**Access to Care and Mental Health in Early Adulthood**

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**Introduction**  
• Impeded access to needed health care:  
  – may be common among young adults with serious mental health problems,  
  – could have adverse health and socioeconomic consequences.  
  • Unnecessary hospitalization and ED visits  
  • Long-term unemployment  
  • Lifetime dependency on public institutions and programs

**Objectives**  
- Severity of Mental Health Problems  
- Lapses in Insurance Coverage  
- No Usual Source of Care  
- Delay Needed MH/SA Treatment Because Cannot Pay or Get an Appointment

**Intermediate Outcomes**  
- Employed Full-Time, Offered Employer-Based Coverage, Enrolled in School, Married  
- Lapses in Insurance Coverage  
- No Usual Source of Care  
- Delay Needed MH/SA Treatment Because Cannot Pay or Get an Appointment

**Data and Sample**  
- Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)  
- Young adults 18 to 27 in 2001/2002  
- Sibling Pairs, N=1,826
Methods

- Regression models of access to care
  - Index measure of severity of mental health problems
  - Covariates
    - Family income, parents’ educational attainment, race-ethnicity, gender, age, educational attainment
  - Sibling fixed-effects used to control for unmeasured differences in family background.
- Sampling weights

Other Results

- Intermediate outcomes were related to access.
  - Being married and having a job with health insurance had strongest association with access.
  - Associations were modest in magnitude.
- Intermediate outcomes did not mediate relationship between severity and access.

Discussion

- Access to health care services limited in early adulthood.
  - Dependent coverage ends
  - Limited economic opportunities
- Young adults with mental health problems have even less access.
- Employment, school enrollment, and marital status have only a modest influence on young adults’ access to care.

Discussion

- Generosity of insurance coverage and system-level factors may matter more than whether a person has coverage.
Next Steps

- Systems may multiply influence access, cost, and outcomes.

Primary Care Provider/Organization (MCOs)  \rightarrow  Specialty Mental Health

Access, Costs, and Outcomes

THANK YOU!