

Health Disparities in the Medi-Cal Population

Adolescent Depression



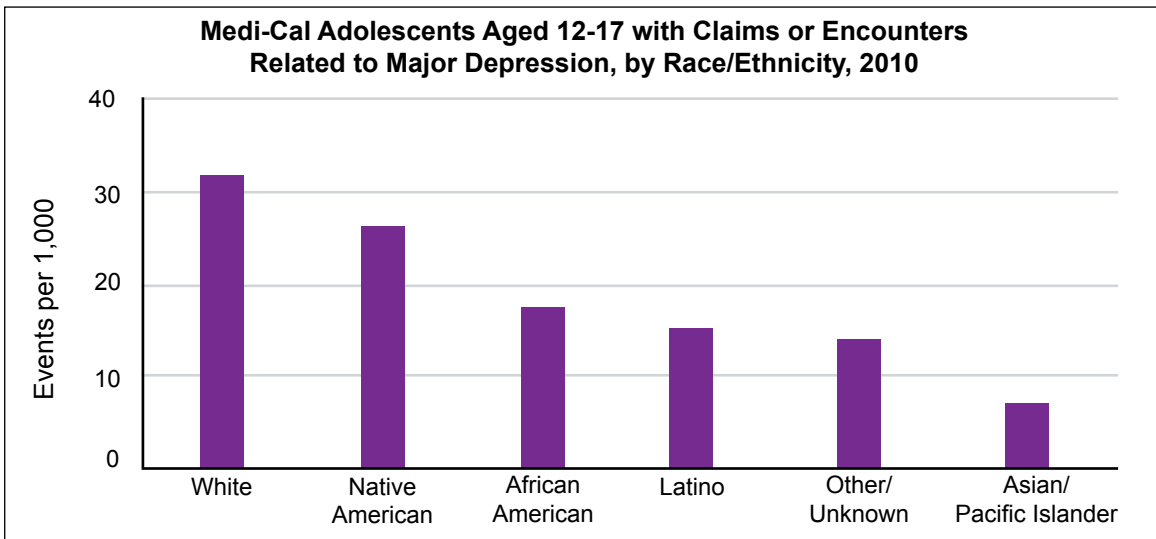
Depression involves five or more symptoms such as sad mood or diminished interest that are continuously present for at least two weeks.¹ Depression among adolescents is influenced by stressful events and changes associated with maturing, sex hormones, and interpersonal conflicts.² Research has shown that adolescent girls are twice as likely as boys to experience depression.³

The *Let's Get Healthy California Task Force Final Report* provided survey data that suggested about one-third of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders experienced sad or hopeless feelings in the past 12 months.⁴ In a national survey, 8.0% of 12 to 17 year olds reported a "major depressive episode."⁵ Unfortunately, one report suggested that only 38.9% of adolescents who experienced at least one major depressive event in the last year received treatment for major depression.⁶



Medi-Cal claims and encounter data suggested that about 1.7% of adolescents between the age of 12 and 17 received medical treatment for depression. Although possibly related to data quality problems such as incomplete reporting of managed care encounter data, there were racial/ethnic disparities associated with treatment of depression (see Figure). Native Americans and Whites were more likely than other groups to receive treatment for a major depression event. The rate for Asians and Pacific Islanders was substantially lower.

Figure



Source: Medi-Cal MIS/DSS and Symmetry ETG Groupers, 2010 Ver. 8.0.
Note: Members eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid were excluded.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Depression. <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics/mental-illness/depression.htm>. Published December 16, 2011. Accessed May 2013.
2. Rudolph KD, Gotlib I, Hammen C. Adolescent depression. *Handbook of depression*. 2009:444-466.
3. Naninck E, Lucassen P, Bakker J. Sex differences in adolescent depression: Do sex hormones determine vulnerability? *J Neuroendocrinology*. 2011;23(5):383-392.
4. Let's Get Healthy California Task Force Final Report. <http://www.chhs.ca.gov/Documents/Let%27s%20Get%20Healthy%20California%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report.pdf>. Published December 19, 2013. Accessed February 25, 2013.
5. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (May 11, 2009). The NSDUH Report: Major Depressive Episode and Treatment among Adolescents. Rockville, MD.

Link to Data Sources and Methods