



Assessing Mental Health Knowledge Amongst Historically Black College And University (HBCU) Students

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BACKGROUND

- Mental health conditions are a substantial concern for students in college, particularly at an Historically Black College and University (HBCU). African Americans and Hispanic Americans each use mental health services at about one-half the rate of Caucasian Americans and Asian Americans at about one-third the rate.¹
- Stigmatization, cost of treatment, lack of availability of services, and failing to recognize depressive symptoms are well known barriers to mental health.²
- Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18–44, stated by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, The Department of Health & Human Services.³
- In order to assess the baseline knowledge and utilization of resources at our HBCU, a survey will provide the tools we need to further conduct interventions.
- Based on current literature on minorities in regard to cultural opinion of mental health, we hypothesize that there is a lack of utilization in mental health resources on a HBCU campus.

OBJECTIVES

Primary Objective: The primary purpose of this project is to establish baseline knowledge and utilization of resources at an HBCU in order to effectively promote and develop mental health interventions for students.

METHODS

- Study Design:** This study was a single-centered, survey-based study of students enrolled at Xavier University of Louisiana, a Historically Black College and University
- Inclusion criteria:** All students who are enrolled students at Xavier University of Louisiana were eligible for participation.
- Exclusion Criteria:** All faculty, staff, and other members of the Xavier community including alumni, friends, board members were excluded from the study.
- Survey Data Collection:** The 5-question survey is comprised of questions assessing personal mental health, opinions on mental health, and knowledge of available resources. Mann-Whitney U and Pearson Correlation Coefficient analyses was used to assess the knowledge and utilization of resources amongst the students at an HBCU.
- IRB Approval:** This study is Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved by Xavier University of Louisiana.

GRANT SUPPORT

This project is supported by the **Defining the Future Research Grant, CPNP Foundation.**

The authors involved have nothing to disclose related to this review.

RESULTS

Table 1. Baseline Demographics

Surveys (n=271)

Age	Age <18: 4.4% (12) Age 18-20: 45.8% (124) Age 21-24: 38.4% (104) Age >24: 10% (27)
Gender	Male: 30.3% (82) Female: 67.9% (184) Choose Not to Disclose: 1.8% (5)
Race	Non-Hispanic Black/African American: 73.4% (199) Non-Hispanic White: 4.4% (12) Asian / Pacific Islander: 12.2% (33) Other: 7.4% (20)
Classification	Undergraduates: 61.3% (166) Graduates: 38.7% (105)
*Undergraduates: Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors *Graduates: Graduate Students, First-Fourth Year Pharmacy Students	

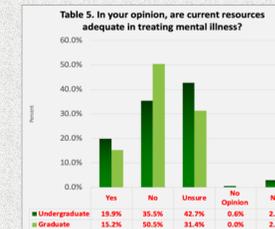
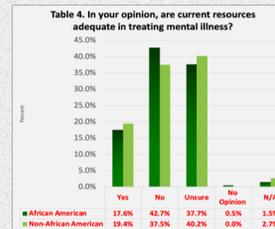
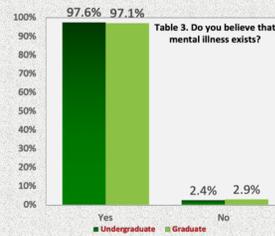
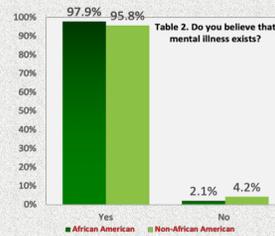


Table 6. How would you rate your own mental health over the past year?

Race	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-value
African American	6.7	1.992	0.037
Non-African American	7.17	2.93	
Undergraduate	6.41	2.042	<0.001
Graduate	7.48	1.856	

Table 7. Assessing On Campus Resources

	Used resources personally	Have not used resources personally, but referred family/friend	Have not used resources personally or referred family/friend	Unaware of available resources	P-value
Undergraduate (N=166)	49 (29.5%)	42 (25.3%)	52 (31.3%)	23 (13.8%)	0.002
Graduate (N=105)	19 (18.1%)	15 (14.3%)	56 (53.3%)	15 (14.3%)	

Table 8. Assessing Off Campus Resources

	Used resources personally	Have not used resources personally, but referred family/friend	Have not used resources personally or referred family/friend	Unaware of available resources	P-value
African American (N=199)	60 (30.2%)	49 (24.6%)	73 (36.7%)	17 (8.5%)	<0.001
Non-African American (N=72)	8 (11.1%)	8 (11.1%)	35 (48.6%)	21 (29.2%)	

RESULTS CONTINUED

Table 9. Assessing Off Campus Resources

	Used resources personally	Have not used resources personally, but referred family/friend	Have not used resources personally or referred family/friend	Unaware of available resources	P-value
Undergraduate (N=166)	40 (26.1%)	43 (25.9%)	55 (33.1%)	8 (4.8%)	0.004
Graduate (N=105)	23 (21.9%)	19 (18.1%)	58 (55.2%)	5 (4.8%)	

Table 10. Assessing Off Campus Resources

	Used resources personally	Have not used resources personally, but referred family/friend	Have not used resources personally or referred family/friend	Unaware of available resources	P-value
African American (N=199)	70 (35.2%)	50 (25.1%)	73 (36.7%)	6 (3.0%)	0.001
Non-African American (N=72)	13 (18.1%)	12 (16.7%)	40 (55.6%)	7 (9.7%)	

DISCUSSION

- ~11% of the Xavier student body participated in the study, N=271.
- While an average of 97.4% participants believe that mental illness does exist, more than half are unsure or do not believe current resources are adequate in treating mental illness.
- The percentage of participants unaware of resources are minute compared to other choices, however, the percentage shows that there needs to be increased awareness for all populations across an HBCU campus.
- African Americans rated their health in the past year lower than a person of a different race, yet lack utilization of resources overall. Only 30.2% and 35.2% used on-campus and off campus resources respectively. However, African American students are more aware and utilize resources at a higher percentage compared to other races.
 - On average, Xavier's Counseling and Wellness Center provides more services for those students that live on-campus. Activities mostly include dormitory presentations, often limiting off-campus students (which happens to be majority Non-African Americans and Graduates).
- Non-African American students tend to use the resources both off and on campus less frequently than African American students. This may be associated with most Non-African American students staying off campus and not utilizing mental health resources between classes. However, NAMI provides data that implies African American & Hispanic Americans used mental health services at about 1/2 the rate of whites in the past year.⁴ This isn't the case within this study. They do not believe the resources provided here are adequate in treating mental illness.
- Graduate students have used resources less than undergraduates students and have equal rates of unawareness. Graduate students on Xavier's campus take on average 17-18 credit hours with numerous clinical hours to complete outside of the didactic courses. This allows graduate students little to no time to use available resources, even though their stress load may be higher than an undergraduate student.
- Limitations:** 1. Not a validated tool to assess utilization. 2. Studied at one University, a small population of HBCU students. 3. Responders may not always provide accurate answers.

CONCLUSION

- This study shows that there is a significant lack of utilization of both on and off campus resources. Specifically, there is a higher percentage of both Non-African Americans and Graduate students that share this characteristic.
- Although African Americans rate their mental health lower, it is hypothesized that they should utilize the resources more readily if stigmas and misconceptions were not attached to utilizing resources.
- This study provides the groundwork to target interventions of enhancing knowledge and promoting use of current mental health resources available to HBCU students.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Provide a follow up survey to students at Xavier to assess why mental health resources are viewed as inadequate in the treatment mental health.
- Implement the survey at surrounding HBCU Schools to see if mental health knowledge and utilization of resources are similar.
- Partner with HBCU's Counseling and Wellness Centers to increase awareness and utilization by formulating a peer-support group with the intent to decrease stigmas, debunk myths, and promote treatment options.

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Acknowledgements

Dr. Thomas Maestri, Pharm.D, BCPP
Dr. Ifeanyi Onor, Pharm.D, BCPS, FNKF