

Adults with Diabetes in Puerto Rico During the Pandemic: Rates of Mental Disorders and Treatment

Adultos con diabetes en Puerto Rico durante la pandemia: tasas de trastornos mentales y tratamiento

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Abstract: Adults with diabetes (AWD) have higher rates of mental disorders (RMD) than adults without chronic diseases (AWOCD). The pandemic may have exacerbated the mental health-related challenges of AWD, increasing their need for mental health treatment (MHT). These issues have been understudied in Puerto Rico (PR). We examined the RMD and use of MHT of AWD (G1 = 198) vs. AWOCD (G2 = 672) who completed an online survey during the outbreak. Participants ($M_{Age} = 43.96$) had to be PR residents for ≥ 3 months before enrollment, have internet access, and understand Spanish. Adults completed a Health/Treatment History Module. Using chi-square, we compared groups in RMD and MHT. With logistic regression, we examined the crude and adjusted odds for presenting a history of mental disorders when having diabetes (type 1 or 2). AWD showed significantly higher rates for major depression, dysthymia, minor depression, any depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, any phobic disorder, any anxiety disorder, and any mental disorder than AWOCD ($p \leq .05$). G1 odds of being diagnosed with mental disorders were from 1.87 (GAD) to 3.10 (dysthymia) times higher. After adjusting for age and household size, odds ratios ranged from 2.45 (GAD) to 3.91 (dysthymia). AWD showed higher adjusted odds for having presented ≥ 2 mental disorders (3.37), a lifetime history of MHT (2.48), and any MHT during the outbreak (2.29). AWD present higher odds and RMD and comorbidity than AWOCD. They also have higher odds of lifetime/current MHT. Public policies must address the mental health needs of AWD during health emergencies.