Numbers of Americans Affected by Mental Illness

- One in four adults—approximately 61.5 million Americans—experiences mental illness in a given year. One in 17—about 13.6 million—live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder.¹
- Approximately 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 experience severe mental disorders in a given year. For ages 8 to 15, the estimate is 13 percent.²
- Approximately 1.1 percent of American adults—about 2.4 million people—live with schizophrenia.³,⁴
- Approximately 2.6 percent of American adults—6.1 million people—live with bipolar disorder.⁴,⁵
- Approximately 6.7 percent of American adults—about 14.8 million people—live with major depression.⁴,⁶
- Approximately 18.1 percent of American adults—about 42 million people—live with anxiety disorders, such as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder and phobias.⁴,⁷
- About 9.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.⁸
- Approximately 26 percent of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness and an estimated 46 percent live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders.⁹
- Approximately 20 percent of state prisoners and 21 percent of local jail prisoners have “a recent history” of a mental health condition.¹⁰
- Seventy percent of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and at least 20 percent live with a severe mental illness.¹¹

Getting Mental Health Treatment in America

- Approximately 60 percent of adults¹², and almost one-half of youth ages 8 to 15 with a mental illness received no mental health services in the previous year.¹³
- African American and Hispanic Americans used mental health services at about one-half the rate of whites in the past year and Asian Americans at about one-third the rate.¹⁴
- One-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14; three-quarters by age 24.¹⁵ Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.¹⁶

The Impact of Mental Illness in America

- Serious mental illness costs America $193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.¹⁷
- Mood disorders such as depression are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults ages 18 to 44.¹⁸
- Individuals living with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions. Adults living with serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than other Americans, largely due to treatable medical conditions.¹⁹
- Over 50 percent of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older who are served by special education drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.²⁰
- Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. (more common than homicide) and the third leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24 years.²² More than 90 percent of those who die by suicide had one or more mental disorders.²³
- Although military members comprise less than 1 percent of the U.S. population²⁴, veterans represent 20 percent of suicides nationally. Each day, about 22 veterans die from suicide.²⁵
References
6 Ibid.
Reviewed by Ken Duckworth, M.D., March 2013