

COVID-19 in children and adolescents in Gauteng – changes since December 2020

Related GCRO research project:
Responding to the COVID-19
pandemic in Gauteng

Vignette #38 showed that those aged 0-19 made up a small proportion (8%) of all Gauteng COVID-19 cases between March and October 2020. However, shortly after its release in December 2020, some coastal cities saw a spike in cases amongst youth attending post-matric 'rage parties', followed by heightened concern over renewed spread and a tightening of lockdown measures. Simultaneously, various countries became aware of newly dominant COVID-19 variants, with fears that the mutating virus would be more contagious in children. This concern was cited as one reason to delay the opening of schools until mid-February. This Vignette interrogates COVID-19 infection data again – through five key periods – to assess the impact on 0-19s relative to other age groups.

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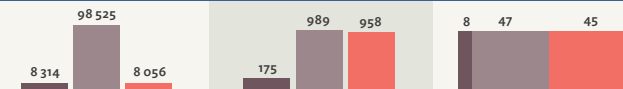
Source
Gauteng Dept of Health
Mpilo database downloaded
15/05/2021. StatsSA mid-year
population estimates 2020

Number and percentage of recorded COVID-19 cases in each age bracket for five key 30 day periods over the pandemic

(The five periods correspond to the five periods marked in blue on the graph bottom right of the Vignette)

# of recorded cases	# per 100 000	% / age group
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1. The first peak - 21 June to 20 July



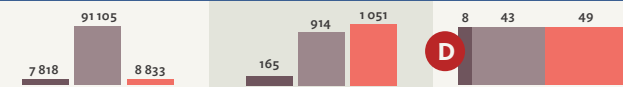
2. The return to school - 30 August to 28 September



3. The rage period - 20 November to 19 December



4. Second peak, new variant - 22 December to 20 January



5. New year back to school - 21 February to 22 March

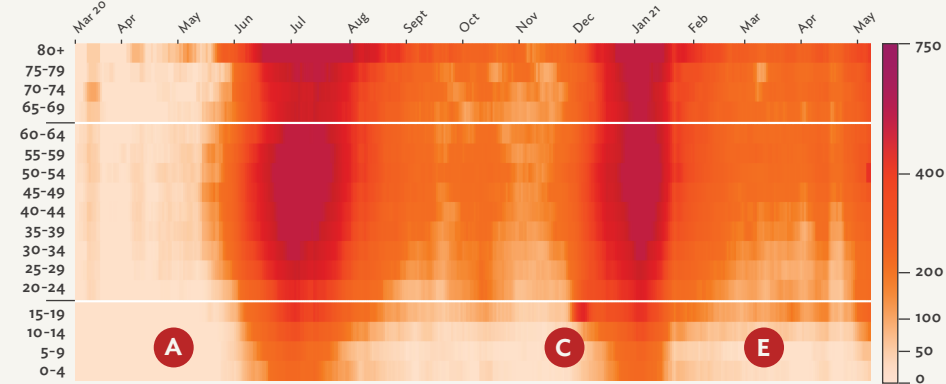


GAUTENG POPULATION

0-19 : 4 740 668
20-64 : 9 963 502
+65 : 840 725

- A** Per 100 000 population, working age adults (20-64) and the elderly (65+) have been far more affected than those aged 0-19 throughout the pandemic.
- B** The proportion of cases in 0-19-year-olds increased suddenly in December – to over 40% on 5 and 6 December.
- C** Spike was driven by those in the 15-19 cohort, almost certainly due to adolescents testing after growing concern over COVID-19 spread at end of school rage events.
- D** Spike was very short lived, and rapidly returned to the long run average of 8%. No indication that lower age groups relatively more affected by new variant.
- E** However, after January 2021 0-19's share of total cases steadily increased, though numbers remained low. Again, growth was in the 15-19 cohort. School attendance could have increased the relative proportion, suggesting that there may have been benefits to the delay in school return.

For each age cohort, number of cases per 100 000 on a rolling 7 day period



(Following the graph here <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases?areaType=region&areaName=London>)

Number of daily cases in 0-19 age group, and 14 day moving average of % of total cases in this group

