

Co-occurring Mental & Physical Disorders Among Adults Under 65 Years of Age

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BACKGROUND

Research in the areas of co-occurring depression, heart disease, diabetes, asthma and schizophrenia are extensive. However, a comprehensive account of physical illnesses among those with many types of mental illnesses is scarce.

OBJECTIVE

To estimate the prevalence of common chronic physical illnesses among a nationally representative sample of adults under 65 years of age with mental illness and examine the demographic, socioeconomic, and health status predictors of co-occurring physical and mental illness.

METHODS

Cross-sectional analysis of 13,649 adults from the 2005 household component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS). Chi-square and multinomial logistic regression were used to profile individuals with co-occurring mental and physical illnesses. All analyses accounted for the complex survey design of the MEPS.

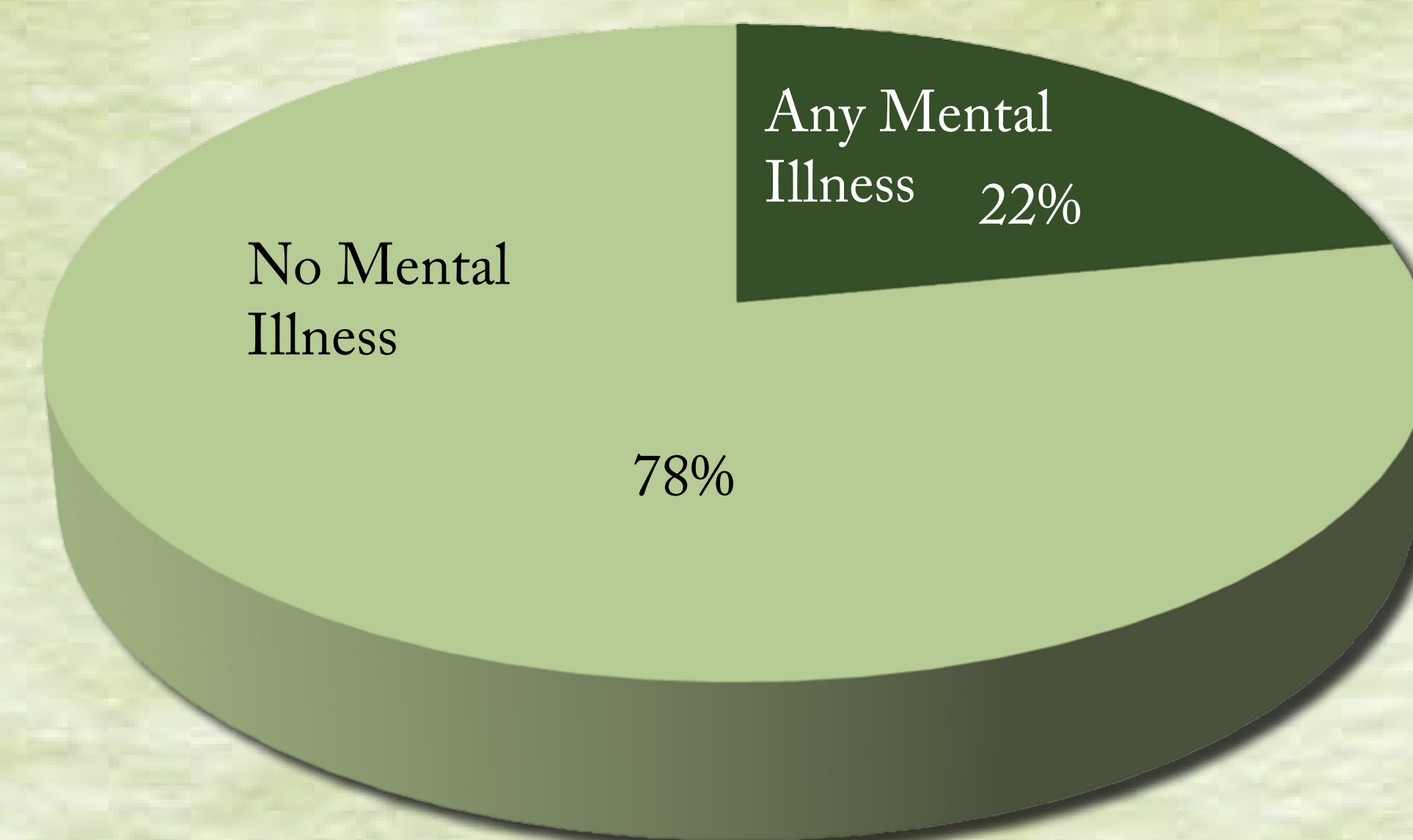
MEASURES

Mental illness: attention deficit, adjustment, anxiety, mood, personality, other psychotic, miscellaneous disorders, schizophrenia

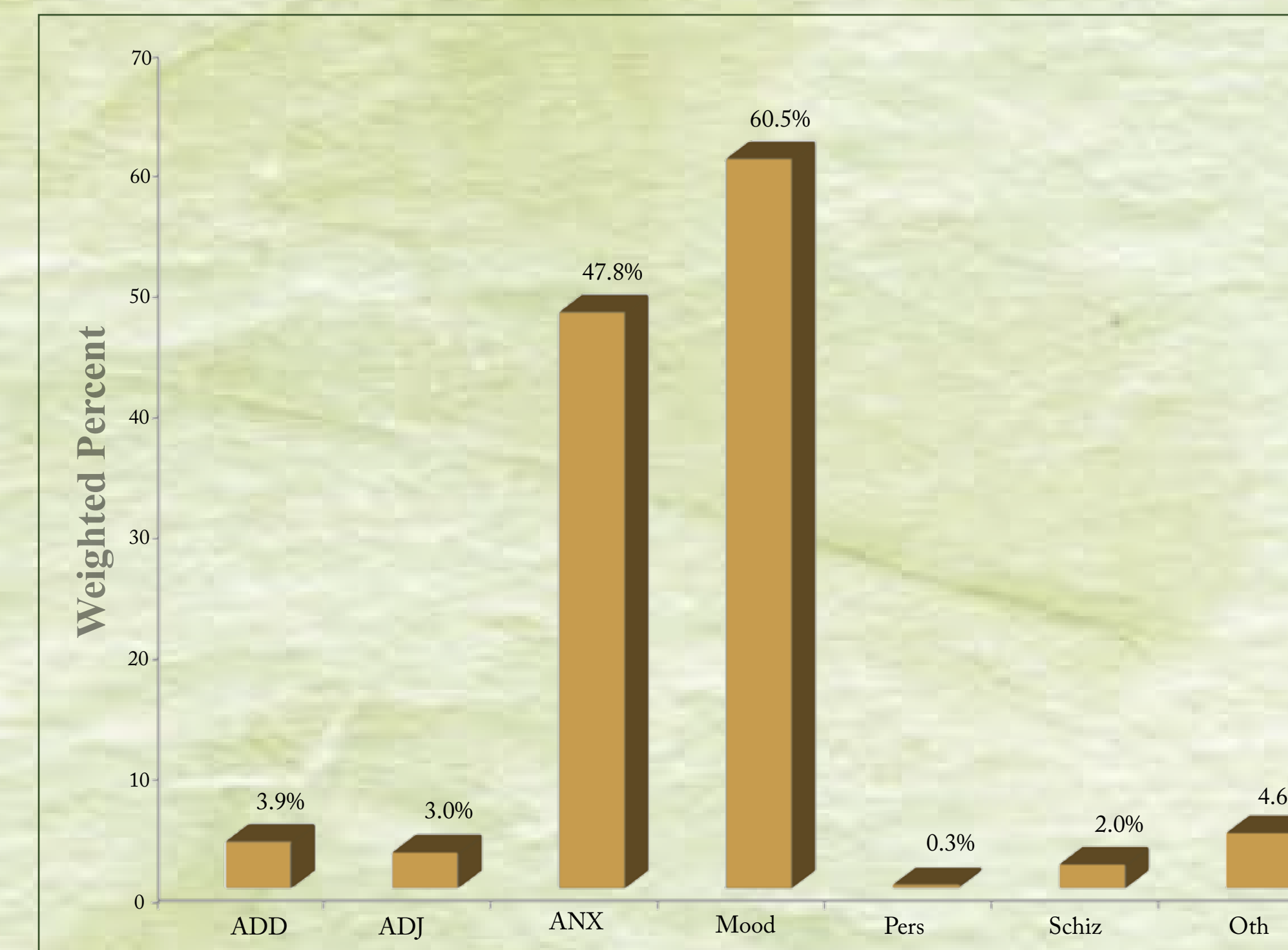
Physical illness: Alzheimer's, arthritis, asthma, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, HIV, osteoporosis, stroke, and thyroid disorders



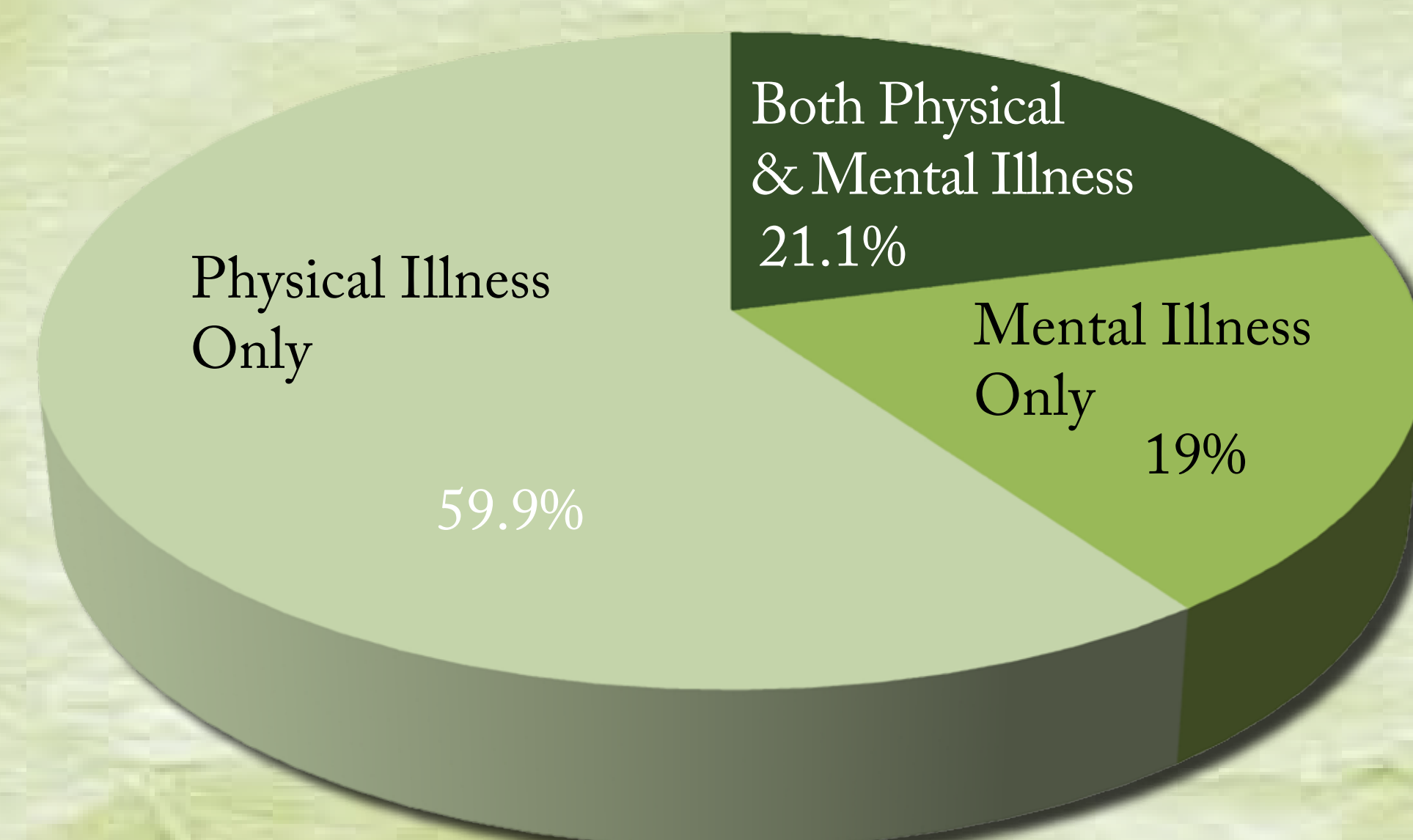
PREVALENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS



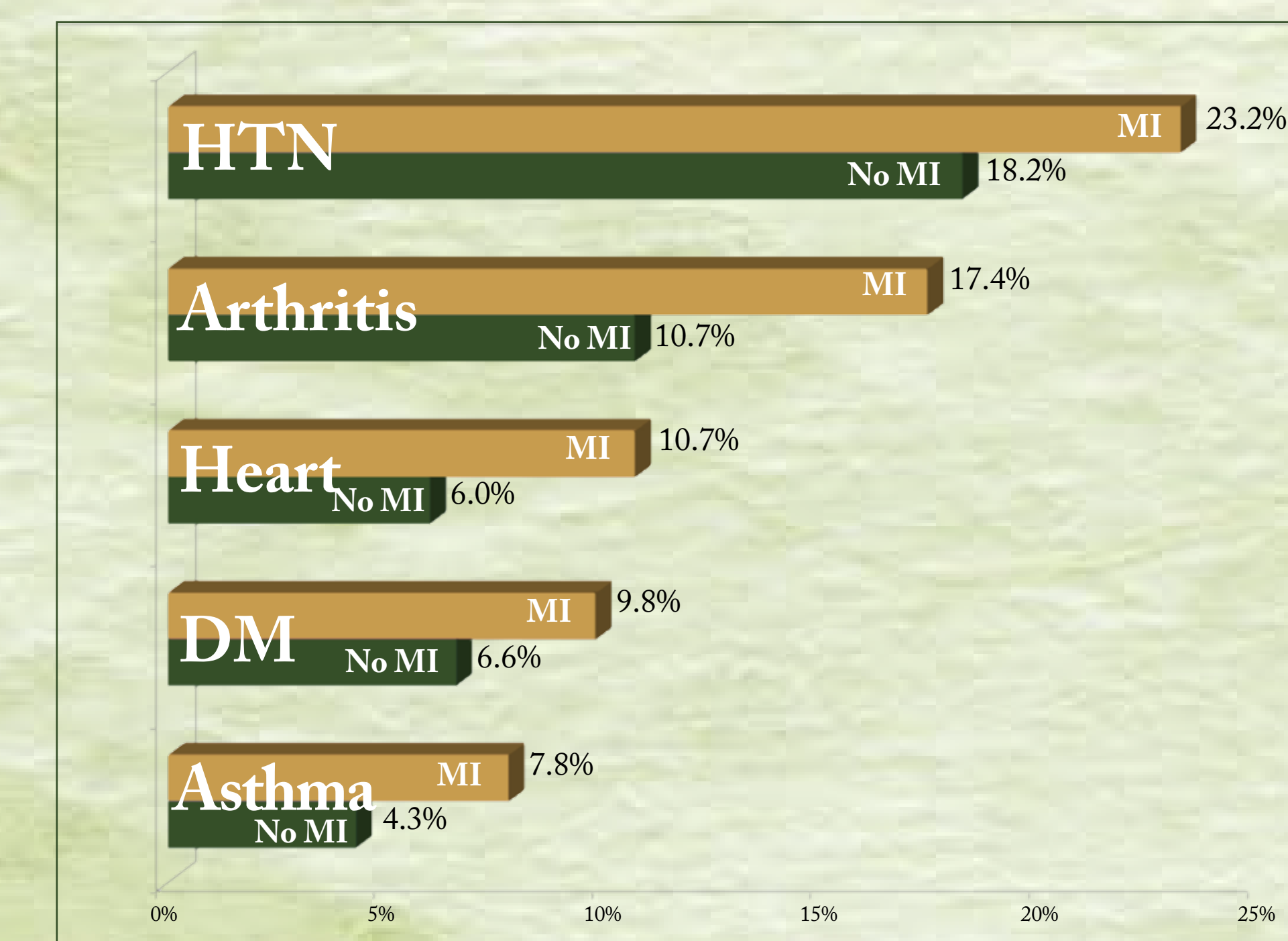
MOOD & ANXIETY DISORDERS WERE COMMON



% CO-OCCURRING MENTAL & PHYSICAL ILLNESS AMONG THOSE WITH MENTAL OR PHYSICAL ILLNESS



HIGHER RATES OF PHYSICAL ILLNESS IN THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS – SELECTED PHYSICAL ILLNESSES



ODDS RATIOS FROM THE MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS – SELECTED VARIABLES

	AOR	ONLY MI 95% CI	Sig	AOR	BOTH 95% CI	Sig
Gender						
Women		1.29 [1.10, 1.51]	**		2.26 [1.93, 2.66]	***
Men						
Age						
22 – 39					1.11 [0.86, 1.43]	
40 – 49		0.48 [0.39, 0.60]	***		0.89 [0.70, 1.12]	
50 – 64		0.18 [0.15, 0.22]	***			
Race/Ethnicity						
White					0.34 [0.28, 0.42]	***
African American		0.39 [0.30, 0.51]	***		0.55 [0.43, 0.71]	***
Latino		0.75 [0.59, 0.96]	*		0.67 [0.48, 0.94]	*
Other		0.66 [0.46, 0.94]	*			
Health Insurance						
Private					1.12 [0.82, 1.52]	
Public		1.21 [0.89, 1.66]			0.66 [0.49, 0.871]	**
Uninsured		1.22 [0.96, 1.55]				
Current Smoking						
Yes					1.30 [1.07, 1.57]	**
No		1.47 [1.16, 1.86]	**			

***, **, * denote significant effect at .001, .01 and .05 levels. Reference group: Physical illness only, male gender, age 22-39, white race, private insurance, and no smoking.

The regression consisted of all the independent variables presented in the Measures section.

MEASURES

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

Demographic Characteristics:

Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Marital Status

Socioeconomic Status:

Education, Employment and Poverty Level

Assess to care:

Health Insurance coverage

Usual Source of Care

Health Status:

Perceived Physical Health

Perceived Mental Health

Healthcare practices:

Body Mass Index

Smoking

Exercise

Substance Use Disorders

RESULTS

Overall 22% (N = 2,980) reported presence of mental illness. Among those with mental illness, depressive (61%) and anxiety (48%) disorders were highly prevalent and the most common physical illness was hypertension (23.2%) followed by arthritis (17.4%). A comparison of physical illnesses among individuals with and without mental illness revealed that except for Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, HIV, and cancer, all other disorders had elevated rates in individuals with mental illness (p < .01). Women, whites, current smokers, and those who were obese were more likely to report co-occurring mental and physical illnesses.

CONCLUSIONS

Many types of physical illnesses occur at higher rates in individuals with mental illness. Some subgroups are more likely to have co-occurring mental and physical illnesses. These subgroups need special attention and monitoring for prevention and treatment of both mental and physical health.