



Effective Health Care

Interventions to Reduce Disparities among Patients with Serious Mental Illness Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- The topic, *Interventions to Reduce Disparities among Patients with Serious Mental Illness*, is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available at this time; however, it will be considered for a potential technical brief by the Effective Health Care (EHC) Program.
- To see a description of a technical brief, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/research-for-policymakers-researchers-and-others/> .
- If this topic is developed into a technical brief, the protocol will be posted on the AHRQ Web site. To sign up for notification when this and other EHC Program topics are posted, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/> .

Topic Description

Nominator(s): Organization

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the comparative effectiveness of interventions to reduce disparities (e.g., diagnosis disparities, treatment disparities, access to care disparities) in patients with serious mental illness (SMI).

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Population(s): Patients with SMI, with or without comorbid medical conditions such as diabetes, HIV and cardiovascular disease

Intervention(s): Interventions to reduce disparities (e.g., improved diagnosis, treatment, access to care) across patients of different races and genders

Comparator(s): All other treatment options

Outcome(s): Improved patient outcomes (e.g., quality of life, patient satisfaction), reduced patient barriers to care

Key Questions from Nominator: For patients with SMI, what is the comparative effectiveness of interventions to reduce disparities (e.g., diagnosis disparities, treatment disparities, access to care disparities) across patients of different races and genders?

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Serious mental illness (SMI) is defined generally as a major mental, behavioral or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. More specifically, SMI includes major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and borderline personality disorder.
- Mental health is a frequently unaddressed matter in racial and ethnic minority communities, and minority individuals may experience symptoms that are undiagnosed, under-diagnosed, or misdiagnosed for cultural, linguistic, or historical reasons. Disparities represent a lack of efficiency within the health care system and therefore account for additional unnecessary economic and human costs.
- A scan of the literature identified relevant AHRQ products, including the annual National Healthcare Quality Report and National Healthcare Disparities Report, which present data on the progress and opportunities for improving health care quality and reducing health care disparities. The 2013 reports focus on the limited access to healthcare among racial and ethnic minorities. . . . The reports also discuss facilitators and barriers to health care, and address the effectiveness of care for common clinical conditions including mental health and substance abuse.
 - National Healthcare Quality Report (2013). Rockville, MD: AHRQ Publication No. 14-0005, May 2014. Available at: www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/index.html.
 - National Healthcare Disparities Report (2013). Rockville, MD: AHRQ Publication No. 14-0006, May 2014. Available at: www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/index.html.
- There is also an AHRQ Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) project underway, titled *Improving Cultural Competence to Reduce Health Disparities for Priority Populations*, which will examine, in part, the effectiveness of interventions to improve culturally appropriate care in different subgroups of adolescents and adults, including their effects on mental health outcomes.
 - Improving Cultural Competence to Reduce Health Disparities for Priority Populations. Evidence-based Practice Center Systematic Review Protocol. Rockville, MD: AHRQ, July 8, 2014. Available at: <http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/search-for-guides-reviews-and-reports/?pageaction=displayproduct&productid=1934>.
- However, a scan of the literature identified limited evidence that specifically looked at interventions to reduce mental healthcare disparities.
- Given the limited amount of evidence available and the importance of reducing disparities in healthcare, a technical brief outlining methodological approaches and a research framework may help to inform future research in this area.