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		19,985.54	34,687.85	4,327.16	14,427.24	

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Jul 8, 2021

Very Few Kids Need to Shield From Covid, Large U.K. Study Finds

Katharine Gemmell and Suzi Ring, Bloomberg News



Pedestrians walk along the River Thames in view of The Houses of Parliament in London, U.K., on Monday, June 14, 2021. U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is preparing to delay his plan to lift England's pandemic restrictions amid concerns that a rapid rise in Covid-19 cases could put hospitals under strain. Photographer: Jason Alden/Bloomberg, Bloomberg

(Bloomberg) -- Most young people face an "extremely low" risk of illness and death from Covid-19 and have no need to shield from the virus, according to researchers behind a large U.K. study.

The analysis, which its authors say is the most

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The analysis, which its authors say is the most comprehensive on the topic, states that children and teens are less likely to be hospitalized or face severe effects from the virus. Covid-19 does increase the chance of serious illness in the most vulnerable children -- those with complex disabilities or severe existing medical conditions -- but even in those cases, the risk is smaller compared with adults.

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... highest rates of infection in recent weeks were seen in those ages 15 to 29, with the fastest jump in positive cases week-on-week among children ages 5 to 14. With 68% of adults in the U.K. having received at least one shot and more than 50% fully vaccinated, the increase in hospitalizations can be attributed to the delta variant.

“It is reassuring that these findings reflect our clinical experience in hospital -- we see very few seriously unwell children,” Elizabeth Whittaker, senior clinical lecturer in pediatric infectious diseases and immunology at Imperial College London, said in a statement. “We hope this data will be reassuring.”

Though the data only measure the period up to February, the situation hasn’t changed recently with the proliferation of the delta variant, Whittaker said.

Under 18s in England had about a 1-in-50,000 chance of being admitted to intensive care with coronavirus during the first year of the pandemic, one study in the analysis found. A number of conditions that were previously thought to increase the risks of Covid-related illness, like active asthma or cystic fibrosis, brought “very little risk,” researchers said at a press briefing.

“There’s a general feeling among pediatricians that probably too many children were shielded in the first elements of the pandemic and that there’s probably very few children that need to shield according to these data,” Russell Viner, a professor of child and adolescent health at University College London, said at the briefing. He was senior author of two of the studies involved.

Read more: What We Know About the Impact of Covid-19 on Children: QuickTake

The analysis is based on three papers that haven’t yet been peer reviewed, led by researchers at UCL, University of Bristol, University of York and the University of Liverpool. Preliminary findings will be submitted to Britain’s Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization, the Department for Health and Social Care and the World Health Organization to help inform policies on shielding and vaccinations for under-18s in Britain and elsewhere.

