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Healthy People
2020

Improving the health of Durham
& NC communities since 1989

July 2018

Healthy Sunday Topic: HIV/AIDS and Minority Mental Health

HIV/AIDS

Despite a decrease in HIV diagnosis across every population in the United States, great disparities remain between ethnic groups, with African-Americans still much more likely to be diagnosed with HIV than Caucasians. In 2016 blacks were 8.5 times more likely than whites to be diagnosed with HIV, in 2005 they were 7.5 times more likely. Black MSM (men who have sex with men) had the highest rate of diagnosis of all Americans, and the rate of diagnosis in that population increased 154% from 2005 to 2016. As pointed out in the Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, a continuation of this trend will mean that one in two black MSM will contract HIV in their lifetime. The number of African-American females diagnosed with HIV through heterosexual contact increased by 75% from 2005 to 2016, with a similar increase of 75% in HIV diagnosis among heterosexual black man.

Veronica Ray, MD. Internal Medicine at Lincoln Health Community, says, **“It has been proven that for HIV, treatment is prevention, it is crucial to diagnose HIV so that persons may be treated with effective medications that will also prevent them from spreading the virus. There are many drugs to treat HIV, and those treated for HIV should be able to live normal healthy lives, without a reduction in their lifespan.”**

It is recommended that all sexually active Americans ages 13 to 65 have one HIV test, following the initial test, repeat testing should be done based on an individual’s risk factors for contracting the virus.” All sexually active individuals who are not in mutually monogamous relationships in which both partners are known to be HIV negative should practice safe sex, using condoms at all times. For individuals who are at high-risk for contracting the virus, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), one pill, once each day, is available. Please contact the Durham County Department of Public Health or <http://healthydurham.org> for more information about PrEP.



Tamera Coyne-Beasley, MD, MPH., a Professor at UNC General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine and at Duke University Med-Peds Residency, states, **“It is very important for people to get tested and know their HIV status. You can save your life and your partner’s life by knowing your status and getting a treatment as ordered by your doctor”**

Minority Mental Health

Nearly one in five American adults will deal with a mental health issue in a given year. While research and promotion have come a long way when it comes to mental health, there's still one area that is highly under-addressed: How mental illness affects people of color.



Ongoing stigma and lack of access to health care act as barriers for anyone with a mental health condition, but experts argue there's a particular disparity when it comes to minorities. And that can contribute to people not receiving proper support or treatment in order to feel better.

Researchers found that black and Hispanic young people were less able to get mental health services than white children and young adults.

Remember: Mental illness is not a character flaw. It's not something a person can just simply "get over." It's not a person's fault. Mental health issues can be anything from dealing with particularly stressful periods to something more serious like depression or schizophrenia.

If you're struggling with your mental health, look into treatment options

If you — or someone you know — need help, please call 1-800-273-8255 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Remember the ABC's

Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV, other STD's, and pregnancy.

Be informed about your HIV status.

Control your stress and seek treatment for mental health when you need it.

For More Information

Durham Knows <http://healthydurham.org/media/durham-knows>

Durham County Public Health (919) 560-8819

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) <https://www.nami.org>

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