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More Than a Quarter of All Adults Have Received Mental Health Treatment Over Two-Year Period, According to New National Survey

Large majorities of those who were treated with therapy and with medication satisfied with their care

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A national survey of the general adult population and of adults who have needed or received some form of mental health treatment¹ find that more than a quarter (27%) of all adults have received some form of mental health treatment over a two-year period.

Among those patients who have received treatment in the past two years:

- Approximately one-third (34%) received both therapy and drugs.
- Approximately one-half (47%) of patients used prescription drugs but did not receive therapy.
- Approximately one-fifth (19%) of patients received therapy but did not use prescription drugs.

A modest majority of those who received treatment were extremely (15%) or very (39%) satisfied with their care, while a much larger share (85%) was at least somewhat satisfied. There was little difference in levels of satisfaction among patients who received drugs and therapy, therapy only, or drugs only.

These are some of the findings from research conducted both online and by telephone by Harris Interactive for PacifiCare Behavioral Health and *Psychology Today*.

Respondents are classified as having “**needed treatment**” if they:

- Meet criteria for need as determined by the Life Status Questionnaire (LSQ), a clinically validated instrument used by PacifiCare Behavioral Health* **OR**
- Feel that they have needed treatment **AND** have talked to a primary care doctor about personal, emotional, or mental health problems.

Respondents are classified as having “**received treatment**” if they:

- Have seen a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or marital and family therapist **OR**
- Have taken a prescription medication for a personal, emotional, or mental health problem.

Based on these definitions, the research found that:

- Almost one-third of adults (30%) needed mental health treatment over a two-year period.
- Just over a quarter of adults (27%) received mental health treatment over the two-year period.

However, not all of the people who received treatment needed it (using our definition of need), and not everyone who needed treatment received it. Specifically,

- Of the 30 percent who needed mental health treatment, almost two-thirds (63% or 19% of all adults) received it and more than one-third (37% or 11% of all adults) did not.
- Of the 70 percent who did **not** need mental health treatment, more than one out of 10 (11% or 8% of all adults) received it anyway.

* Those meeting this criterion were considered as having experienced high levels of distress.

¹ “Mental health treatment” defined as receiving psychotherapy, receiving medication, or receiving both therapy and medication.

² “Therapy” is defined as talking to a mental-health professional—such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or marriage and family therapist—on a regular basis about problems or things that are bothering you. Therapy can take place either alone (one-on-one) or in a group setting.

TABLE 1

People Who Needed and Who Received Mental Health Treatment

Base: All Adults (n=500)

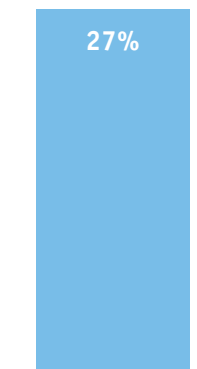
	%
Needed Mental Health Treatment in Past Two Years	30
Needed and received treatment	19
Needed but did not receive treatment	11
Did Not Need Mental Health Treatment in Past Two Years	70
Did not need or receive treatment	62
Did not need but received treatment	8
Total Who Received Treatment in Past Two Years	27
Needed and received treatment	19
Did not need but received treatment	8

TABLE 2

Who Received Different Types of Treatment

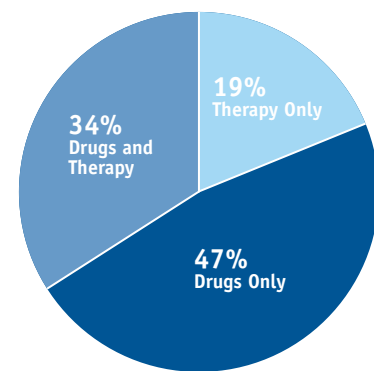
More than one-quarter of all adults have received mental health treatment in the past two years. Of these, about 8 in 10 were treated with medication.

Share Who Have Received Mental Health Treatment



Base: All adults (n=500)

Treatment Approaches



Base: Those who received mental health treatment in the past two years (n=871)

Women are more likely than men to have received treatment within the past two years – with only slight variations across other demographic characteristics.

TABLE 3
Received Treatment – Demographic Breakout

Base: Those who received treatment in the past two years (n=871)

	Received Treatment*	Total Population**
	%	%
Gender		
Women	63	52
Men	37	48
Age		
18-34	30	32
35-49	37	31
50-64	24	21
65+	9	16
Marital Status		
Married	54	57
Single	20	24
Divorced/Separated	15	12
Widowed/Other	10	7
Race		
White	80	77***
Nonwhite	20	23

* Harris Interactive online survey

** Current Population Survey

*** Includes Asian and "other race" respondents.

TABLE 4

Level of Distress and Treatment History

Among those with a treatment history, those who have experienced a high level of distress are more likely to have a history of both therapy and medication.

Base: Those who received treatment in the past two years (n=871)

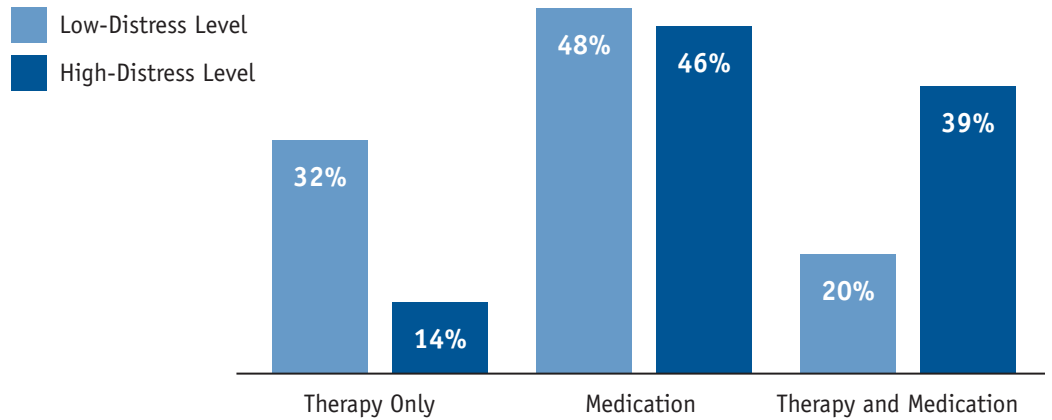


TABLE 5

Effectiveness of Treatment

A large majority of those with a history of either therapy or medication use report that their treatment was effective.

Base: Those who received treatment in the past two years (n=871)

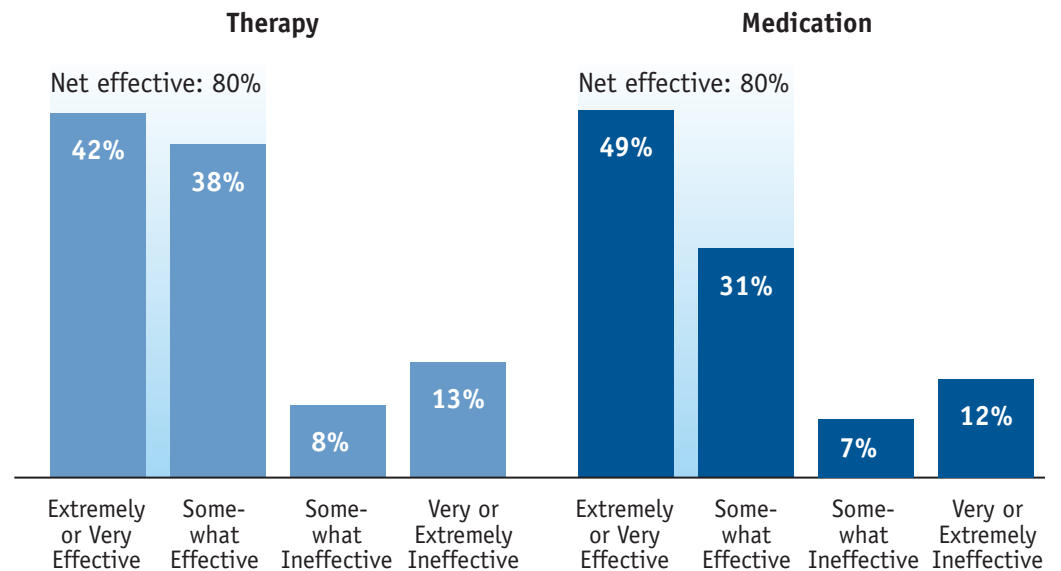
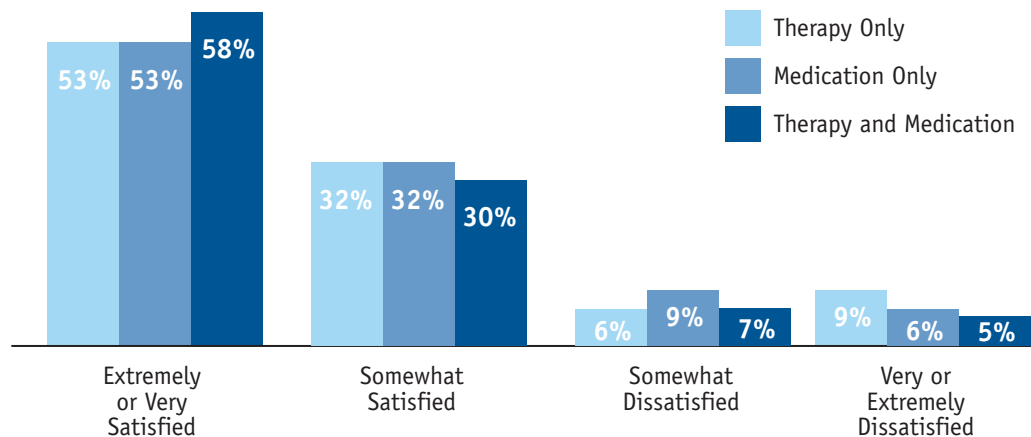


TABLE 6

Level of Satisfaction for Treatment

The majority of adults who have received treatment have been satisfied with their care, regardless of the type of treatment they have received.

Base: Those who received treatment in the past two years (n=871)



To obtain a copy of complete survey results, please contact: 877 919 4765 or info@harrisinteractive.com.

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted online and telephone surveys in the U.S. between February 16 and March 5, 2004. The telephone study was conducted among a nationwide cross section of 500 adults aged 18 and over. The online survey was conducted among 1,730 adults who have needed and/or received treatment for a mental health problem within the past two years. For both surveys, figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. For the telephone survey, data were also weighted for the number of voice/telephone lines in the household. For the online survey, propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one could say with 95 percent certainty that the results from the telephone survey have a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points and sampling error for the online survey results is plus or minus 2 percentage points. Sampling error for sub-sample results is higher and varies. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (non-response), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data and screening (e.g., for likely voters). It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. The online sample was not a probability sample.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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