



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

INSTITUTE OF BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

Research and News Worth Repeating

August 17, 2020

Substance Use Research

Substance Abuse can block veterans from getting mental health help, researcher warn

Military Times, July 22, 2020

Many veterans with substance use disorders are also likely to have a mental health disorder. Both issues are treatable but generally only with professional help. A recent RAND report estimated that between 11 and 25% of veterans have a substance use disorder, up to 20% of them have PTSD and 15% with depression. Proximity to care did not seem to be a major problem with 88% of veterans living within an hour of treatment. However, many are ineligible for treatment services because facilities require them to be abstinent, or substance-use free before admission. The report recommended screening for co-occurring disorders, treatment that addresses substance abuse and mental health together, and clearer recovery plans after relapse.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/07/22/substance-abuse-can-block-veterans-from-getting-mental-health-help-researchers-warn/>

COVID-19 and the opioid crisis: pandemic and an epidemic collide

AAMC, July 27, 2020

Factors such as grief, isolation, finances, work and home changes, and uncertainty as a result of the COVID pandemic can increase risk of increased substance use problems. Alcohol sales have skyrocketed, as have non-prescribed fentanyl use, methamphetamine, cocaine and overdoses. Many are obtaining double the amount of medications they would previously. Social distancing has led to increased use of teletherapy which has been aided by loosening of federal Medicare and Medicaid rules.

<https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/covid-19-and-opioid-crisis-when-pandemic-and-epidemic-collide>

Substance use disorder treatment programs face funding challenges amid COVID-19 pandemic

WGRZ News, August 5, 2020

The COVID pandemic has exacerbated social-emotional issues such as stress, isolation and a rise in opioid-related deaths, resulting in calls for increased funding and resources for behavioral health programs. However, the state of New York has announced significant funding cuts to services with the expectation that some federal funding will be available. This is a cause for concern from the mental health standpoint, as many will be without treatment, and risk entering the criminal justice system instead.

<https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/health/substance-use-disorder-treatment-programs-face-funding-challenges-amid-covid-19-pandemic/71-b2af17e9-0d80-4bb8-90b0-8ee601c2ba09>

Mental Health

Mental Health and Substance Use State Fact Sheets

Kaiser Family Foundation, July 10, 2020

Kaiser Family Foundation provided a mental health and substance use fact sheet that reports national and state-level data before and during the current COVID pandemic. For example, the average weekly data for June 2020 found that 36.5% of adults in the U.S. reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, up from 11.0% in 2019. Drug overdose deaths increased by a factor of four since 1999 with states such as West Virginia (51.5 per 100,000), Delaware (43.8 per 100,000), Maryland (37.2 per 100,000), Pennsylvania (36.1 per 100,000), and Ohio (35.9 per 100,000) having the highest overdose death rates.

<https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/>

Editorial: Caring for Those Who are Neglected and Forgotten: Psychiatry in Prison Environments

Frontiers in Psychiatry, March 31, 2020

Psychiatric issues in prison present many unique challenges as people in prison deal with disproportionate levels of mental health issues, social marginalization, substance abuse disorders and infectious diseases. People in prison with severe mental illness are considered especially vulnerable, prone to making false confessions, at higher risk of violent behaviors, and higher risk of self-harm and suicide.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7136393/>

Technology

How technology can help to manage COVID-19's mental health fallout

World Economic Forum, August 5, 2020

Before COVID-19, telepsychiatry was limited in most places, with concerns about rapport and therapeutic alliance, technical concerns and limited evidence of effectiveness. Challenges in providing care as a result of the COVID pandemic has warranted the increase in videoconferencing and telephone calls with patients. It is now being used as an almost first-line of defense in mental health care and developments will allow greater access to care and allow more preventative, reactive and empathetic care.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/covid-19-mental-health-telehealth/>

Technology innovations tackling the youth, young adult mental health crisis

Mobile Health News, July 10, 2020

The CDC reports that up to 80% of youth suffering from a mental health disorder like depression or anxiety are undertreated or not treated at all. Technology has the opportunity to intervene in mental health; through prevention, offering tools such as meditation exercises, resilience training, positive mental health habits, protection and detection through mobile and online content monitoring, and treatment through teletherapy and crisis lines.

<https://www.mobihealthnews.com/news/technology-innovations-tackling-youth-young-adult-mental-health-crisis>

Using a health information technology survey to explore the availability of addiction treatment data in the electronic health records: A National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network Study

Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, March, 2020

Electronic Health Records (EHRs) can provide a plethora of health information about clients and addiction behavior. A total of 36 representatives from facilities within the NIDA CTN (Clinical Trials Network) were surveyed to examine information related to data completeness and presence of unstructured data for conducting EHR-based research on substance use disorders (SUD). Results showed significant variation between EHRs and frequent use of paper records. Separate EHRs were often used for behavioral healthcare presenting challenges for SUD research and suggesting the need for integration and standardization.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S074054721930399X>

CPT Coach – Cognitive processing therapy downloaded to smartphone for use as companion during CPT for PTSD

Veteran Affairs, April 8, 2020

Cognitive Processing therapy (CPT), much like the familiar Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), is an evidence-based psychotherapy for patients with PTSD that helps them manage their symptoms. CPT Coach is an app for mobile devices designed to be used as a treatment companion for patients working with a trained therapist. The app provides psychoeducation, symptom tracking over time, homework assignments, worksheets, and session reminders.

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/cpt_app_pro.asp

Specialized Smartphones Could Keep Released Offenders on Track for Successful Reentry

NIJ, April 30, 2020

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is designing ways to support offenders with reentry using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to monitor and support offender reentry. Tippecanoe County in Indiana partnered with Purdue University to create and study a system using AI-based support and wearable biometric devices that can accumulate data on other reentry success measures such as technical violations of reentry terms, re-arrests, goal attainment, and monitor biological markers such as blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature. Overall goals include empowering released offenders to take control of their lives.

https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/specialized-smartphones-could-keep-released-offenders-track-successful-reentry?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=articles