliness and suicidal thoughts were measured.

Reply 2: We added more information in the method of the abstract as advised (see Page 2, line 37-40).

Changes in the text: EBPs were evaluated based on the student version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Loneliness and suicidal thoughts were measured by item 20 and item 9 of the Chinese version of the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI), respectively.

Comment 3: There are several domains of EBPs in your study, however the significance and impact of each domain on adolescents have not been described clearly. Relevant information should be added in the Introduction.

Reply 3: We added more relevant information about impact of each domain of EBPs on adolescents in the introduction (See Page 4-5, line 78-87)

Changes in the text: Besides, emotional problems were associated with a range of

adverse outcomes including substance abuse, physical health problems, and educational failure (9). Hyperactivity was a risk factor for later development of adolescents, and caused a high likelihood of violence and other conduct problems, substance abuse, and low self-esteem (10). In addition, adolescents who were isolated from their peer group tended to present emotional and behavioral problems (11). Peer attachment played a key role in explaining adolescents' behavioral problems such as substance abuse and aggressive behavior (12, 13). Epidemiological studies have indicated that children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to EBPs during the pandemic due to a variety of challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis (14-16).

Comment 4: The study excluded 655 and 40 invalid questionnaires from the two stages respectively. The authors should explain what kind of questionnaires were classified as invalid.

Reply 4: Questionnaire missed school information or took more than one hour to completed was classified as invalid. We added more information as suggested. (see Page 6, line 128-130)

Changes in the text: After the exclusion of 655 and 40 invalid questionnaires which missed school information or took more than one hour to complete from the two stages.

Comment 5: Since the pandemic situation has changed in China, some sentences in the Discussion should be revised. For example, "As China was affected by a new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools were closed in multiple cities." The implications in the current context could be added.

Reply 5: We revised the manuscript as advised. (see Page 14-15, line 358-363)

Changes in the text: As China released measures to optimize COVID-19 response, schools are no longer closed and adolescents' life returns to normal. However, they still face looming challenges such as the health burden of post-COVID-19 condition and academic stress due to the long-term disruption to education. We hope that our findings are beneficial to the government, to schools, and to parents who should try their best to provide psychological support for adolescents, especially addressing the symptoms

highlighted by our network analysis.