



From Medscape Medical News <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/702869>

## Majority of US Adolescents With Depression Go Untreated

Caroline Cassels

May 14, 2009 — New research shows a significant proportion of US adolescents with depression go untreated.

Based on a 2007 nationwide survey, a report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that adolescents without health insurance were less than half as likely to get treatment as those with Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or private health insurance coverage.

Further, the research shows that 8.2% (2 million) youths aged 12 to 17 years have experienced at least 1 major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year. Only about 40% of these adolescents received treatment, according to the SAMHSA report.

"This report contributes to the growing realization that much more must be done to meet enormous mental-health needs of our young people," the organization's acting administrator, Eric Broderick, DDS, said in a statement.

"This report, along with the enactment of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act and the recent landmark report by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine on children's mental health, highlights our nation's growing concern and commitment to alleviating the damage and suffering inflicted by untreated mental disorders on children, their families, and their communities," he added.

The report also found that health insurance coverage is a major determinant of whether adolescents with at least 1 MDE received treatment within the past year. Among the adolescents, those without health insurance coverage were far less likely to have received treatment (17.2%) than those with Medicaid/CHIP (42.9%) or private health insurance (40.6%).

The report also revealed that among treated adolescents:

- 58.8% saw or spoke with a counselor.
- 36.8% saw or spoke with a psychologist.
- 27.3% saw or spoke with a psychiatrist or psychotherapist.
- 26.6% saw or spoke with a general practitioner or family doctor.

The report is drawn from **2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health**, which collected data from a representative sample of approximately 22,000 adolescents across the United States.

**Authors and Disclosures** Caroline Cassels Caroline Cassels is the news editor for Medscape Psychiatry. A medical and health journalist for 20 years, Caroline has written extensively for both physician and consumer audiences. She helped launch and was the editor of Health Digest, an award-winning Canadian consumer health publication. She was also national editor of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada's Web site before joining Medscape Neurology & Neurosurgery in 2005. She is the recipient of the 2008 American Academy of Neurology Journalism Fellowship Award. She can be contacted at [CCassels@webmd.net](mailto:CCassels@webmd.net).

Medscape Medical News © 2009 Medscape, LLC