

Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project

Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health
108 Cherry Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani, Rod McCormick, and Walter Ochs

DATE: October 17, 2008

RE: Serious Psychological Distress and Normal Activities

This is the second in series of reports on serious psychological distress in the general population of the state of Vermont. The first report¹ in this series focused on the prevalence of serious psychological distress (SPD). The current report focuses on one consequence of SPD: the inability to conduct normal activities.

As with the previous report, this report is based on analysis of Vermont's statewide Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey of Vermont residents conducted during CY2007 by Vermont's Department of Health. The measure of serious psychological distress used in this analysis, "K6", consists of six questions designed to identify individuals "with a high likelihood of having a diagnosable mental illness and associated functional limitations."² Days of inability to conduct normal activities were assessed by a separate BRFSS question: "During the past 30 days, for about how many days did poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?"

Results of our analysis indicate that the percent of days lost during the past 30 days was substantially greater among adults with SPD than among other Vermont residents (42% vs. 5%). Among adults with SPD, days lost was greatest among low income people (68%) and lowest among young adults (35%)

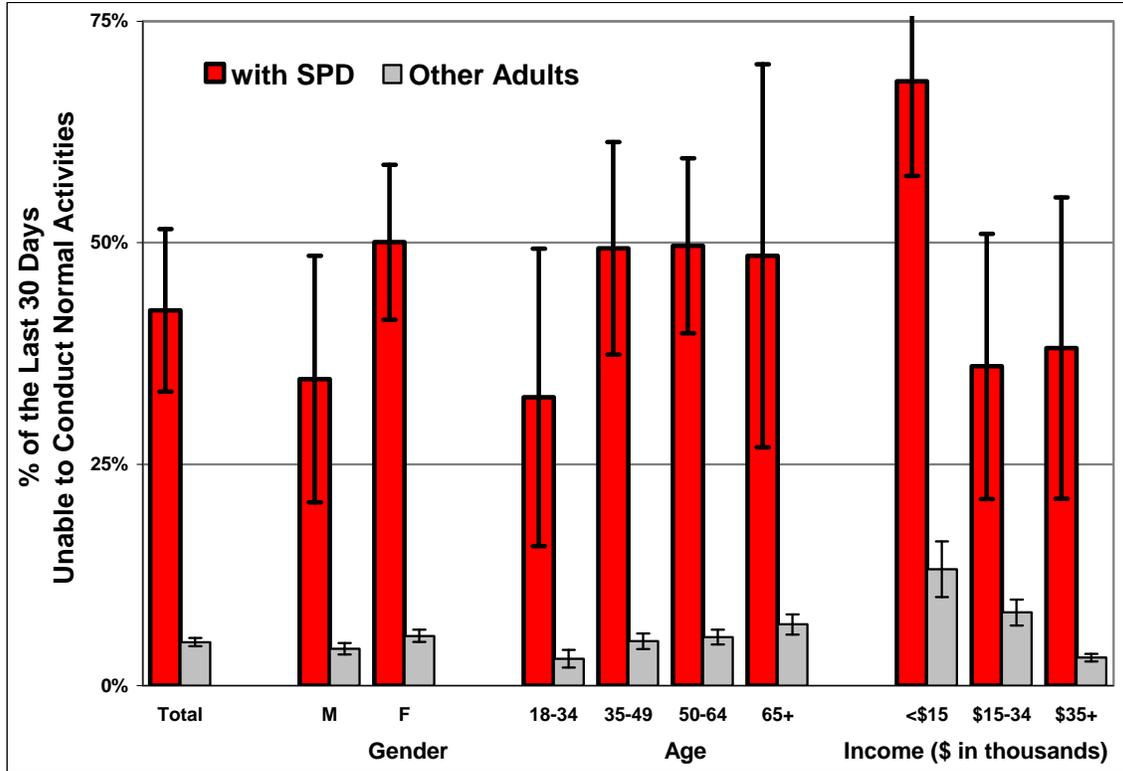
Compared to other adult Vermont residents, adults with SPD lost nine times as many days as other residents due to poor physical or mental health. The impact of SPD on days lost was greatest among those in the highest income group (12 times as many days lost) and lowest among those in the lowest income group (5 times as many days lost).

We look forward to your interpretation of these findings, and your suggestions for further analysis of these data. Please forward your comments and suggestions to pip@vdh.state.vt.us or 802.863.7249

¹<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/docs/pips/2008/documents/Pip091908.pdf>

²Pratt, L. A., Dey, A. N., & Cohen, A. J. (2007). Characteristics of Adults with Serious Psychological Distress as Measured by the K6 Scale: United States, 2001-04. *Advance Data*, 382, 1-19.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad382.pdf>

Days of Inability to Conduct Normal Activities* Adults with Severe Psychological Distress and other Vermont Residents during 2007



	Total	Gender		Age				Income \$ in Thousands		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	<\$15	\$15-34	\$35+
with SPD										
% of Days	42%	35%	50%	33%	49%	50%	49%	68%	36%	38%
CI	(33-52%)	(21-49%)	(41-59%)	(16-49%)	(37-61%)	(40-60%)	(27-70%)	(58-79%)	(21-51%)	(21-55%)
Other Adults										
% of Days	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%	5%	7%	13%	8%	3%
CI	(4-5%)	(4-5%)	(5-6%)	(2-4%)	(4-6%)	(5-6%)	(6-8%)	(10-16%)	(7-10%)	(3-4%)
Elevated Rate										
Rate	9	8	9	11	10	9	7	5	4	12
CI	(7-10)	(5-12)	(7-10)	(5-16)	(7-12)	(7-11)	(4-10)	(4-6)	(3-6)	(7-17)

*Based on BRFSS survey response to the following question : "[d]uring the past 30 days, for about how many days did poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?"

Analysis based on data collected by the Vermont Department of Health Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey during CY2007. The BRFSS is an on-going telephone health survey system conducted by the health department of each state. The BRFSS surveys include residents and exclude institutionalized Vermonters. Serious psychological distress (SPD) was indicated by a K6 score of 13 and over. K6 is "intended to identify persons with mental health problems severe enough to cause moderate to serious impairment in social, occupational, or school functioning and to require treatment." (1)

(1) Pratt, L. A., Dey, A. N., & Cohen, A. J. (2007). Characteristics of Adults with Serious Psychological Distress as Measured by the K6 Scale: United States, 2001-04. *Advance Data*, 382, 1-19.