

Key Facts in Rural Health

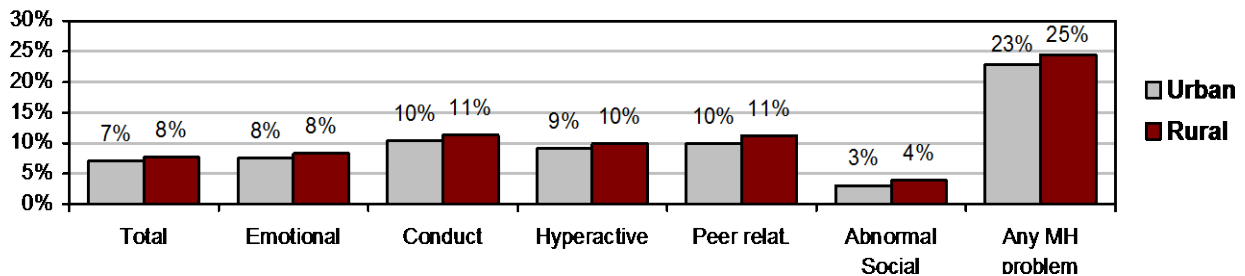
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Mental Health Risk Factors, Unmet Needs, and Provider Availability for Rural children

Children in rural areas have fewer mental health resources available. To assess the need for services among rural children, we studied information from the 2001 National Health Interview Survey, a nationally representative survey of the US population. Possible mental health problems were identified based on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Because the SDQ is based on parent's descriptions of their child's behavior, rather than reported health provider diagnoses, it can assess problems among children who have not received clinical services.

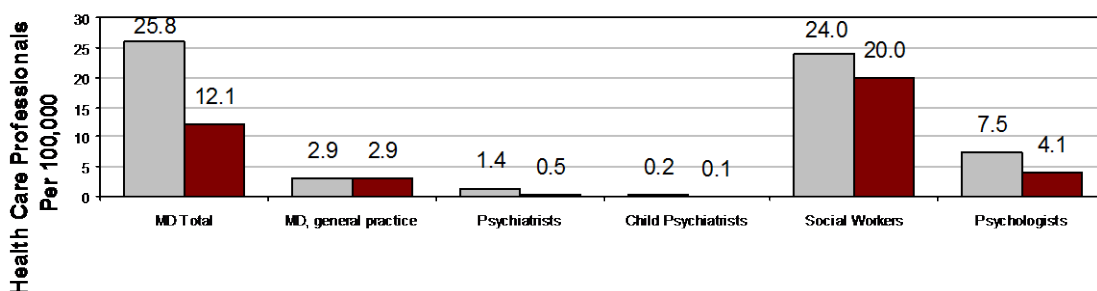
Prevalence of potential problems:

- Nearly 1 of every 4 rural children, aged 4 – 17, has a potential mental health problem as measured by the SDQ.
- 36% of rural African-American children were found to have at least one potential mental health problem.
- Age, sex, family income, parental education, living situation, health insurance status, and previously diagnosed developmental disorders were all associated with subclinical mental health problems in children.



General and Mental Health Care Providers and Utilization:

- Four of every five (80%) rural children with potential mental health problems live in counties that do not have community mental health centers.
- Race/ethnicity, insurance status, level of education in the child's family, living situation, previous diagnosis of a developmental disorder, and the presence of mental health resources were associated with mental health care utilization.



A full copy of the report can be obtained from the SC Rural Health Research Center at <http://rhr.sph.sc.edu>

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