



Screening for Maternal Depression as Part of Comprehensive Asthma Care for Homeless Pediatric Patients

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Background

- Depression in mothers and of children with asthma is associated with reduced medication compliance, greater child activity limitations, and increased use of hospital emergency departments for asthma care
- Homeless children in New York City shelters have the highest reported rate of pediatric asthma (as high as to 40%), with very high rates of emergency department and in-patient hospital use
- Lifetime prevalence estimates for depression among women range as high as 20%
- There are notable racial-ethnic disparities, with higher rates among black and Hispanic women
- Maternal depression during pregnancy and in the postnatal period is associated with compromised infant growth and development
- Maternal depression is associated with behavior problems among preschool children

Objectives

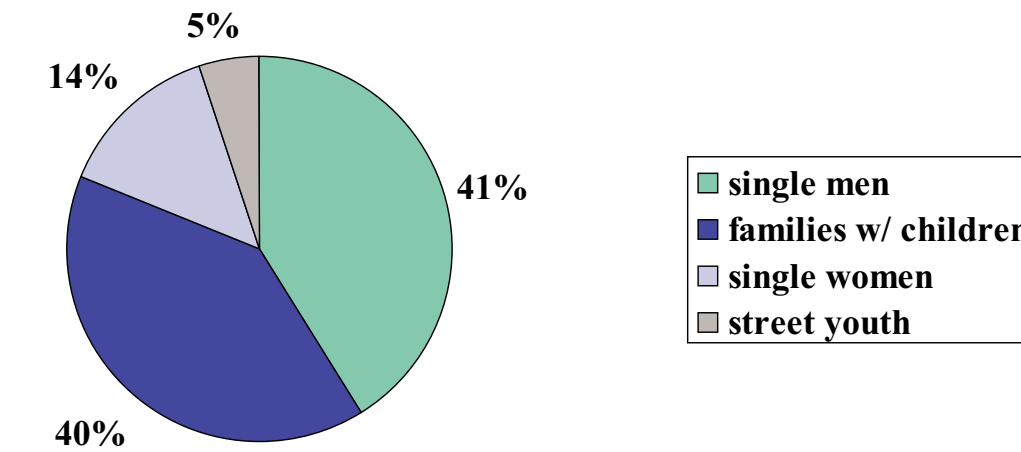
- To determine the need for psychosocial services as part of comprehensive asthma treatment in a primary care setting for homeless children

Methods

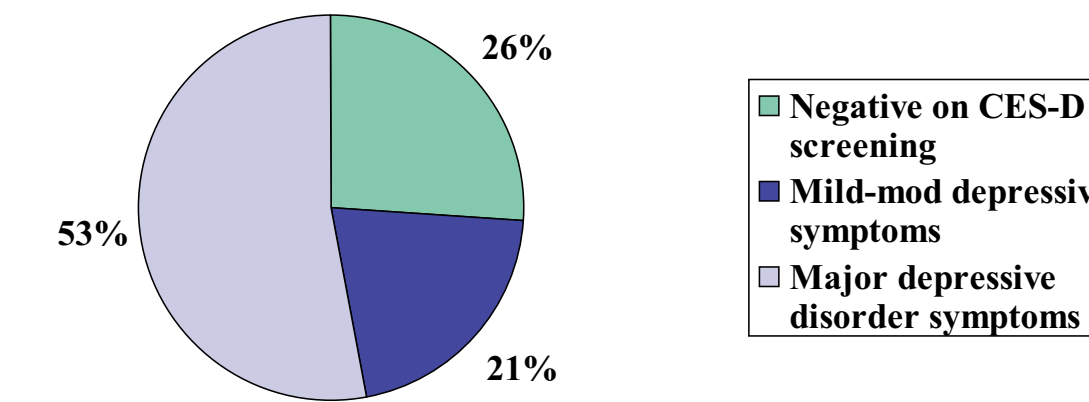
- To screen for depression, the Center for Epidemiologic Studies of Depression Scale (CES-D) was filled out by mothers of children receiving comprehensive NHLBI guidelines-based asthma care in primary care clinics located at shelter sites
- The women were all homeless, black or Hispanic, and primary caregiver for a child with asthma
 - The CES-D is a 20 item self-administered questionnaire which identifies recent symptoms consistent with a possible diagnosis of depression
- The validity of the CES-D in screening low-income women for depression at primary care settings is established
- The CES-D is not a diagnostic instrument
- All parents of children with asthma were offered a psychosocial assessment which included the CES-D, and treatment if indicated
 - This is not a mental health-referred sample
- Comparison was made of the rate of positive CES-D screening in this population with published results for other low-income and minority populations

Who is homeless in America?

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors 2003

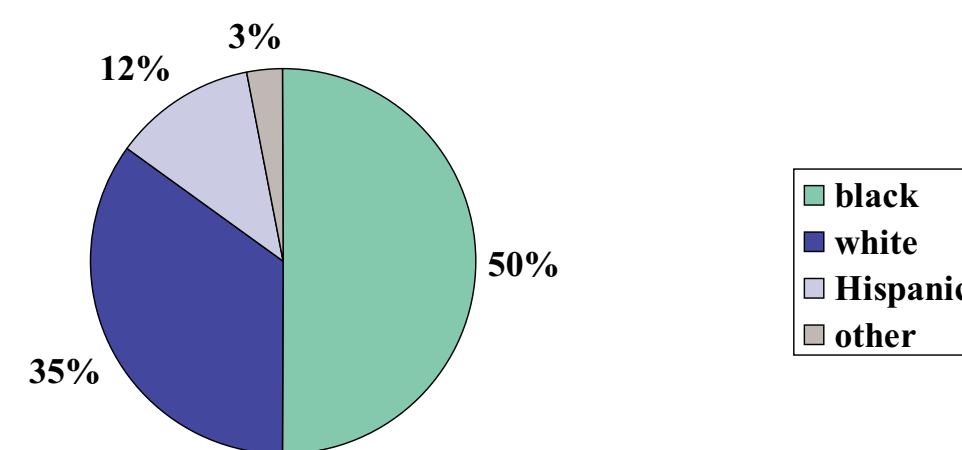


Depression among homeless mothers of children with asthma (N=169)

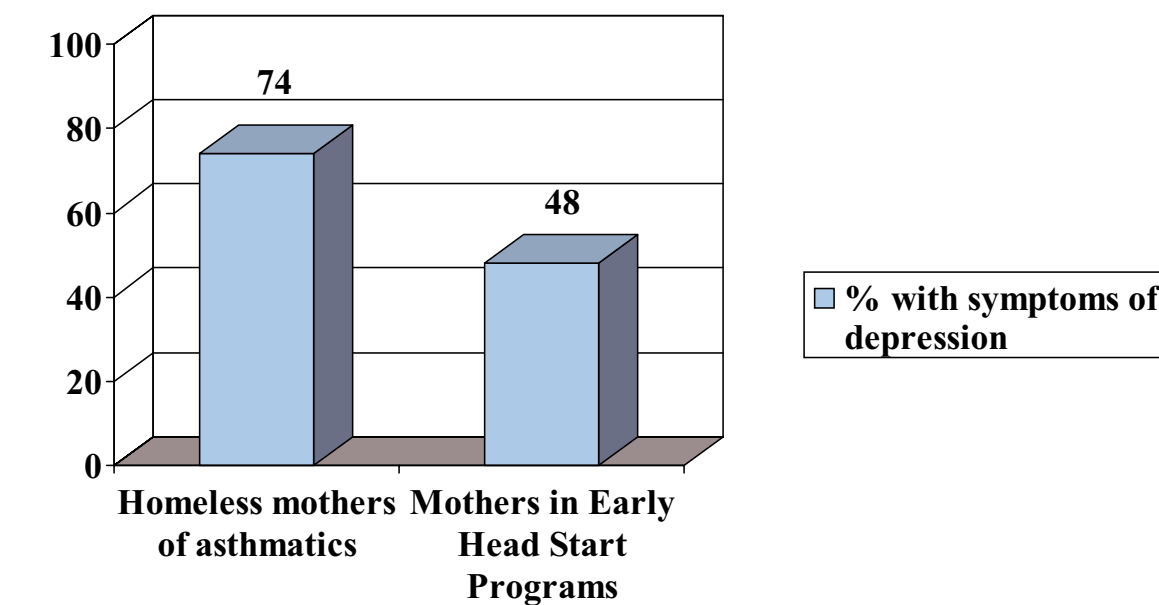


Homeless in America: Demographics

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors 2003

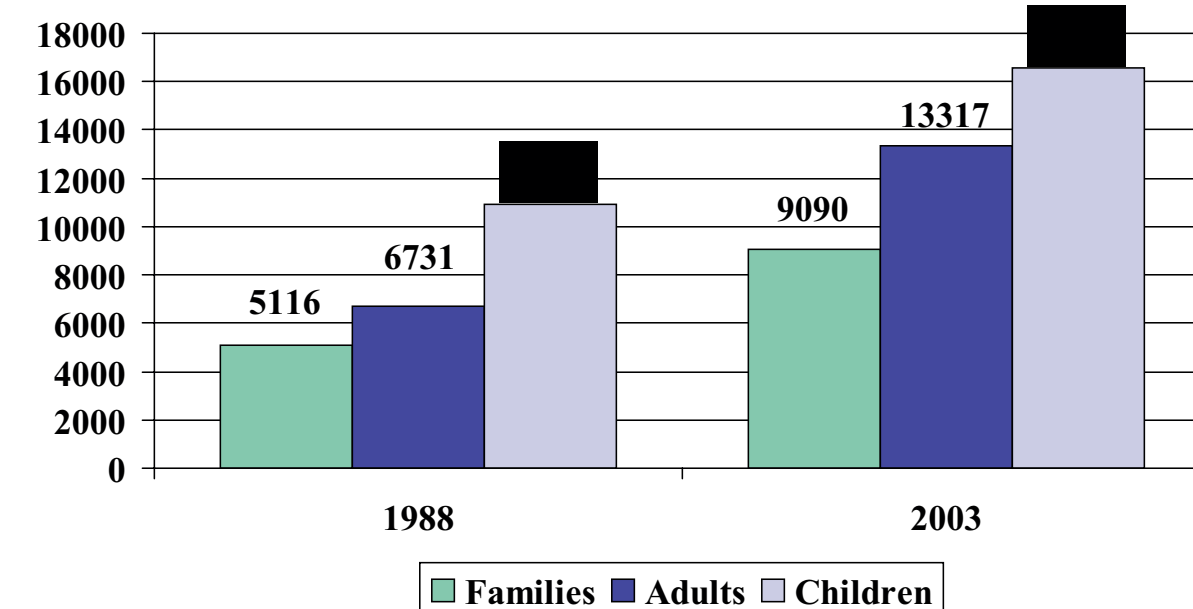


Comparison with another low-income sample



Homeless Children - NYC

Source: NYC Dept. of Homeless Services



CES-D items with highest rates of positive response

- "I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing"
- "I thought my life was a failure"
- "I could not get going"

Results

- In this population (N=169), the mean CES-D score was 23.6, which is in the potential "major depressive disorder" range
- Positive for recent symptoms of depression: 73.4%
 - Mild-moderate range: 20.7% (CES-D score 16 –21)
 - Major depressive disorder range: 52.7% (CES-D score >21).
- Specific CES-D items with a high rate of positive response suggest a lack of self-efficacy, which
 - May affect adherence to asthma care recommendations, and
 - May affect adherence with health care appointments
- There was no association between CES-D score and pediatrician assessment of the child's asthma severity
- There was no association between the child's night time asthma symptom severity and response to the CES-D item, "My sleep was restless"
- The rate of maternal depression in this sample is consistent with prior reports of the mental status of homeless mothers
- The rate was higher than published rates of possible depression among other low-income and minority populations
- Short-term psychotherapy and case management were provided for identified patients
 - Mental health services were co-located with primary care
 - Utilization of mental health services was very high
- In each case where a patient with a high CES-D score was referred for psychiatric assessment, depression (or psychotic disorder) was diagnosed
 - This suggests that the screening tool is reliable for this population

Conclusions

- Maternal depression may be a complicating factor in the treatment of homeless children with asthma
- Identification and intervention for maternal depression is an important component of comprehensive asthma care for homeless and possibly other high-risk pediatric patients
- Intervention for depressed mothers may have a positive impact on other aspects of growth and development for their children
- Co-location of mental health services with primary care is an effective way to increase utilization

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