

Psychosocial Issues — Cultural

Issues in the identification of comorbidity of mental retardation and psychopathology in a multicultural context. Slone M, Durrheim K, Kaminer D, Lachman P, Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol 1999 Apr;34(4):190-4

Identification of the comorbidity of mental retardation and psychopathology in a multicultural setting raises manifold difficulties. The present study explored the sampling and identification issues implicated in estimating the prevalence of this dual diagnosis in a South African clinic sample. The relations between the prevalence of dual diagnosis and socioeconomic status, gender, and severity level of retardation were investigated. The detection rate of 4.36% was significantly lower than that of other studies. Prevalence was found to be greater in areas of high socioeconomic status, among males, and among less severely retarded individuals. Implications of these findings for cross-cultural studies and for allocation of service resources for patients with dual diagnosis are considered.

Substance use and psychiatric problems of homeless Native American veterans. Kaspro WJ, Rosenheck R, Psychiatr Serv 1998 Mar;49(3):345-50

OBJECTIVE: This study estimated the proportion and representation of Native Americans among homeless veterans and compared their psychiatric and substance abuse problems with those of other ethnic groups of homeless veterans.

METHODS: The study was based on data from the Department of Veterans Affairs' Health Care for Homeless Veterans program, a national outreach program operating at 71 sites across the country. Alcohol, drug, and psychiatric problems of Native American veterans (N=950) reported during intake assessment were compared with problems reported by white, black, and Hispanic veterans (N=36,938).

RESULTS: Native Americans constituted 1.6 percent of veterans in the program. Age-adjusted analyses suggested that relative to the general veteran population (of which 1.3 percent are Native Americans), Native Americans are overrepresented in the homeless population by approximately 19 percent. Regression analyses controlling for demographic characteristics found that Native American veterans reported more current alcohol abuse, more previous hospitalizations for alcohol dependence, and more days of recent alcohol intoxication than members of other ethnic groups. In contrast, Native American veterans reported fewer drug dependence problems than other minority groups and fewer current psychiatric problems and previous psychiatric hospitalizations than the reference group of white homeless veterans.

CONCLUSIONS: Native Americans are overrepresented in the homeless veteran population. They have more severe alcohol problems than other minority groups but somewhat fewer psychiatric problems.

African American women and substance abuse: an overview. Levi DB, Easley C, J Cult Divers 1999 Fall;6(3):102-6

Contemporary trends and forces suggest that drug use and drug abuse among women may be rooted in a cultural context. Cultural patterns and experiences provide situations out of which women forge their sense of self, their identity, their concept of race and ethnicity, their notion of gender, and their sense of class. A woman's life experience and situation,

and cultural roles and beliefs generally influence drug abuse. This paper builds on the cultural context of drug use by analyzing the socialization of women, and the life circumstances and socio-demographic experiences women face. Specifically, this cultural context framework forms the foundation for the prevention of drug abuse and the extent to which health professionals need to understand drug abuse and to treat women effectively across class, and racial and ethnic differences.

SUNY Upstate Medical University, Department of Psychiatry 02/05