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Mental Disorders and/or Substance Abuse Related to One of Every Eight Emergency Department Cases

AHRQ News and Numbers

Release date: July 8, 2010

Nearly 12 million visits made to U.S. hospital emergency departments in 2007 involved people with a mental disorder, substance abuse problem, or both, according to the latest *News and Numbers* from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). This accounts for one in eight of the 95 million visits to emergency departments by adults that year.

Of these visits, about two-thirds involved patients with a mental disorder, one quarter was for patients with a substance abuse problem, and the rest involved patients dealing with both a mental disorder and substance abuse.

The Federal agency's analysis also found that for the 12 million emergency department visits involving mental health and/or substance abuse problems:

- Depression and other mood disorders accounted for 43 percent of the visits, while 26 percent were for anxiety disorders, and 23 percent involved alcohol-related problems.
- Mental health and/or substance abuse-related visits were 2½ times more likely to result in hospital admission than visits not involving mental disorders and/or substance abuse. Nearly 41 percent of mental disorder and/or substance abuse-related visits resulted in hospitalization.
- Medicare was billed for 30 percent of all mental health and/or substance abuse emergency department visits; private insurance was billed for 26 percent; the uninsured for 21 percent; and Medicaid for 20 percent.

This *AHRQ News and Numbers* is based on data in [Mental Health and Substance Abuse-Related Emergency Department Visits among Adults, 2007](#) (PDF file, 279 KB; [PDF Help](#)). The report uses statistics from the 2007 Nationwide Emergency Department Sample, an AHRQ database that is nationally representative of emergency department visits in all non-Federal hospitals. The Nationwide Emergency Department Sample contains 26 million records from emergency department visits from approximately 1,000 community hospitals nationwide. This represents 20 percent of all U.S. hospital emergency departments.

For other information, or to speak with an AHRQ data expert, please contact Bob Isquith at Bob.Isquith@ahrq.hhs.gov or call (301) 427-1539.

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