



The Youth Well-Being Questionnaire. Getting to the of adolescent patients



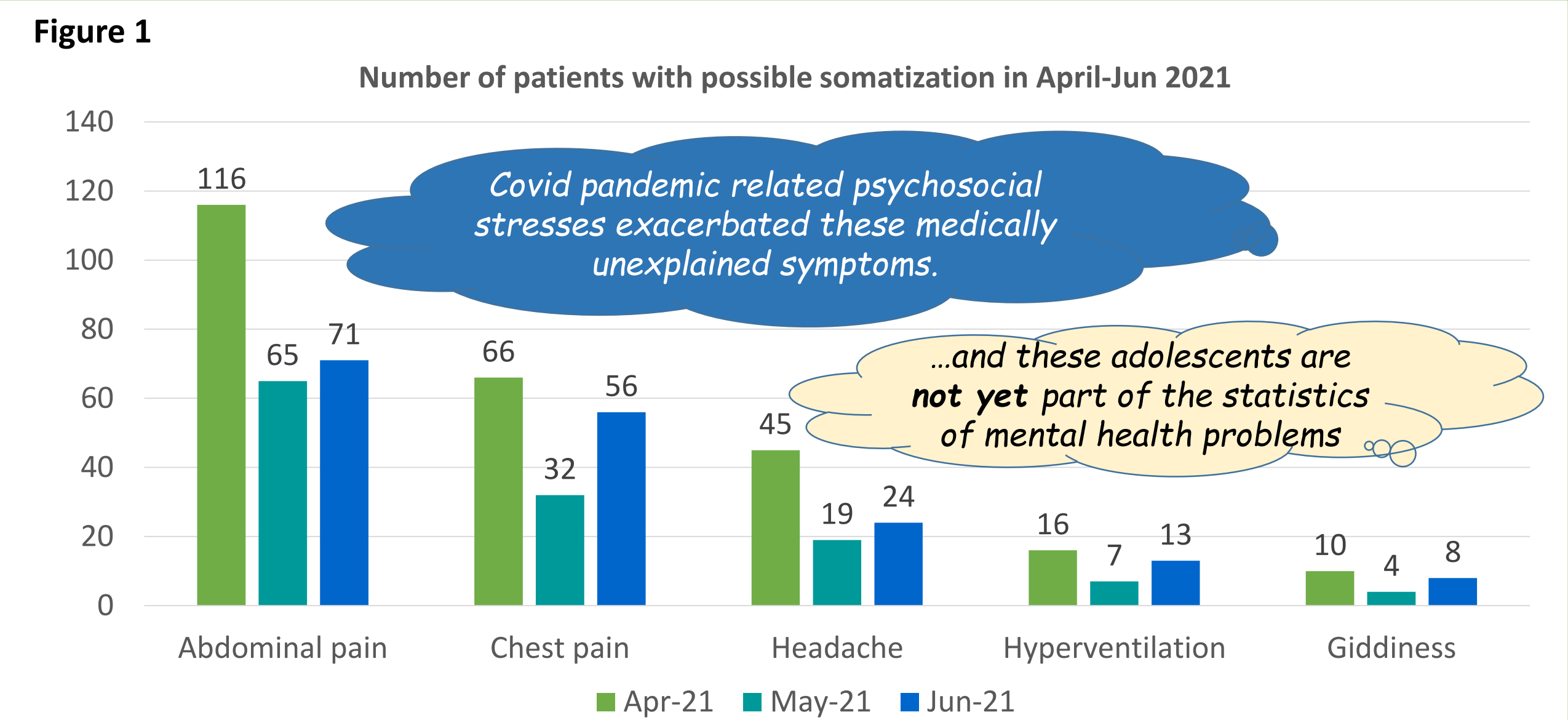
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Background

Somatization is an unconscious process by which psychological distress is expressed as physical symptoms. In Children's Emergency Department (CE), KKH there is an increasing number of patients with possible somatization from April to June 2021 (Figure 1). Patients usually seek medical care rather than mental health care. They repeatedly attend outpatient clinics or CE, as the latter is the only place where these patients and their families seek medical assistance.



Problem & Aim

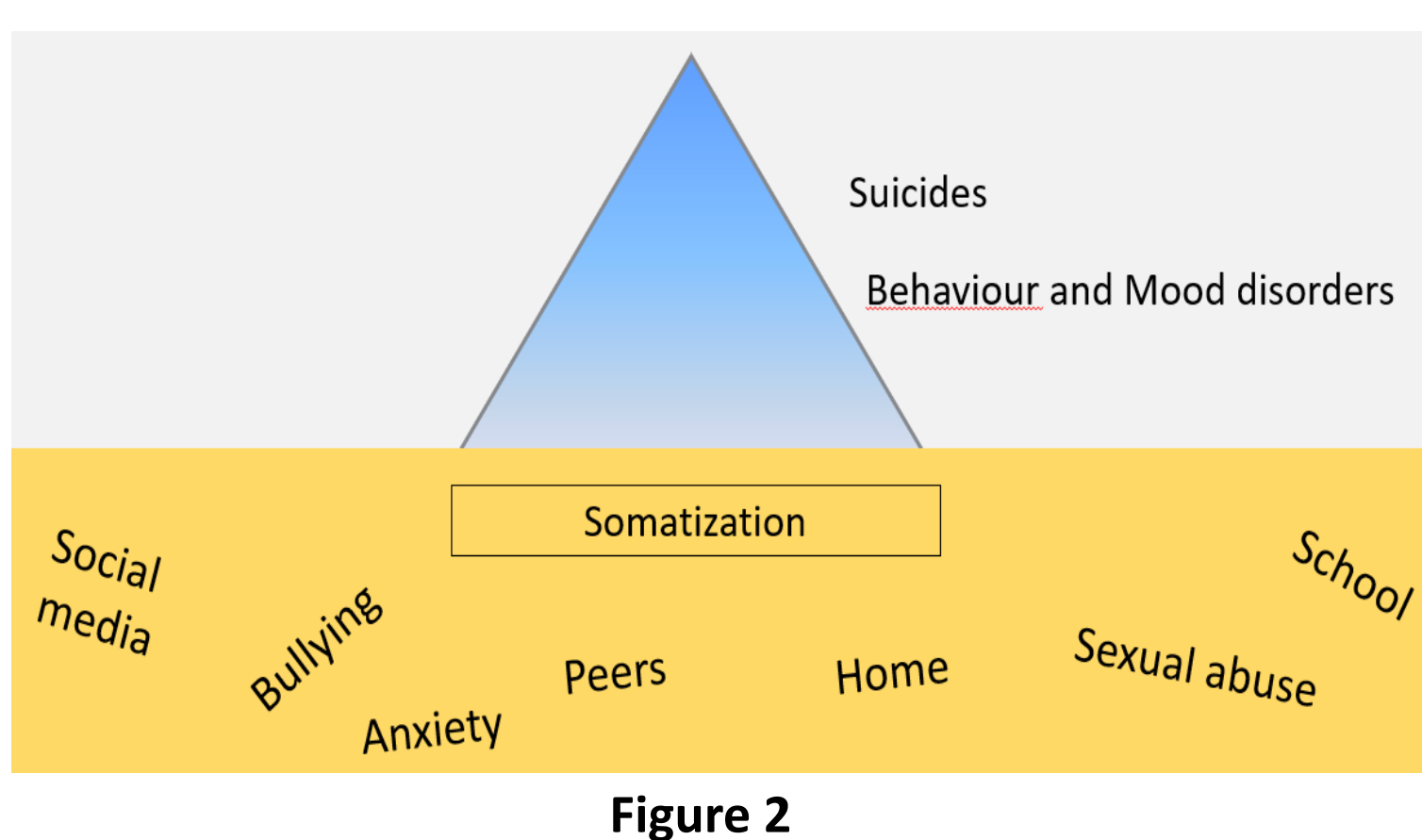


Figure 2

today Singapore World News Big Deal Don't Miss! Adding 101 Comments 1 Year 1 Week 1 Month 1 Day 1 Hour 1 Minute 1 Second

Covid-19: Suicide rate among 10-19 age group rises in 2020 year-on-year

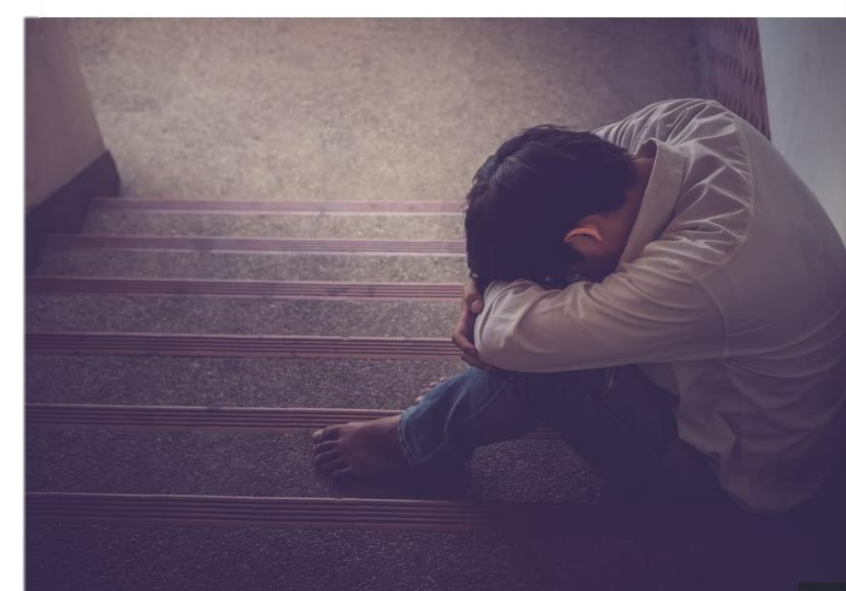


Figure 3

THE STRAITS TIMES SINGAPORE About 1 in 3 young people in Singapore has mental health symptoms: Study



Figure 4

In Figure 2, Psychosocial and mental health problems are often **concealed** by somatization. Adolescents present with **somatic symptoms that are caused and maintained by emotions and stress**. In articles published in 2020 (Figures 3 and 4), 1 in 3 young people has mental problems (study involved 3,336 youths aged 11-18) and suicide incidence rates aged 10 to 19 had risen 37.5%, from 4.0 per 100,000 in 2019 to 5.5 per

100,000 in 2020. We, healthcare professionals may well be the last safety net, as each visit to CE provides a unique window of opportunity to identify and support them. The aim of this project is to create a digital self-administered psychosocial questionnaire that effectively screens adolescents patients for psychosocial, behavioral and mental health difficulties.

Methodology

A multidisciplinary team comprising psychiatrists, psychologists, medical social workers, advanced practice nurses, adolescent medicine specialists, and emergency medicine pediatricians collaborated using a modified Delphi methodology. The questionnaire domains were based on HEADS-ED, which stands for Home, Education, Activities and Peers, Drugs and Alcohol, Suicidality, Emotions, behaviors, thought disturbances, Discharge resources.

The team tested the questionnaire in a hard copy format and refined the phrasing and digital framework of the questions. A digital prototype was then developed using Jotform to gather feedback from clinicians, youths, and the SingHealth Patient Advocacy Network (S.P.A.N). An application developer was engaged through a tender process to create the digital questionnaire according to specifications.

Snippets of the application designed by developer

Results

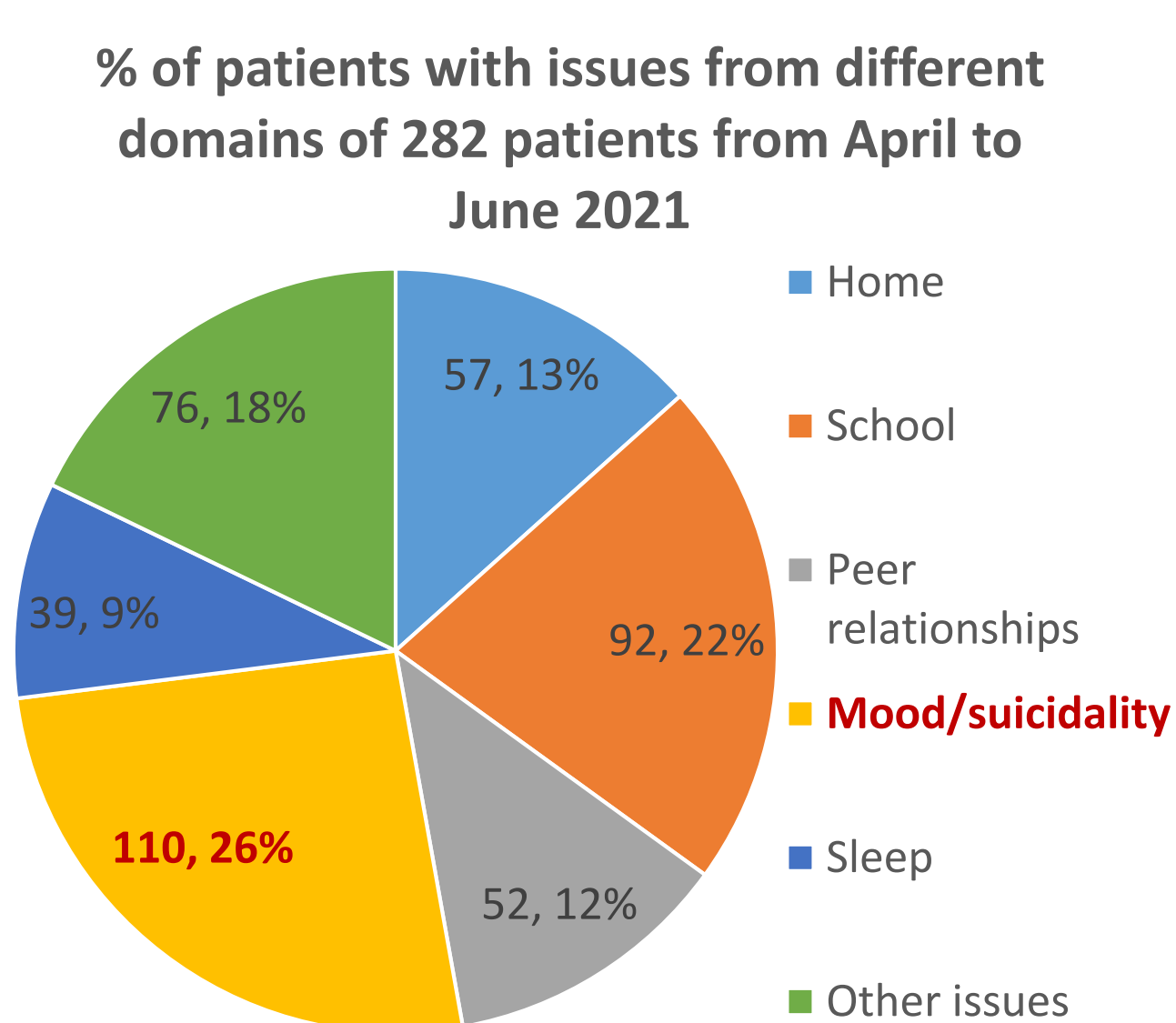


Figure 5

The resulting Youth Wellbeing (YWB) questionnaire leverages on the psychological effects of digital empathy and disinhibition. The user interface engages adolescents through soft music and animated graphics, while sensitive and non-judgmental phrasing of questions relevant to local cultures and social norms facilitate the disclosure of sensitive and highly personal psychosocial difficulties.

The YWB questionnaire enables efficient psychosocial screening of approximately 20 adolescents per day who present to the Emergency Department with medically unexplained symptoms caused by stressors such as home (13.4%), school (21.6%), peer relationships (12.2%), and mood/suicidality (26%) issues (Figure 5). Under-recognition of suicide risk in healthcare facilities is considered a sentinel event, making the YWB questionnaire an important tool for risk management.

Conclusion

The YWB questionnaire enables efficient screening and timely interventions for psychosocial, behavioral, and mental health issues, which might otherwise be over-medicalized and under-recognized in vulnerable adolescents. The strong collaboration between multidisciplinary clinicians, allied health, digital integration and medical innovation, quality and safety staff has led to care transformation using this tool.