



Mental Health

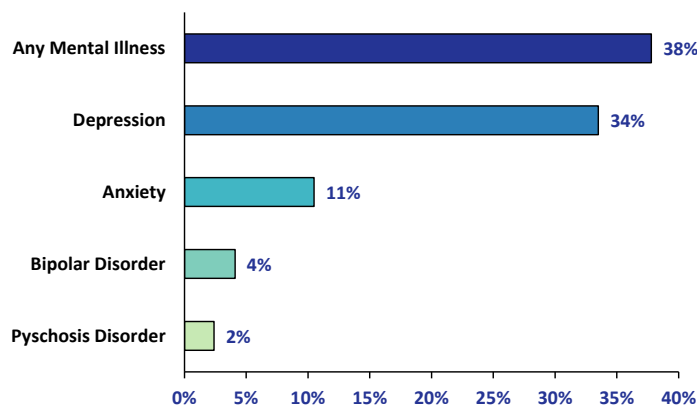
Mental illnesses are “characterized by altered mood, thoughts and/or behaviors associated with distress or impaired functioning”.¹ Some common types of mental illnesses are depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety. In the United States (US), one in four adults experiences a MI in a year.² The number of PLWH and MI is unknown as MI often goes undiagnosed and can vary in duration. Percentage of HIV among adults with serious MI is estimated to be between 3% and 23%.³

MEDICAL MONITORING PROJECT

The Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) assesses the health-related behaviors, clinical outcomes and needs of HIV-infected adults receiving medical care. Data on MI are collected through a participant interview and a medical record abstraction (MRA). Participants are asked the Patient Health Questionnaire-8 (PHQ) to measure depression in the last two weeks. PHQ is one of the most validated instruments to measure depression.⁴ The MRAs document diagnosed MIs since HIV diagnosis until 12 months before the interview.

In Virginia, from 2009 to 2013, 38% of participants had a MI listed in the medical chart, with depression being the most common (34%) (Figure 1). Those with HIV often suffer from MI as they adjust to complicated treatment regimens and stigmatization.

Figure 1. Diagnosed Mental Illness During the MMP Medical History Period, 2009-2013*



PLWH with severe MI have a slower rate of HIV viral suppression than those without severe MI.^{5,6} The MMP findings highlight the importance of MH screening and treatment as an integrated component of HIV care.

RYAN WHITE SERVICE UTILIZATION

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program offers social and medical services for low-income PLWH. A key service offered by the Ryan White program in Virginia is referral to MH providers. About 6% of Ryan White services in 2015 in Virginia were utilized for MH referrals. Twenty percent of all clients in Virginia served by Ryan White in calendar year (CY) 2015 had at least one MH referral. In CY 2015, there were 10,812 Ryan White MH referrals. MH is the fourth most widely used service in Virginia, after outpatient care and both medical and non-medical case management. Thus, Ryan White MH services may be vital for continuity of both medical and non-medical comprehensive HIV care.

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*Medical History Period is the first medical care visit after HIV diagnosis to 12 months before the MMP interview or first contact attempt if no interview.

^Current depression was measured using a PHQ-8 score ≥10