

## Did you know...

- There is very little research about mental health issues in these populations.
- Overall prevalence rates of diagnosable mental illnesses among AA/PIs are similar to those of the Caucasian population.
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have the lowest rates of utilization of mental health services among ethnic populations.<sup>i</sup>
- AA/PIs show higher levels of depressive symptoms than whites. South Asian refugees reported the highest rates among Asian groups.<sup>ii</sup>
- The Chinese American Psychiatric Epidemiologic Study (CAPES study) found a lifetime prevalence rate of about 7 percent (lifetime) and a 3 percent rate over one year.
- The National Comorbidity Study (NCS) reported even higher rates of major depression among Chinese Americans (17 percent for lifetime and 10 percent current).<sup>iii</sup>
- The word depression does not exist in certain Asian languages (*e.g.* Chinese).
- The suicide rates for Filipino (3.5 percent), Chinese (8.3 percent) and Japanese (9.1 percent) Americans are substantially lower than the suicide rate of white Americans (12.8 percent).<sup>iv</sup>
- Among elderly women of all ethnic or racial groups, Asians have the highest suicide rate.<sup>v</sup>
- According to mental health care providers: Asian American women ages 15-24 have a higher rate of suicide than Caucasians, African Americans and Latinos in that age group.<sup>vi</sup>
- The Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls reported that Asian American adolescent girls had the highest rates of depressive symptoms of all racial/ethnic and gender groups.<sup>vii</sup>
- Southeast Asians suffer from particularly high rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder and exhibit more than twice the need for outpatient mental health services than the general Asian population.<sup>viii</sup>
- Suicide rates are higher than the national average for some groups of Asian Americans.
- The suicide rate among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California is similar to that of the total population.<sup>ix</sup>
- Many Southeast Asian refugees are at risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) associated with trauma experienced before and after immigration to the United States.
- One study found that 70 percent of Southeast Asian refugees receiving mental health care met diagnostic criteria for PTSD.
- In a study of Cambodian adolescents who survived Pol Pot's concentration camps, nearly half experienced PTSD and 41 percent suffered from depression 10 years after leaving Cambodia.<sup>x</sup>
- Approximately 70 AA/PI providers are available for every 100,000 AA/PIs in the United States, compared to 173 per 100,000 Caucasians.<sup>xi</sup>
- AA/PIs appear to have the extremely low utilization of mental health services relative to other U.S. populations.
- In the CAPES study, only 17 percent of those experiencing problems sought care.<sup>xii</sup>
- A national study concluded that Asian Americans were one quarter as likely as whites to seek mental health services and half as likely as Latinos and African Americans.<sup>xiii</sup>

Created by the NAMI Multicultural & International Outreach Center June, 2003

## References

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