TRENDS AND DISPARITIES IN MENTAL HEALTHCARE USE AMONG ASIAN AMERICAN SUB-GROUPS, 2013 - 2017

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**BACKGROUND:** Racial/ethnic disparities in use of mental healthcare has been extensively documented. However, there is limited research employing nationally-representative data to estimate mental healthcare utilization among Asian Americans, and there are no studies examining service use variation among Asian American subgroups. Dated research suggest that Asian Americans are less likely than White Americans to access MH services. The goal of this study is to use nationally-representative data to provide a much-needed update to national trends in mental healthcare use among Asian American and Asian American subgroups.

**METHODS:** We analyze yearly cross-sections from the 2013-2017 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, including White (n=77,426) and Asian American (n=8,686) participants. Using multivariable logistic regression models and predictive margin methods, we estimated the percentage of adults who used any mental healthcare, outpatient mental healthcare, specialty mental healthcare, or had a psychotropic medication fill. Regression models adjusted for demographic, socioeconomic, and health-related variables.

**RESULTS:** Asian Americans, including Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, and Other Asians had lower rates of mental health use than White Americans. These patterns persist among adults with elevated risk of mental illness, even after adjustment for demographic, socioeconomic, and health-related factors. Trends and patterns of utilization are not always consistent across subgroups, with aggregation masking both improvements and areas of need.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Asian Americans continue to have lower rates of mental healthcare use than White Americans, even when reporting symptoms of mental illness and after covariate adjustment. Disaggregation of this diverse heterogeneous population is critical to evaluating measures of care and understanding root causes of mental healthcare disparities.Clinicians should be mindful of the diversity within the Asian American population and be aware of the various barriers that may contribute to these continued disparities in care.

**CONTENT CATEGORY:** Epidemiology

**KEYWORDS:** Healthcare disparity, Mental Health Services, Access to Health Care, Asian American

**IRB APPROVAL:** This research uses publicly available deidentified data and received a determination of not human subjects research from the Boston University Medical Campus IRB.