

The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health, Behavioral Health, and Access to Health Among Participants in the Mentoring in Medicine Network



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Introduction

January 2020, life as we once knew it was altered without an end in sight. An overwhelming period of self-reflection, isolation, anxiety, and fear was born; the COVID-19 pandemic. Various global studies have led to the discovery of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health. By defining all factors assessed when discussing mental health, going into depth on demographic stressors and the implications of behavioral studies in mental health, highlighting the various demographic and socioeconomic differences of 88 participants, and discussing how a lack in access to mental health care contributes to mental health issues, the statistics observed in the study can be used to assess the impact of the pandemic in a population of people with a significant gap between mental health and care received.

Methods

Participants completed the July 2022- September 2022 survey, "New Post-Covid Mental Health Survey" consisting of 21 questions regarding demographic information, mental health, behavioral health, and access to care. Demographic questions included age, income, number of individuals in the household, gender, race, and ethnicity. Mental health questions assessed work problems, daily motivation, feelings of disappointment, self-esteem, suicidal ideations, increased suicidal ideations, and decreased interest in activities. Behavioral health questions assessed increased substance abuse (alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin), changes in interpersonal/familial relationships, dietary and sleep changes also contributed to the research. Access to healthcare questions included mental health diagnosis, time of diagnosis, and access to facilities. Participants polled whether or not they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement being made.

Results

Results from the study demonstrate important intersections between demographic information, mental health, behavioral health, and access to care. The data used in the study was collected from 88 participants in the Mentoring in Medicine network who were at least 18 years old. The results show the prevalence of mental health issues based on demographic health, access to care, changes in emotional and behavioral health. The data resulted in a clear distinction between mental health illness and diagnosis, the external factors contributing to access to care, and the relevance of demographic information pertaining to mental health.

Figure 2: Participants Access to Mental Healthcare (With and Without Mental Health Diagnosis)

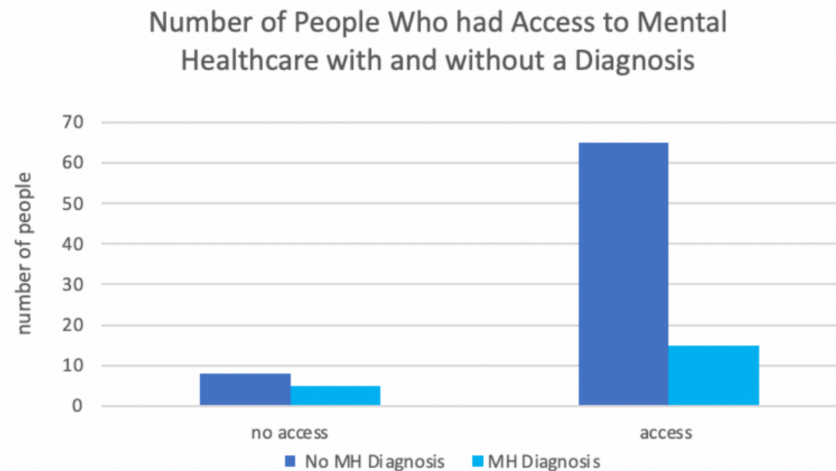
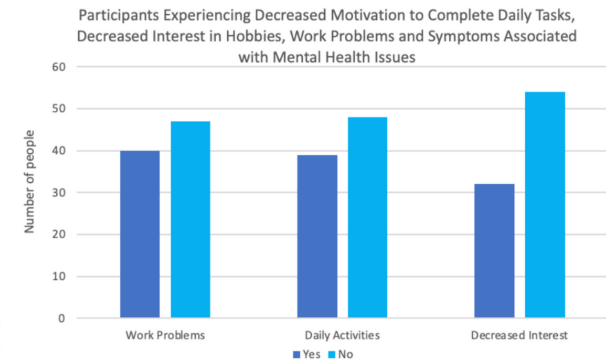


Figure 3: Participants Experiencing Decreased Motivation to Complete Daily Tasks, Decreased Interest in Hobbies, Work Problems and Symptoms Associated with Mental Health Issues During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Discussion & Conclusion

When compared, Figures 3 and 1 indicate the gap between mental health issues and care received. Almost half of the participants (45.6%) admitted to having problems doing daily activities due to emotional issues such as feeling depressed, sad, or anxious; however, 76.9% of participants had never been diagnosed with a mental health illness, 68.3% of which had no difficulty accessing care. An interesting conversation can be made, transcending race, income, and other factors that impact mental health. Using these statistics regarding increased prevalence of common mental illness markers means that the COVID-19 pandemic in itself can be analyzed as a contributor to mental health issues. A hypothesis can be made about the severity of the pandemic and its implications on all aspects of peoples livelihood such as work, joy, interpersonal relationships, and the self. In conclusion, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health is visible in some magnitude in this diverse population of individuals. The impact of the pandemic on mental health managed to transcend demographic factors that statistically set participants apart.