

Developmental Milestone Attainment of Israeli Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Guy Amit¹, Tamar Sudry¹, Pinchas Akiva¹, Meytal Avgil Tsadok³, Deena Zimmerman⁴, Yair Sadaka^{1,2}

¹ KI Research Institute, Kfar Malal, Israel; ² Neuro-Developmental Research Center, Mental Health Institute, Beer Sheva, Israel; ³ TIMNA initiative - Big Data Platform, Israel Ministry of Health, Jerusalem, Israel; ⁴ Public Health Services, Israel Ministry of Health, Jerusalem, Israel;

✉ guy@kinstitute.org.il kinstitute.org.il

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted human life, affecting multiple factors of children's health

Child development is routinely screened in Israel at Maternal Child Health Clinics (MCHC)

We aimed to study changes in developmental milestone attainment during COVID-19 in a large nationwide cohort

Methods

We analyzed a cohort of 882,365 children aged 0-6 years, who visited MCHCs between 1/2014 and 10/2021 (>4.9M visits)

Children with abnormal developmental potential were excluded

We compared normative attainment age of 59 milestones in four developmental domains before and during the pandemic [1]

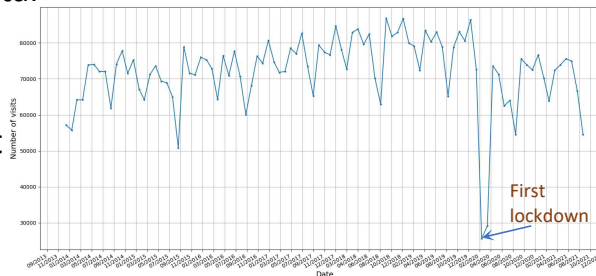
Results

The number of developmental visits decreased during the pandemic by ~12%

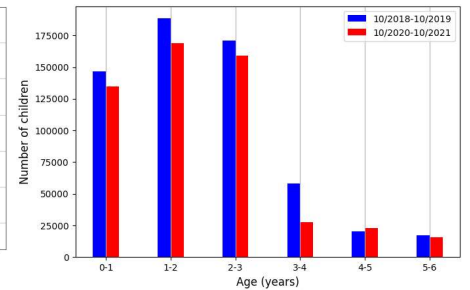
Milestones were attained at older age during COVID era, compared to pre-COVID

Delays were most prominent in language and social milestones at older age (>18 months)

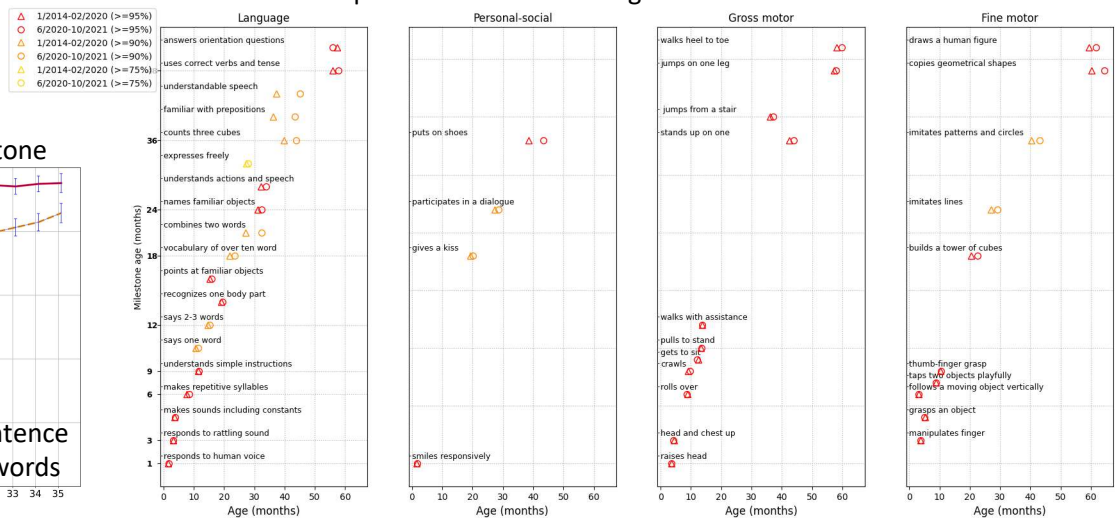
Temporal trend of MCHC visits



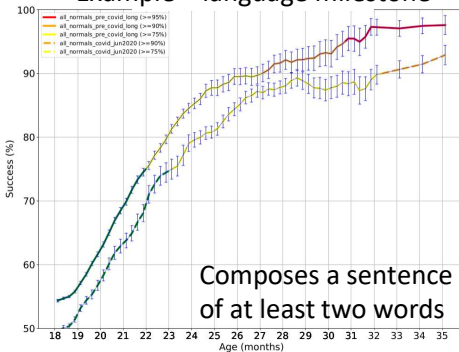
Number of children per age group



Comparison of attainment age for all milestones



Example – language milestone



Conclusions

We observed changes in milestone attainment age during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may indicate delayed development in the language and social skills of children.

References

[1] Sudry et al., JAMA Network Open. 2022;5(3):e222184.