

Health Disparities in the Medi-Cal Population

Adult Depression

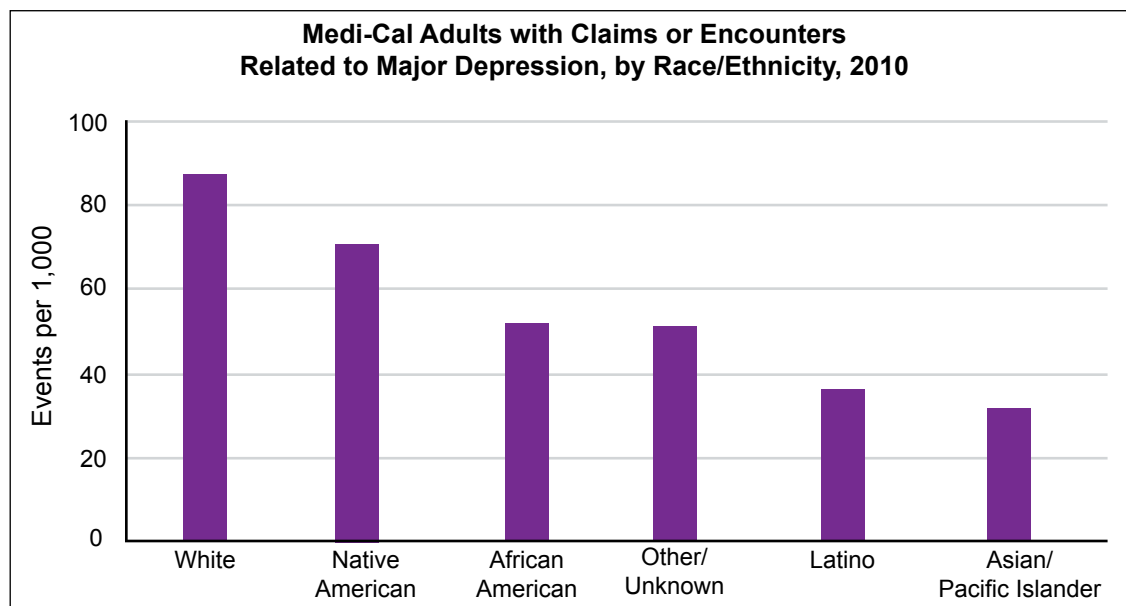


Depression involves five or more symptoms such as sad mood or diminished interest that are continuously present for at least two weeks.¹ Major depression affects between 5% and 10% of patients in primary care settings, and often goes undiagnosed and untreated.² Depression has negative impacts on interpersonal relationships and one's ability to perform in the workplace. In addition, depression is associated with suicide and other adverse health behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, and sleep disturbance.¹

The *Let's Get Healthy California Task Force Final Report* reported that 6% of California adults have experienced a Major Depressive Episode.³ Medi-Cal claims and encounter data suggested that about 4.9% of adults (aged 18-64) received some type of medical treatment for depression. Although possibly related to data quality problems such as incomplete reporting of managed care encounter records, there were racial/ethnic disparities associated with treatment of depression (see Figure). Whites and Native Americans 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. Gilbody S, Richards D, Brealey S, Hewitt C. Screening for depression in medical settings with the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ): A diagnostic meta-analysis. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2007;22(11):1596-1602.
3. 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. The report acknowledges that this measure of depression is a placeholder until better measures are developed.