

**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on eating disorders among adolescents and young adults in Catalonia: a population-based cohort study**

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**INTRO:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have had a particularly detrimental effect on young people at risk of developing eating disorders (ED).

**OBJECTIVE:**

- To investigate how trends in the incidence of diagnoses of ED have been affected by the different periods of the COVID-19 pandemic in Catalonia, Spain.

**METHODS:**

- Design:** Population-level incidence rates (Jan-2016 to June-2021).
- Setting:** Primary care data from Catalonia (SIDIAP).
- Participants:** Individuals aged 10 to 24 years (n=1,147, 573).
- Follow up:** From the latest of 10th birthday, start of observation, or study start; to the earliest of 25th birthday, end of observation, study end, or occurrence of the outcome.
- Statistical analyses:**
  - Incidence rates (IR) of EDs by month and study period.
  - Incidence rate ratios (IRR) (ref: pre-lockdown period).
  - Stratified by sex, age group (10-14, 15-19, 20-24 years) and socioeconomic deprivation index (categorised into quintiles).

**RESULTS:**

- By sex and age groups:**
  - Reductions in IRs were observed for both sexes during the lockdown period.
  - Statistically significant increases in IRs were limited to females across age groups during the post-lockdown period.
- By socioeconomic deprivation index:**
  - Reductions in IRs during the lockdown period were observed across deprivation quintiles except for the least deprived (U1).
  - Substantial increases were observed in all deprivation quintiles during the post-lockdown period.

# The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the number of eating disorders diagnoses in primary care, with adolescent girls seen to be most affected.

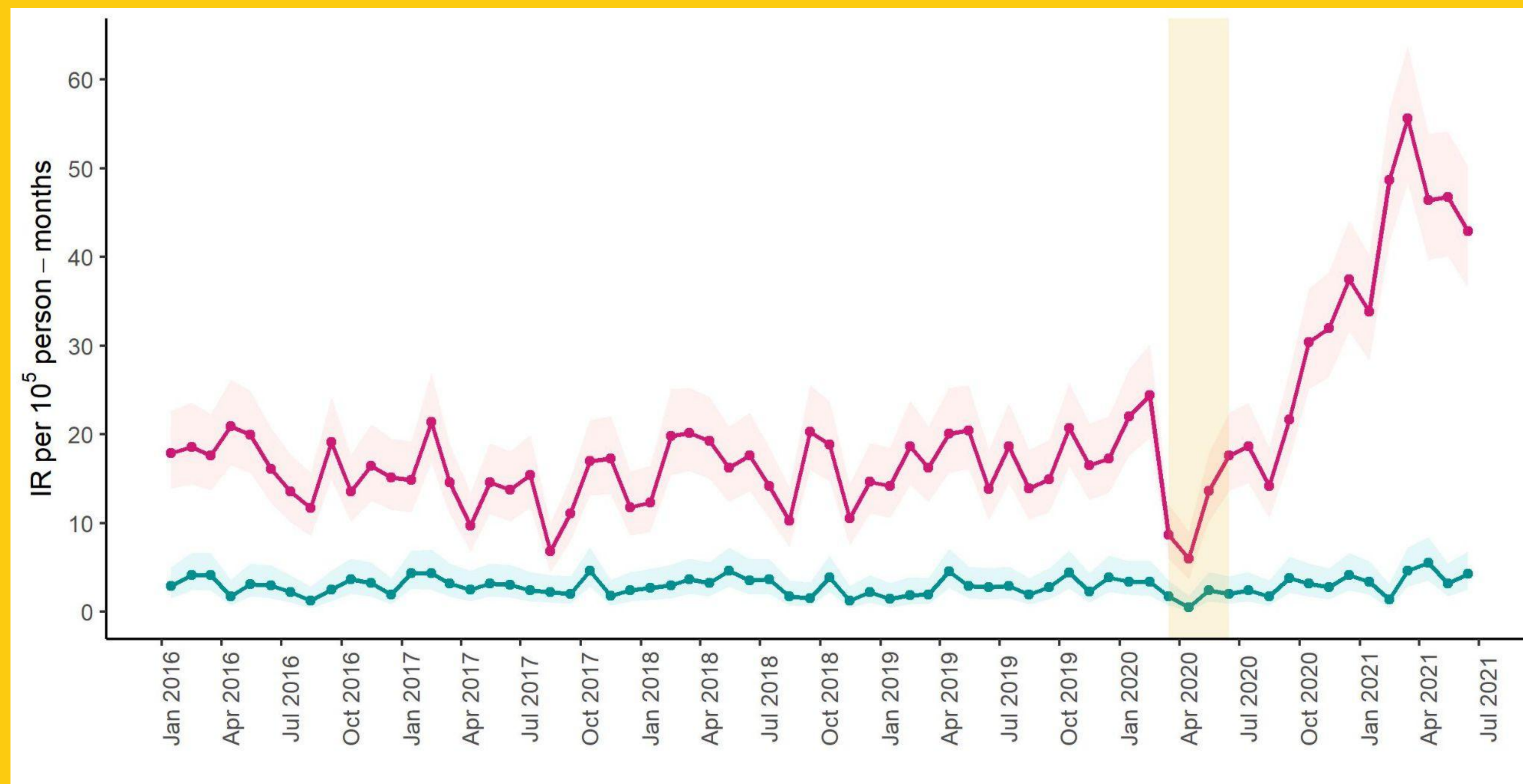


Figure 1: Monthly IR by sex (pink: females; green: males). The shaded area in yellow represents the lockdown period.

**STUDY PERIODS:**

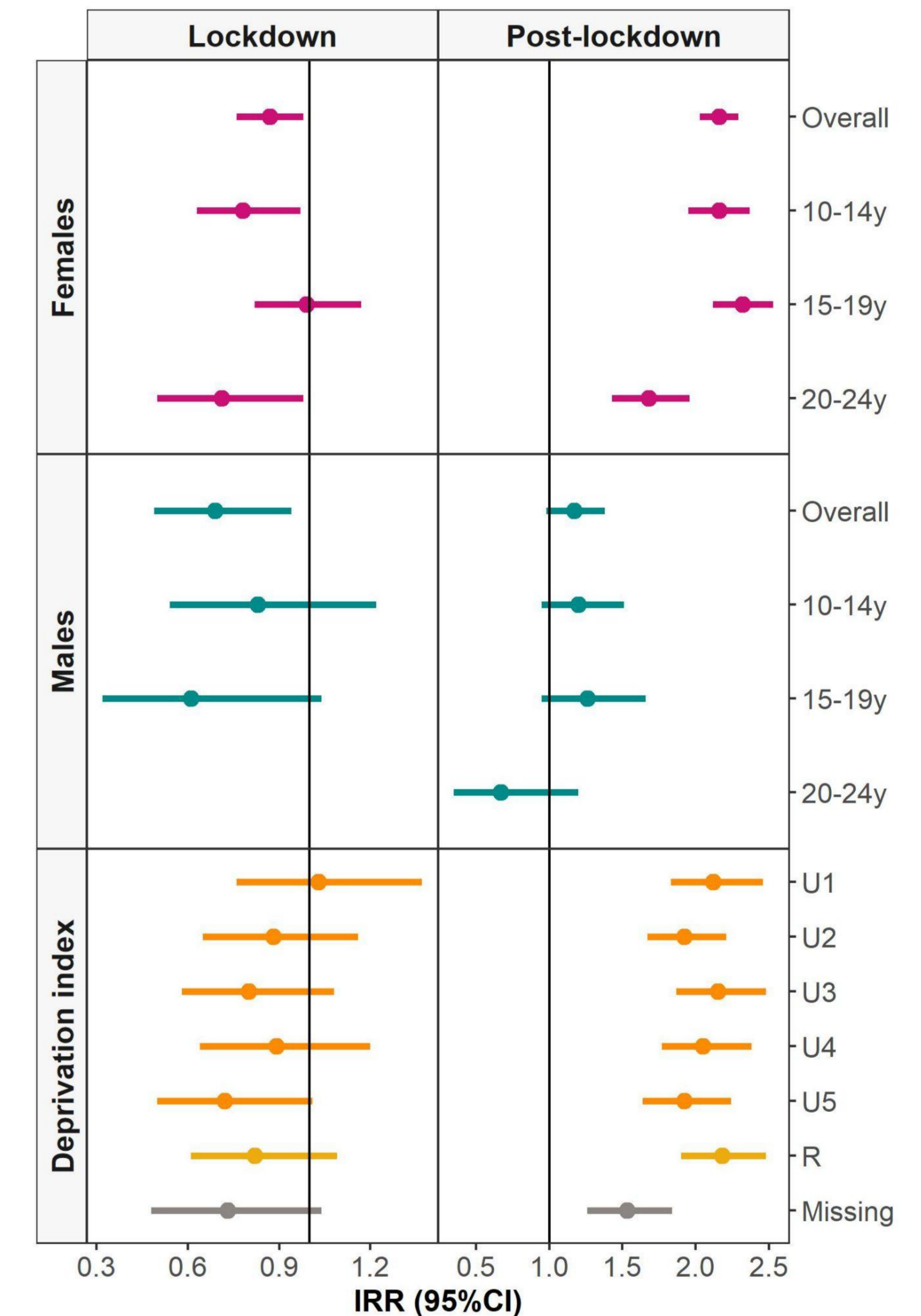
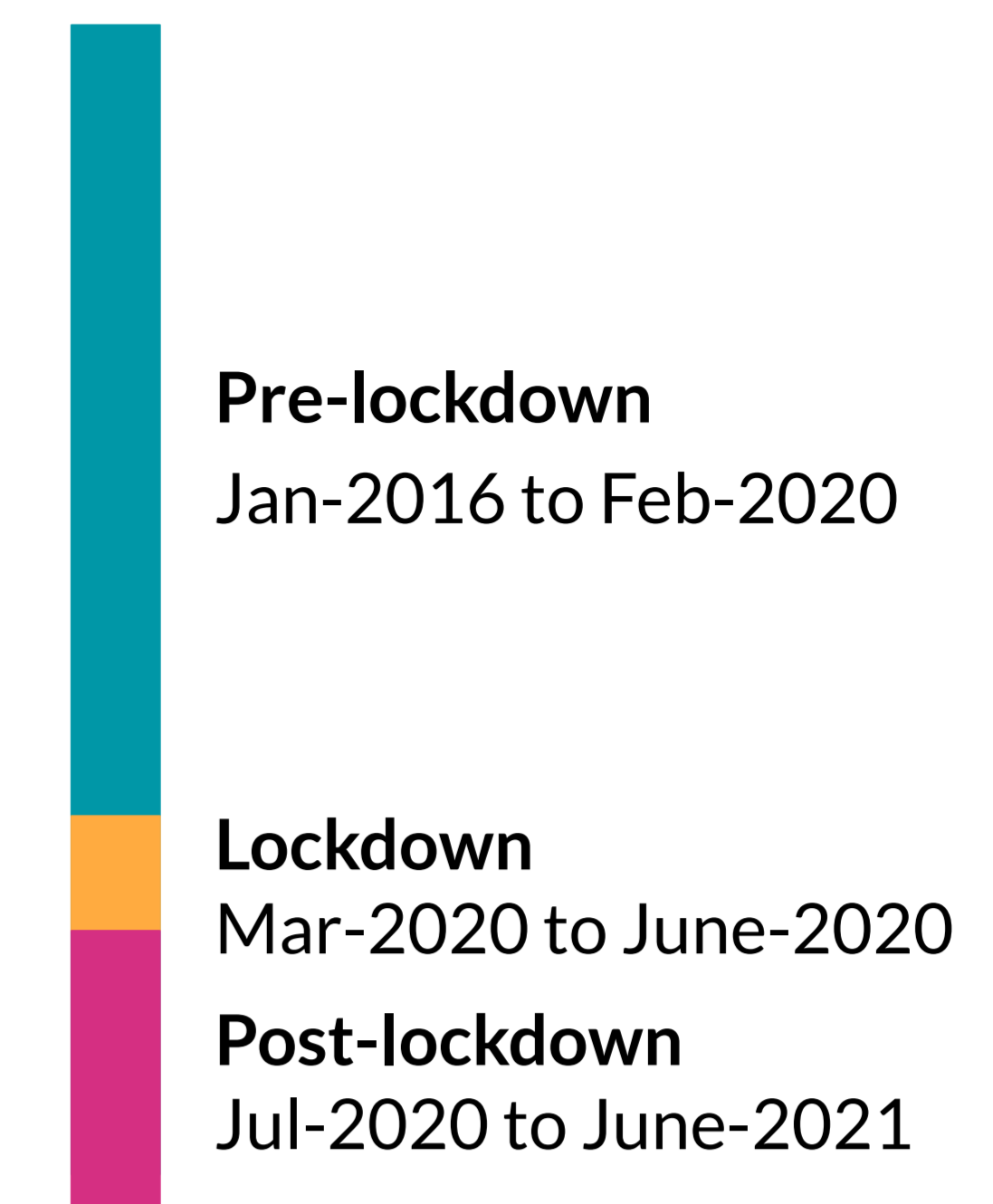


Figure 2: IRRs by sex, age group and socioeconomic deprivation index. The pre-lockdown period was defined as the reference group. For deprivation, urban areas (U) were categorized into quintiles of deprivation (U1 least deprived; U5 most deprived). Information on deprivation was not available for rural areas (R). Events with less than 5 occurrences were omitted for privacy reasons.

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