

Learning about psychosocial effects of life crisis situations

– A concept for improved data collection and regular monitoring of psychosocial burden, mental illnesses and suicidality in Austria

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Berlin, November 9th 2022

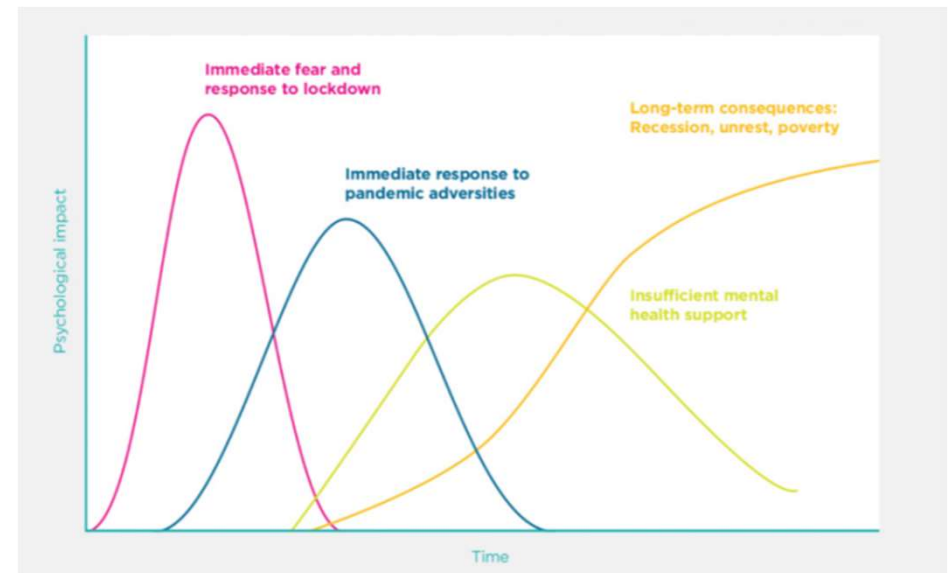
EUPHA Pre-Conference: Addressing pre-existing and emerging mental health challenges in times of crisis and beyond



Gesundheit Österreich
GmbH 

Introduction

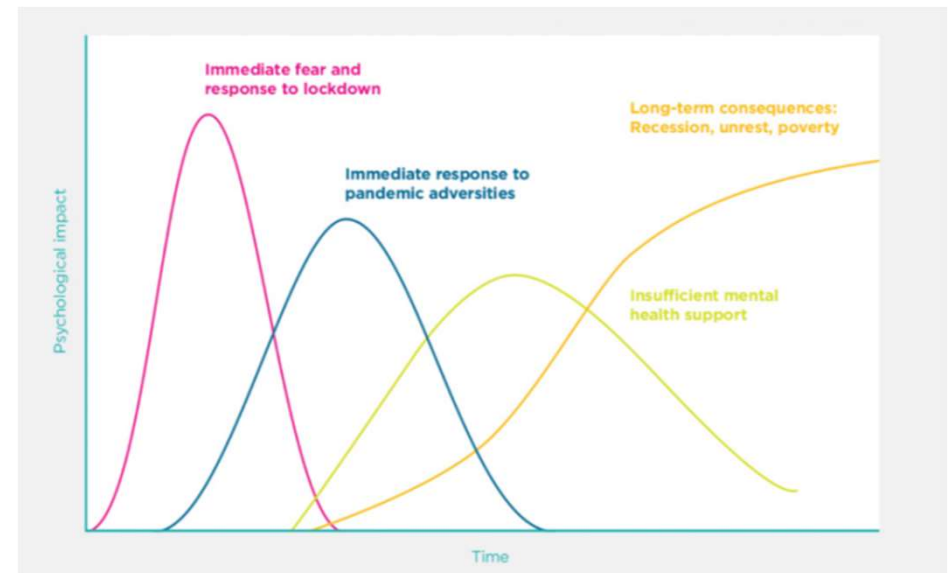
- **Increase in psychosocial problems** due to Covid-19 pandemic was predicted and observed early on
- Considering experience with previous crisis the **peak of psychosocial stress reactions** was expected to occur only after the physical threat has subsided
- → **regular monitoring important**



World Happiness Report 2021 –
Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic

Introduction

- **psychosocial burden** cannot be **quantified** easily → necessary to look at **several different indicators together**
- regular monitoring of psychosocial health in Austria was commissioned by the **Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection**



World Happiness Report 2021 –
Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic

Project: Monitoring psychosocial health in Austria

- Concept to improve the data situation based on available data sources (routine data)
- Regular processing, analysis and interpretation (together with experts)
- Data availability:
 - timely
 - at a regular basis (monthly)
 - nationwide
 - including at least the year 2019
 - differentiated by gender and age (if possible)
- Project order through: BMSGPK
- Project start: November 2020



PHIRI

The Population Health Information Research Infrastructure for COVID-19:

- a **European mechanism**, that aims to
- facilitate and support **data-driven population health research**
- and **exchange of best practices**
- to support **decision making**

41
partners

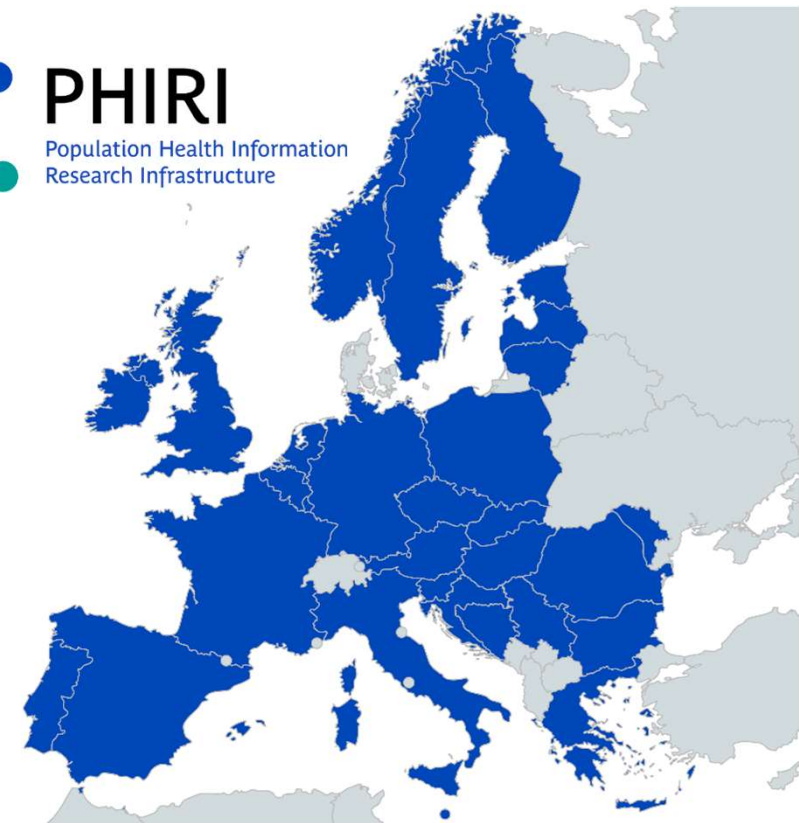
30
countries

3
years



PHIRI

Population Health Information
Research Infrastructure



Map of PHIRI Partners

Monitoring psychosocial health in Austria: included data (October 2022)

Psychosocial stress within the general population

- utilization and (partly) numbers of consultation topics from psychosocial hotlines

Family stress and (domestic) violence

- data regarding restraining orders
- number of violence-related consultations from psychosocial hotlines
- data from „Frühen Hilfen“ (Early Childhood Interventions Programme in Austria)

Socio-economic situation and unemployment

- unemployment figures (Data of the Austrian Public Employment Service)
- unemployment rate from High Frequency Monitor (IHS)



Monitoring psychosocial health in Austria: included data (October 2022)

(Treated) mental illnesses

- inpatient stays in psychiatric care (adults/ child and adolescent psychiatry)
- involuntary placements (without request) in psychiatric departments
- relevant discharge diagnoses

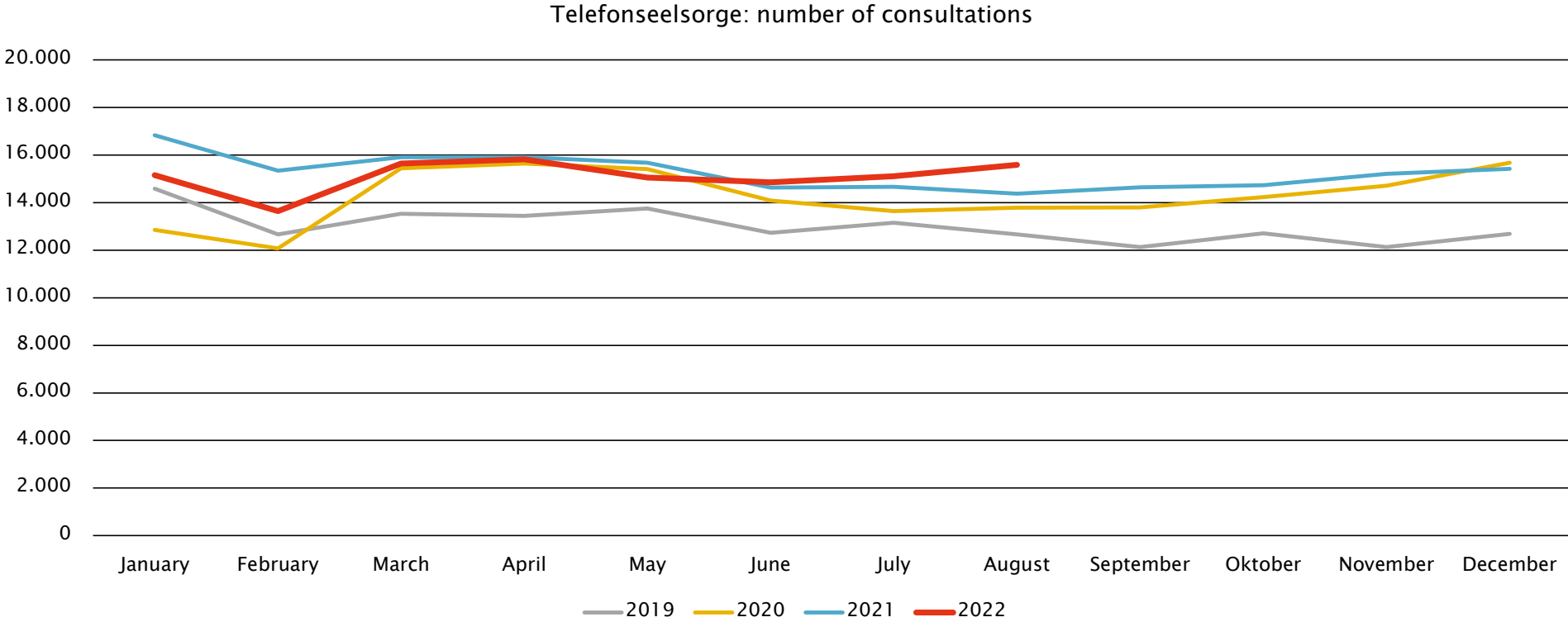
Suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and suicides:

- control center protocols of the emergency organizations (activities associated to suicide attempts) and operational protocols of the crisis intervention teams
- number of suicides from the official causes-of-death statistics (unvalidated numbers for 2022 every 3 months)
- inpatient data (ICD-10 codes regarding suicide attempts, involuntary placements)
- relevant consultation topics from psychosocial hotlines
- numbers of intentional self-poisoning from the Austrian poison control centre



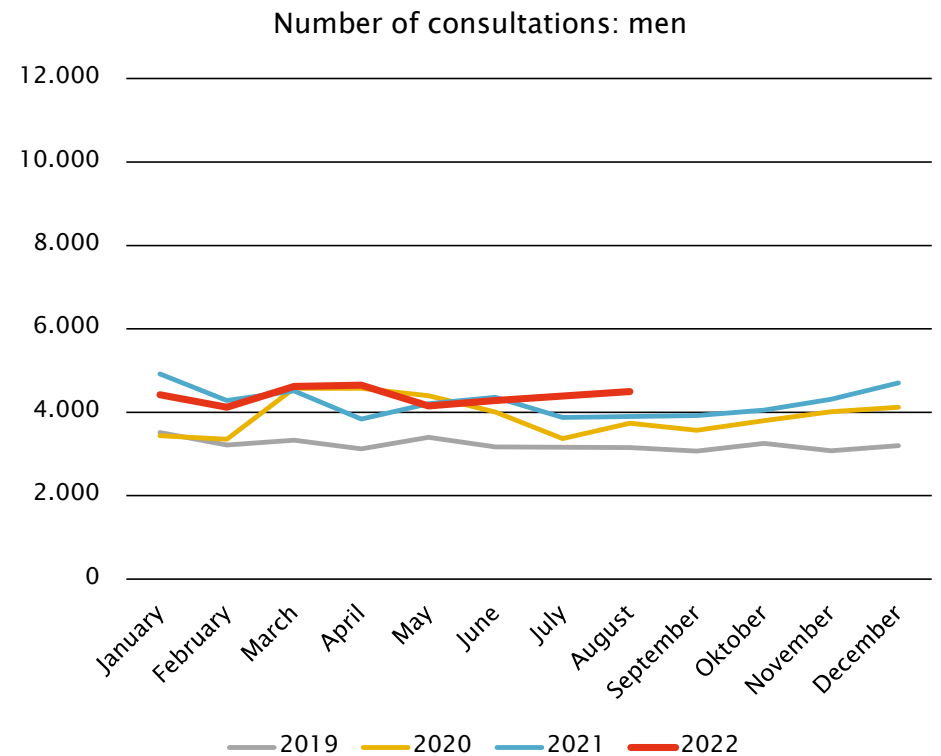
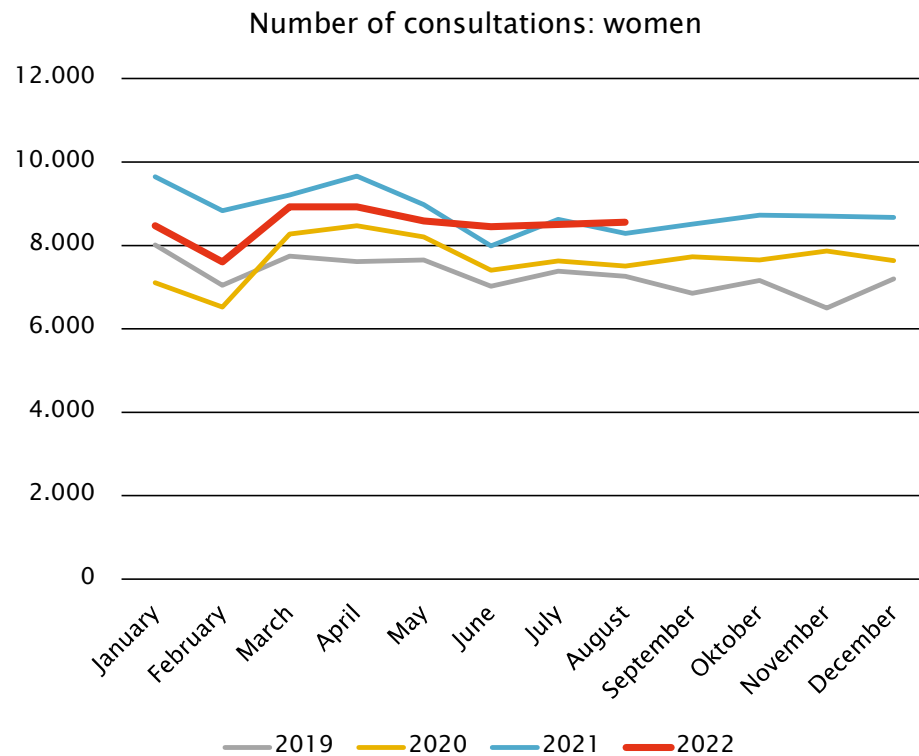
Recent data

Psychosocial stress within the general population: psychosocial hotlines



Source: data from Telefonseelsorge Österreich

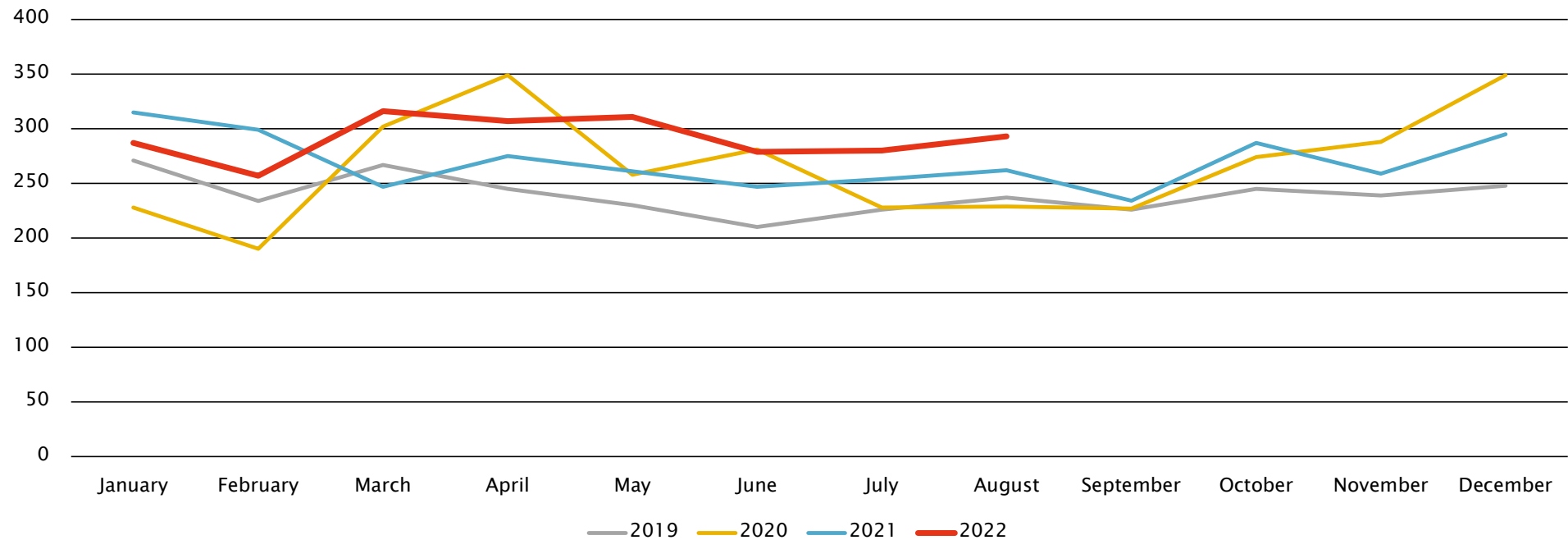
Telefonseelsorge: Gender differences in utilization



Source: data from Telefonseelsorge Österreich

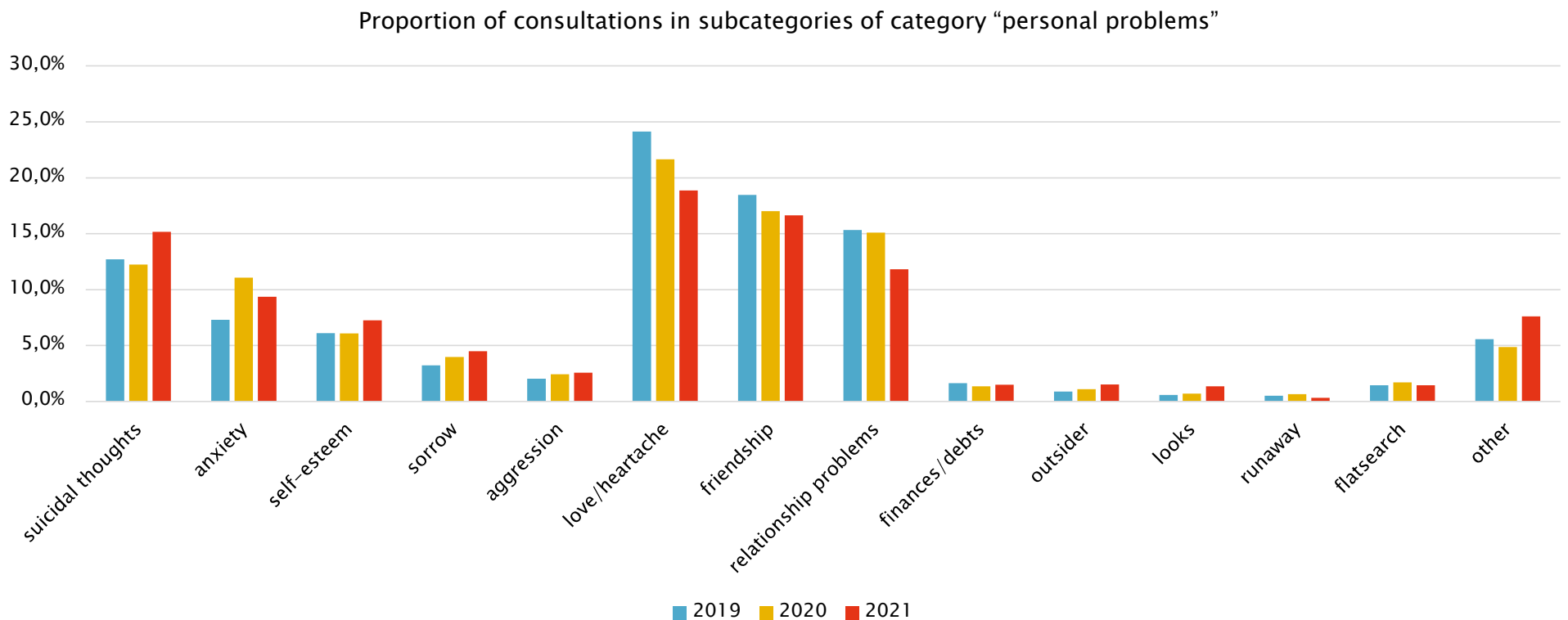
Telefonseelsorge Upper Austria: consultation topics

Number of consultations regarding the topic
„Loneliness/isolation/coping with everyday life“



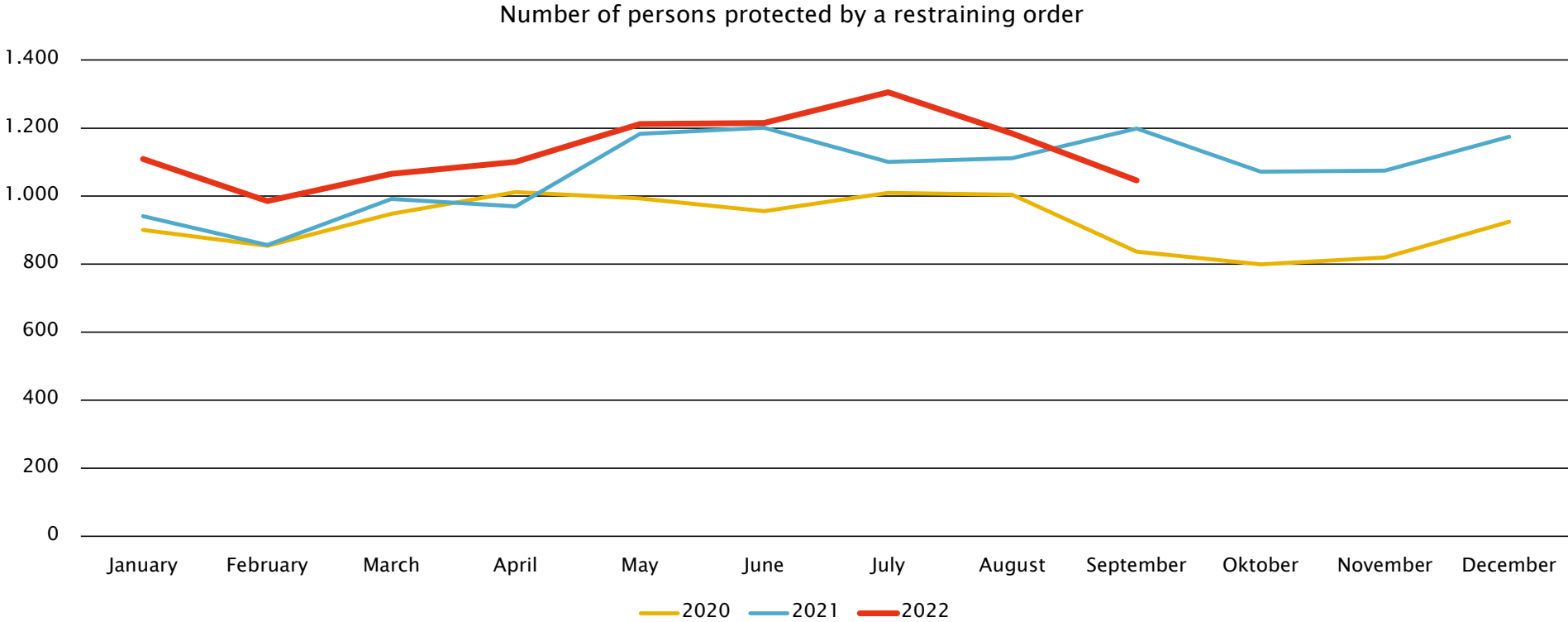
Source: data from Telefonseelsorge Österreich

Rat auf Draht: shift in consultation topics



Source: data from Rat auf Draht

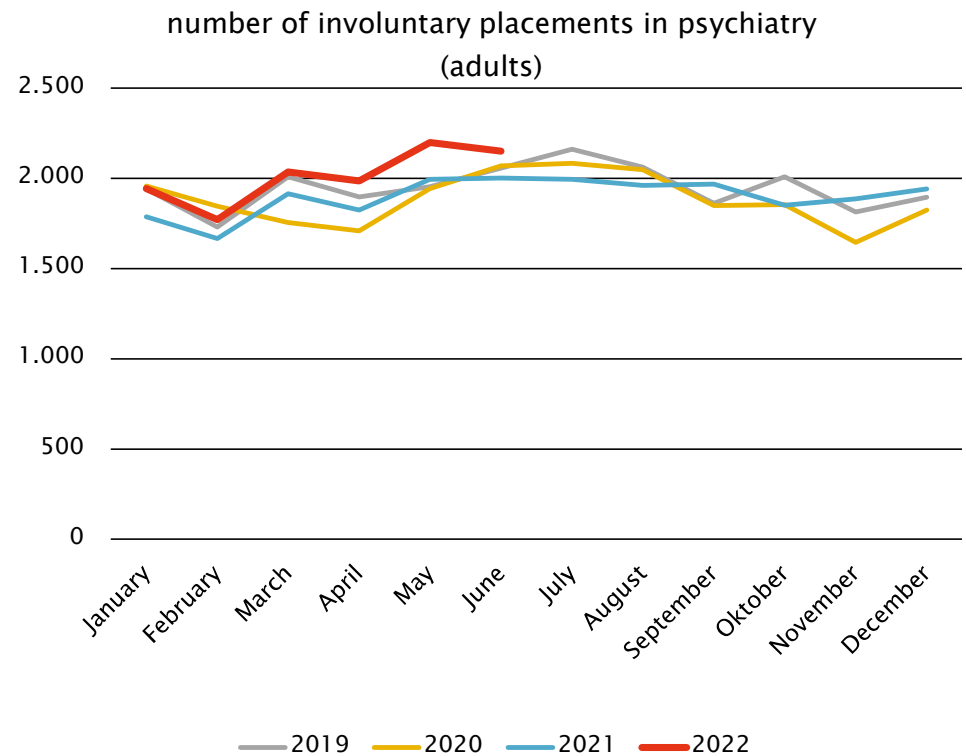
Family stress and (domestic) violence: restraining orders



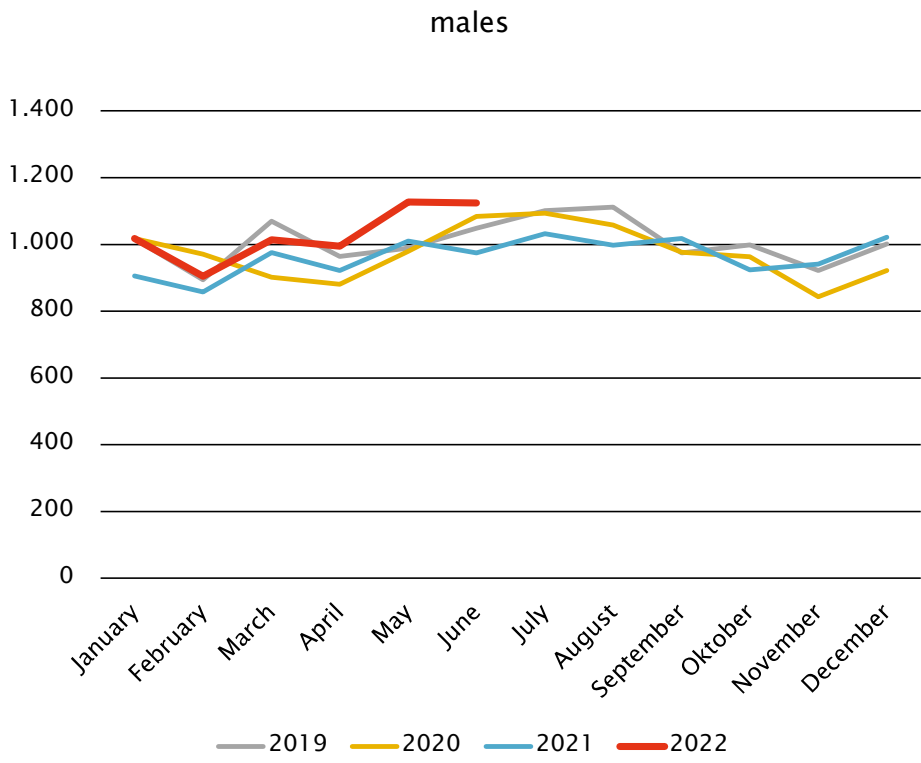
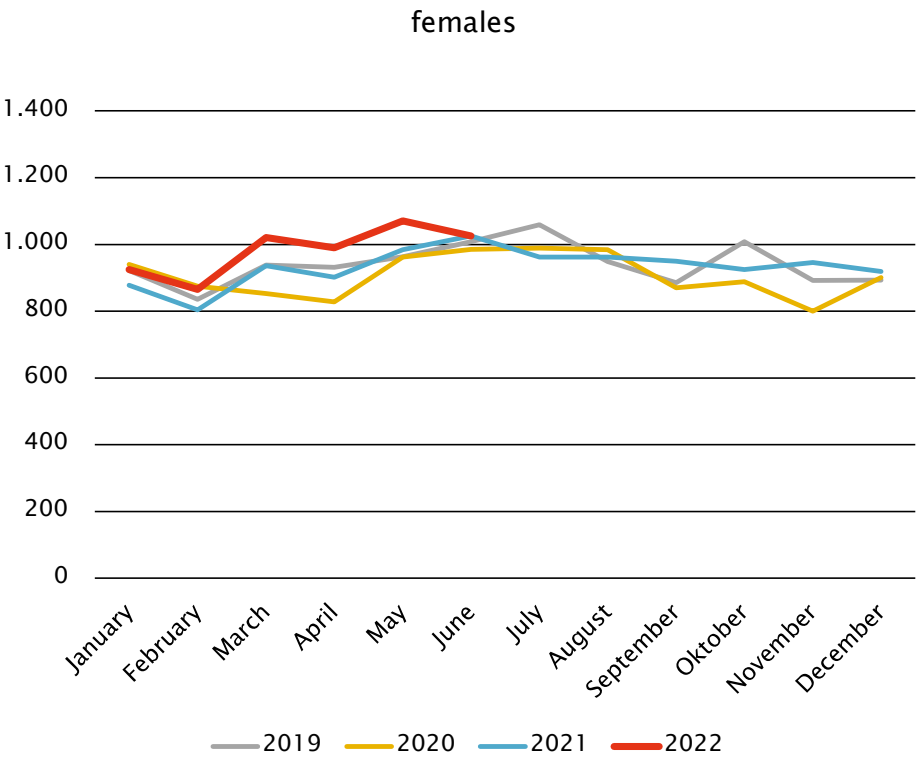
Source: data from Bundeskriminalamt (data from 2021 and 2022 unvalidated)

(Treated) mental illness: utilization of adult psychiatry

number of admissions to adult psychiatric units declined at the start of the pandemic, have been increasing again since spring 2021 but have not yet reached the pre-pandemic level



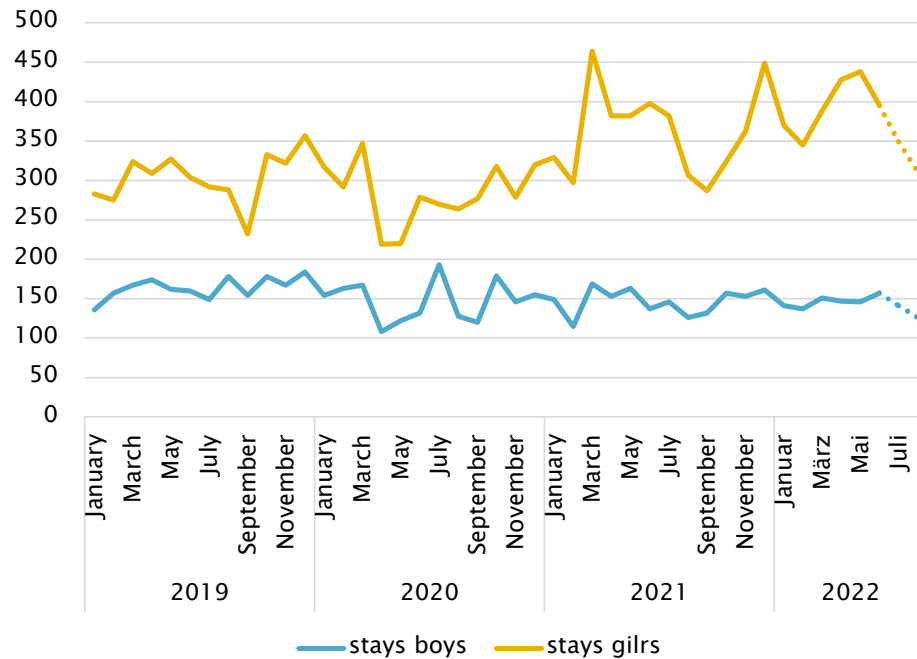
Involuntary placements in adult psychiatry: gender differences



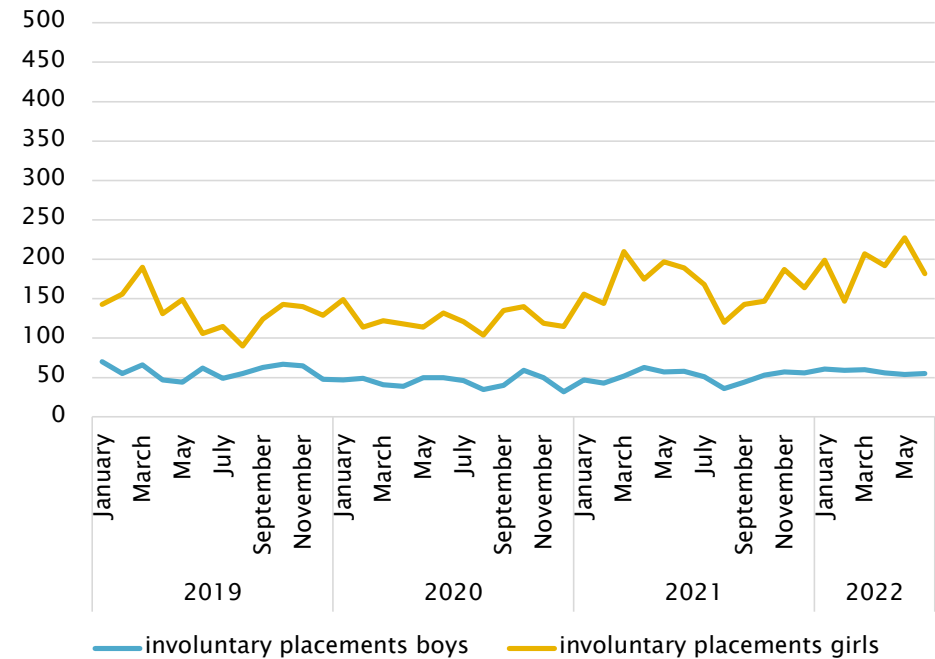
Quelle: Daten von VertretungsNetz-Patientenanzwaltschaft und Ifs

Utilization of child and adolescent psychiatry

Number of admissions in child and adolescent psychiatry

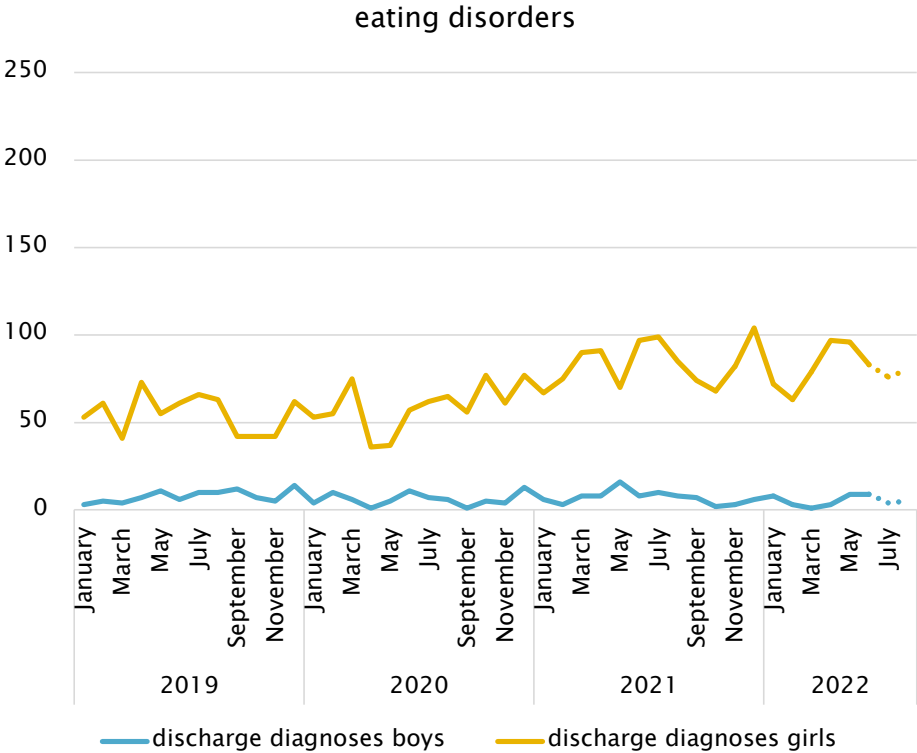
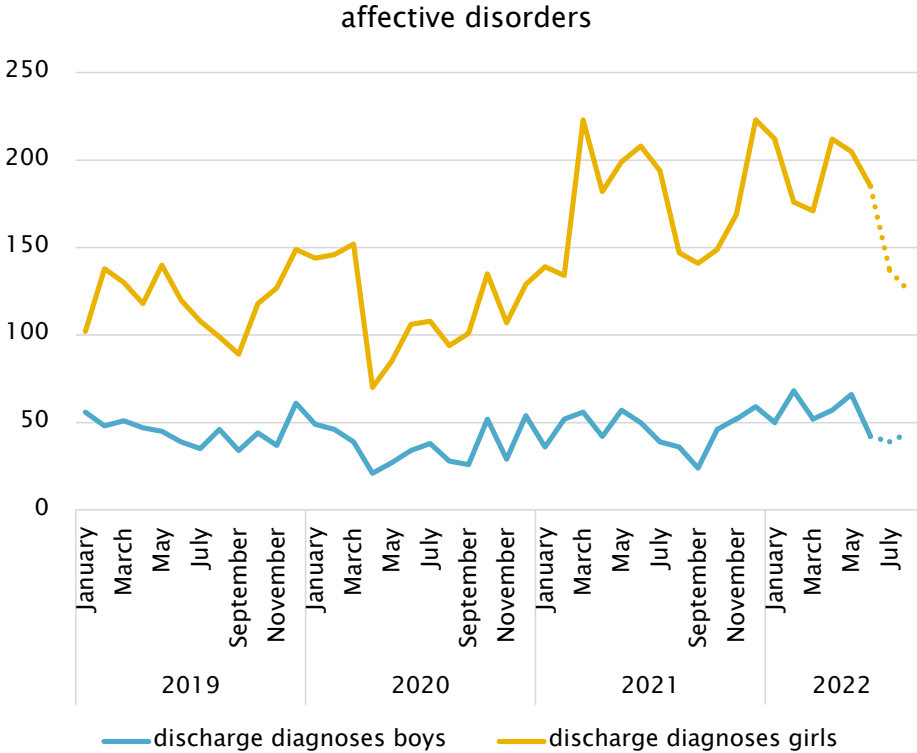


Number of involuntary placements in child and adolescent psychiatry



Source: BMSGPK – Diagnosis and service documentation of the Austrian hospitals (2022 unvalidated data, only hospitals financed by federal states))

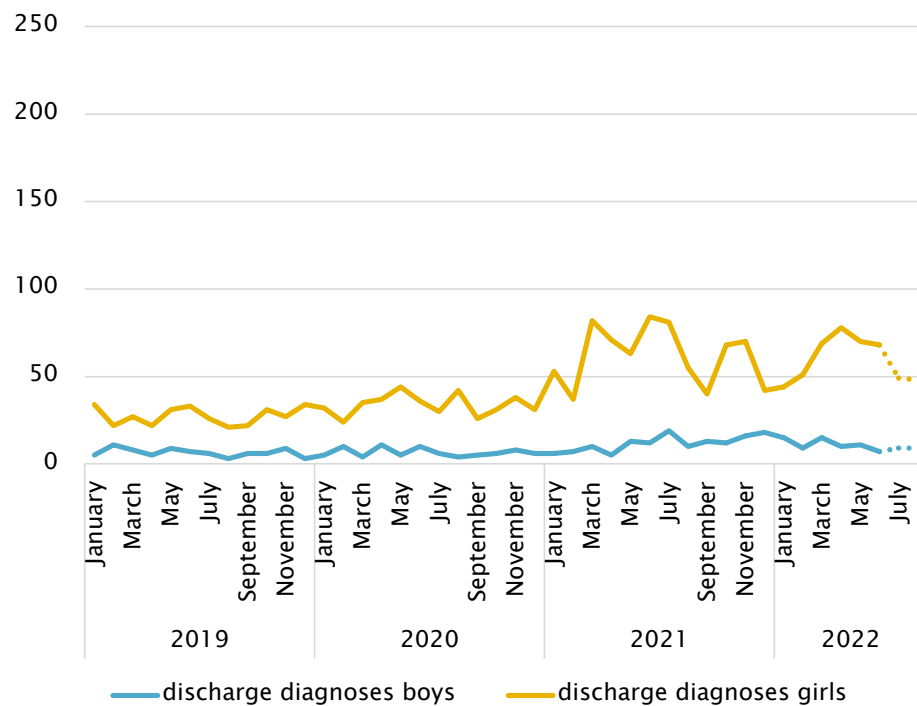
Selected discharge diagnosis (inpatient stays, minors)



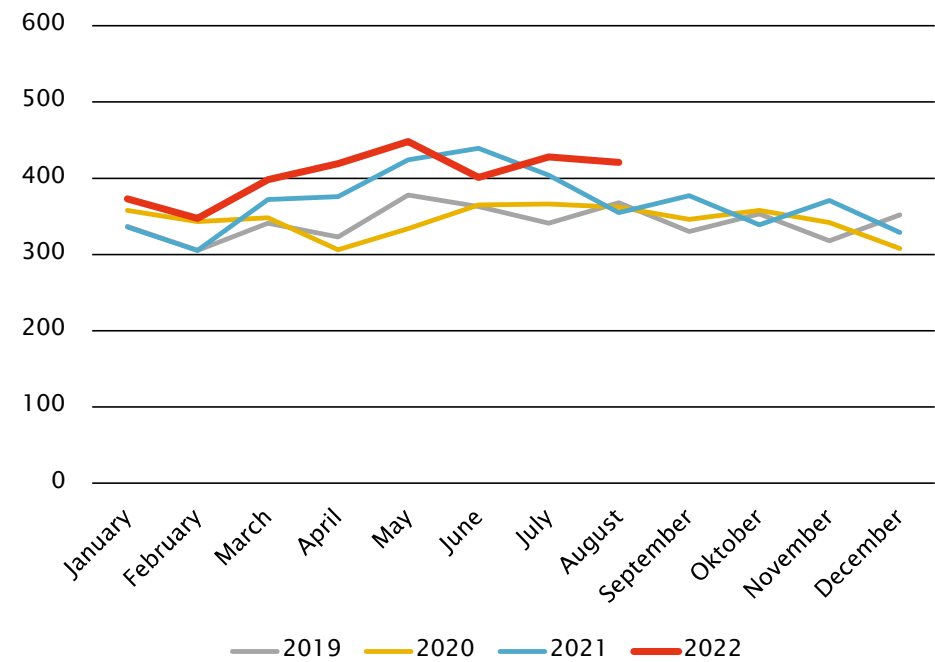
Source: BMSGPK – Diagnosis and service documentation of the Austrian hospitals (2022 unvalidated data, only hospitals financed by federal states)

Suicide attempts

suicide attempts or intentional self-harm



suicide-related activities of emergency organisations (BL, NÖ, OÖ)



Source: BMSGPK – Diagnosis and service documentation of the Austrian hospitals (2022 unvalidated data, only hospitals financed by federal states)

Limitations

- Limitations in data availability (not available timely or at a regular basis, no nationwide data, lack of comparative data from before the pandemic)
- Limitations of data on utilization behaviour (due barriers to access, capacity limits, level of familiarity of the service)
- Bias due to (better) availability of certain data → greater emphasis on certain topics
- Additional information from the data-providing institutions often necessary for a valid interpretation

→ only approximation of the actual situation possible, no complete picture of reality

Conclusions

- Looking **comprehensively** at **different indicators** proves to be a **good approach** to observe developments in psychosocial health in a timely manner.
- It is possible to **outline temporal correlations** with the course of the pandemic and **differences in psychosocial stresses between population groups**.



Many thanks for your attention!

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