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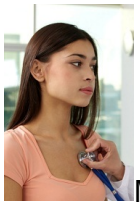
More Than Half of Teens With Mental Health Disorders Do Not Receive Treatment



More than half of teens in the United States who have mental health disorders do not receive treatment, according to a new study. The findings come from an analysis of more than 10,000 teens.

Of those teens who do receive help, most are not treated by a mental health professional, HealthDay reports. They are treated by pediatricians, school counselors or probation officers.

"It's still the case in this country that people don't take psychiatric conditions as seriously as they should," lead researcher E. Jane Costello of Duke University said in a news release. "This, despite the fact that these conditions are linked to a whole host of other problems."

Overall, in the past year, 45 percent of teens with psychiatric disorders received some form of service. The most likely to receive help were those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (74 percent), conduct disorder (73 percent) or oppositional defiant disorder (71 percent). Those least likely to receive services were those with phobias (41 percent) and any anxiety disorder (41 percent). Black teens were much less likely than white teens to receive mental health treatment.

There are not enough qualified pediatric mental health professionals in the United States, Costello said. "We need to train more child psychiatrists in this country," she noted. "And those individuals need to be used strategically, as consultants to the school counselors and others who do the lion's share of the work."

The findings appear in the journal *Psychiatric Services*.