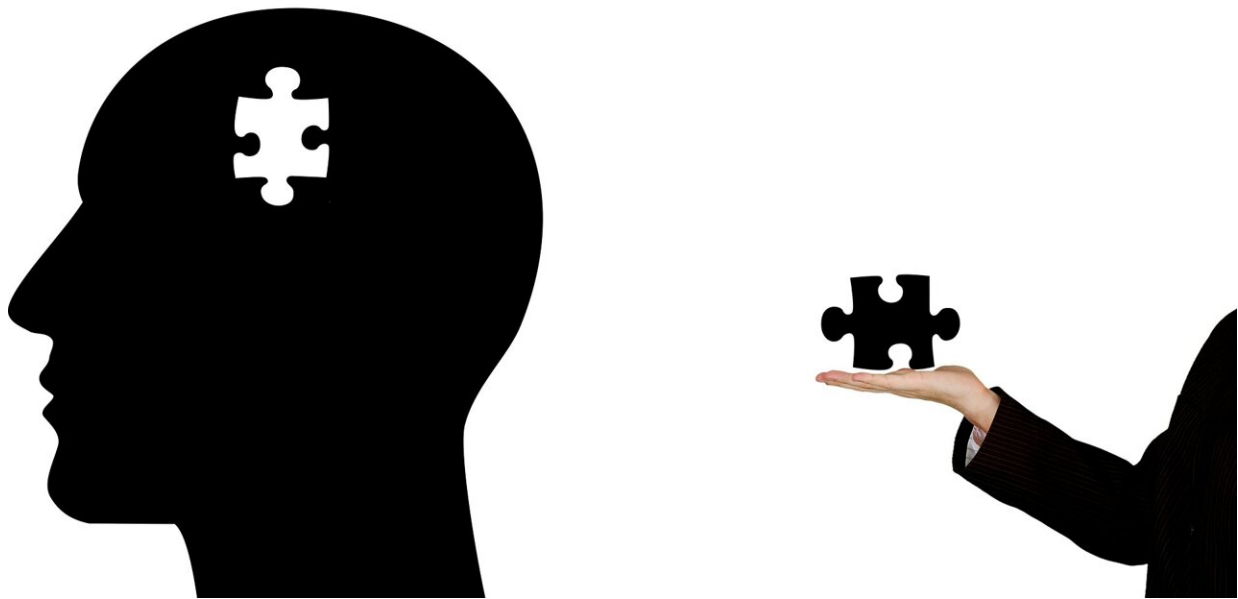


Racial disparities seen in unmet treatment needs for pediatric mental health

December 5 2023, by Elana Gotkine



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

For children with mental health conditions, there are racial and ethnic disparities in unmet treatment needs, according to a study published online Dec. 5 in *Pediatrics*.

Andrew R. Chang, from Harvard Medical School, and Natalie Slopen, Sc.D., from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, both in

Boston, used data from 172,107 participants from the nationally representative National Survey of Children's Health, from 2016 to 2021, to examine unmet [mental health](#) needs.

The researchers found that non-Hispanic Black children had greater odds of unmet needs than non-Hispanic White children (adjusted odds ratio, 1.56; 95 percent confidence interval, 1.18 to 2.05). Heterogeneous patterns were revealed on models disaggregated by specific mental health conditions. Specifically, non-Hispanic Black children had elevated odds of unmet needs for [behavioral problems](#) relative to non-Hispanic White children (adjusted odds ratio, 1.41; 95 percent confidence interval, 1.00 to 2.02), while increased odds of anxiety were seen in Asian and Hispanic [children](#) (adjusted odds ratios [95 percent confidence intervals], 2.60 [1.20 to 4.29] and 1.41 [1.05 to 1.90], respectively).

"Our study highlights the specific racial and ethnic minority groups that are clinically underserved across four [mental health conditions](#)," the authors write.

More information: Andrew R. Chang et al, Racial and Ethnic Disparities for Unmet Needs by Mental Health Condition: 2016 to 2021, *Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2023-062286](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-062286)

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