Prevalence of Co-Occurring Disorders and Engagement in Behavioral Health Treatment among Justice-Involved Adolescents

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Among clients in both mental health and substance abuse treatment settings, CODs are the rule, not the exception.

Persons with CODs:
- Have poorer outcomes
- Face greater difficulties related to treatment engagement and retention
- Are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system

High rates of CODs among justice-involved individuals highlight the justice system as an opportunity for treatment engagement.
Adolescents with CODs in the Criminal Justice System

- In 2016, juveniles represented close to 8% of all arrestees
- Several studies examining adolescents in the criminal justice system estimate about a third to have CODs
- Gap in literature using large-scale data
Key Questions

- How do justice-involved adolescents who have CODs differ from non-justice-involved adolescents who have CODs?
- For adolescents with CODs, how does being involved in the justice system affect one’s chances of receiving treatment?
  - Mental health treatment
  - Substance abuse treatment
Method

● Sample:
  ○ 41,579 non-institutionalized adolescents aged 12 or older
  ○ Surveyed by 2015-2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

● Measures:
  ○ Substance use disorder
  ○ Major depressive episode
  ○ Mental health treatment
  ○ Substance abuse treatment
  ○ Justice involvement

● Analyses:
  ○ Conducted using Stata v. 15
  ○ Two-way tabulations
  ○ Weighted Chi-Square analyses
  ○ Logistic regressions
  ○ Weighted for population
Results

Prevalence of CODs among Adolescents

- No Justice Involvement
- Justice Involvement

6.3% for Justice Involvement
1.2% for No Justice Involvement

$p = 0.000$
Results

Prevalence of Justice Involvement among Adolescents

- 15% Have CODs
- 3% Do Not Have CODs

$p = 0.000$
Results

Rates of Treatment Receipt among Adolescents with CODs

- Mental Health Treatment: 75% (p = 0.000)
- Substance Abuse Treatment: 23% (p = 0.000)
- Both MH & SA Treatment: 21% (p = 0.000)

- Not Involved in the Justice System
- Involved in the Justice System
Conclusions

- Treatment needs for adolescents with CODs are great, even within the justice system.
- Substance abuse treatment should be prioritized.
Limitations & Ideas for Future Study

Limitations:

● Sample of adolescents with CODs limited to those with past-year substance use disorder and past-year major depression
● Sample limited to non-institutionalized individuals

Ideas for Future Study:

● The NSDUH should assess mental health in adolescents as comprehensively as it does adults

Policy Implications:

● Federal mandates should guarantee the availability of substance abuse treatment to those in criminal justice facilities that need it
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Thank you!