

Among adolescents, major depressive disorder prevalence varies by race, ethnicity

October 17 2023, by Elana Gotkine



The rates of major depressive disorder (MDD) vary from 14.5 to 26.5

percent among adolescents by race and ethnicity, according to a study published online Oct. 9 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Michael William Flores, Ph.D., M.P.H., from Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts, and colleagues conducted a [cross-sectional analysis](#) of the nationally representative 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, including 10,743 U.S. adolescents aged 12 to 17 years. Self-reported race and ethnicity included 5.1 percent Asian, 14.1 percent Black, 23.3 percent Latinx, 51.2 percent White, and 6.3 percent more than one race. Data were collected from Jan. 14 to Dec. 20, 2021.

The researchers found that the rates of MDD ranged from 14.5 to 26.5 percent and were highest for adolescents of more than one race or ethnicity. The lowest rates of any MDD treatment were seen for Latinx adolescents and those of more than one [race](#) or ethnicity compared with White adolescents (29.2 and 21.1 percent, respectively).

Similar results were seen for treatment by any clinician (25.6 and 19.1 percent), treatment by a mental health specialist (22.9 and 16.7 percent), treatment by a nonspecialist clinician (7.3 and 4.8 percent), and use of any psychotropic medication prescription (11.6 and 8.3 percent). Black adolescents also had lower rates of MDD treatment by any [clinician](#) and nonspecialist clinicians and experienced lower prescription rates for any psychotropic medication (31.7, 8.4, and 12.6 percent, respectively).

"We found substantial disparities in mental health treatment among [adolescents](#) from racial and ethnic minority groups," the authors write.

More information: Michael William Flores et al, Estimates of Major Depressive Disorder and Treatment Among Adolescents by Race and Ethnicity, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2023.3996](#)

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