These findings suggest that those who are already at risk for depression are at even higher risk during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Given these findings, it is crucial to provide timely and effective guidelines to prevent depression in older adults during outbreaks of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Policymakers should consider the findings of this study when implementing policies aimed at preventing depression in older adults. Overall, this study provides important insights into the long-term trends in depression levels in older adults and highlights the importance of addressing this issue in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.