Gender and Race Differences in Juvenile Mental Health Symptoms: MAYSI-2 National Norm Study

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Research Questions

1. Are there differences between gender and racial/ethnic groups in the reporting of clinically significant levels of mental health symptoms on the MAYSI-2 instrument?
2. Where differences exist, are they of differences consistent?
3. Are there gender across all sites and across demographic subgroups?

Sample Characteristics

N=70,423 from 283 facilities in 19 states

- Gender: Boys: 78% Girls: 22%
- Age (years): 12-14: 29% 15-17: 71%
- Ethnicity: White: 78% Black: 13% Hispanic: 9%
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MAYSI-2 nationwide?

- Gender
- Legal Status (pre vs. post-adjudication)
- Race (Black, Hispanic, White)
- Age Group (12-14, 15-17)
- Gender

Variables for Testing Interactions/Controls

- Site (JJ Facility)
- Gate (larger for pre-adjudicated youths)
- Age (larger for older youths)
- Gender

Conclusions

- Girls in JJ were much more likely than boys to report clinically significant levels of symptoms
- Higher rates of symptoms in girls than boys in JJ may reflect specific
- Findings - gender differences were significant
- Even for alcohol-drug use is lower for younger youths
- Boys: Girls: boys: girls
- Alcohol: Drug: boys: girls
- Older age: younger age

Conclusions

- There is wide variability in racial differences across sites
- White youths were more likely to report problem levels of alcohol or drug use, but the disparity varied widely across sites and states
- Race affects were non-existent or small on all other MAYSI-2 scales

Implications

- Most race-related differences in JJ were small or in the same general direction as national reports of differences in the community
- The alcohol-drug race differences in JJ may be due to “real” community differences; rather than a differences produced by racial discrimination in detention decisions

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