Medical Xpress

Study investigates why minorities underuse services for ADHD

October 3 2012

(Medical Xpress)—Minority children are known to utilize treatments for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD—the most common neurobehavioral disorder of childhood—less than their non-minority peers. The question is what causes this disparity in care.

Previous studies have found significant differences in ADHD knowledge and perceptions between minority and non-minority parents. For example, African American parents reported distrust about ADHD diagnoses and concerns about medications, while Latino parents favored treatments that were non-pharmacologic, primarily because they said medication is addictive and "dulls the mind."

In their own longitudinal study, Mary McKay, the McSilver Professor of Poverty Studies and director of the McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research at the Silver School of Social Work, and her research collaborators—Evelyn Berger-Jenkins of Columbia University Medical Center, Jeffrey Newcorn and William Bannon of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and Danielle Laraque of Maimonides Hospital—surveyed a group of 70 parents of children with untreated ADHD about their knowledge and perceptions of the disorder, and then followed up with them three to six months later to see if the children were using services.

By the three- to six-month follow-up, 48 percent of the children had not attended any mental health appointments in relation to their condition, while 73 percent of the children had not used any treatments, including medications.

In an article published in the journal *Clinical Pediatrics*, the authors explore the characteristics of children and families who are likely to use mental health services compared with those who do not. They emphasize the importance of addressing parents' issues of trust, stigma, and the potential effect of medication related to mental health services. In order to close the ADHD treatment gap between minorities and non-minorities, it is necessary to address these and other concerns at the time of referral for treatment and services, they say.

"Increasingly, the literature points to the need to fully partner and engage families in care," the study concludes. "Much time, effort, and financial cost is being spent on missed mental health visits and long-term consequences of untreated ADHD."

Provided by New York University

Citation: Study investigates why minorities underuse services for ADHD (2012, October 3) retrieved 18 September 2024 from
https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-10-minorities-underuse-adhd.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.