

OMH Patient Characteristics Survey (PCS): 2015

Overview

General Description

The mission of the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYS OMH) is to promote the mental health of all New Yorkers, with a particular focus on providing hope and recovery for adults diagnosed with serious mental illness and children diagnosed with serious emotional disturbance. The NYS OMH vision focuses on community based and recovery oriented services, consistent with the science of mental health evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment. NYS OMH strives to achieve its mission and vision by leveraging its role as New York State's lead authority of the public mental health system, specifically through its dual responsibilities of 1) setting policy and providing funding for community services, and 2) providing direct inpatient and outpatient services.

The Patient Characteristics Survey (PCS) provides a comprehensive one-week "snapshot" of the population served by New York State's public mental health system. The NYS OMH requires all programs that it licenses or funds (directly or indirectly) to complete the Patient Characteristics Survey. The PCS is conducted every other year, and collects demographic, clinical, and service-related information for each client who receives a mental health service during the one-week period. The 2015 PCS collected data from approximately 4,000 mental health programs providing direct services to approximately 180,000 clients during the survey week. For 2015, this equates to an estimated 1% of the NYS general population.

Data Collection Methodology

This dataset contains demographic, clinical, social, and insurance characteristics for each client served by the NYS public mental health system during the week of October 19, 2015. All mental health programs licensed or funded (directly or indirectly) by the NYS Office of Mental Health were required to report. The PCS data were submitted by these providers electronically into a web application via direct entry, file upload, and/or import from other OMH data systems. Additional resources attached to this dataset include the original survey form and survey guidelines, as well as a data dictionary detailing the specific questions available via Open Data.

Statistical and Analytical issues

The PCS Open Data file contains one record for each unique client who was reported as receiving a service during the survey week. For individuals who received services from multiple programs, the information associated with their earliest service date (based on either the admission date or date last served, as appropriate) was kept. Furthermore, in the interest of protecting individuals' identities, some client information has been aggregated or otherwise masked (for example, only the first three digits of clients' zip codes are provided). As such, results may be slightly different from those reported in the PCS Portal or elsewhere. Also note that the Three-digit zip code 888 indicates the client was homeless at the time of the survey and three-digit zip code 999 indicates the client residential zip code is unknown.

The 2015 PCS survey questions had the following modifications: 1) The Gender Identity question was split into two new questions – Assigned Sex at Birth or Sex on Birth Certificate and Transgender Identity; 2) Foster Parent was added as a response option to the Household Composition question; 3) Primary Language was changed to Preferred Language, Chinese and Indic were removed as response options to this question, and Mandarin, Cantonese, Fujianese, Other Chinese, Hindi, Urdu, and Other Indic were added as response options; 4) Other was added as a response option to the Chronic Medical Condition question; and 5) Family Health Plus was removed as response option to the Health Insurance Coverage question.

Benefit of Utilizing Dataset

The PCS is NYS OMH's only data source that describes all of the public mental health programs in New York State, and its results are utilized throughout NYS OMH to inform planning, budgeting, and certification. One

important use is to estimate persons receiving public mental health services in New York State as a rate per general population. The PCS results are also used to describe New York State's mental health system to state and federal funding agencies and legislative bodies (for example, for SAMHSA's Uniform Reporting System (URS) tables and the NYS Statistical Yearbook). Furthermore, the Patient Characteristics Survey is one of several sources of data included in Office of Mental Health's County Capacity Utilization and Data Book, which is a resource summarizing service utilization and capacity statistics that counties rely on for their annual planning process.

The primary benefit of the PCS Open Data file is for obtaining an overarching understanding of New York's public mental health system, including the characteristics of those served and the nature of their illness (i.e., descriptive surveillance information about New York's public mental health population).

Limitations of Data Use

- The PCS is conducted using a cross-sectional methodology, meaning that it only captures information about clients at one point in time (i.e., the week of October 19, 2015). For this reason, causality and outcomes cannot be determined via this data set.
- Not all clients who were served during the week were captured by the survey due to incomplete or no reporting by some agencies. Agencies with programs that did not report any clients provided reasons to the NYS OMH; reasons for not submitting data included substantial staffing turnover, programs opening or closing during or near the survey week, and programs being temporarily closed due to exceptional circumstances. Participation from NYS OMH funded/licensed agencies was still very high (96%).
- Only agencies that are licensed or funded by NYS OMH are included in the survey. Mental health providers who are not part of the public mental health system, such as private practitioners, are excluded.
- The survey is implemented as a provider-reported survey, not a client-reported survey. Reporting providers collect and submit the required information from each client's medical records.
- Some data values have been collapsed, aggregated, and/or masked from their original values to resolve analytical and privacy issues. As such, results obtained from the Open Data file may be slightly different from those reported in the PCS Portal or elsewhere.

Additional Analytical Resources

- [Patient Characteristics Survey \(PCS\) Portal](#) - The PCS Portal allows users to view multiple years of demographic, clinical, and social characteristics for clients who received a mental health service during the specified one-week period using a dynamic web interface. The portal is organized into five sections:
 - 1) Summary Reports – This section provides tables describing various client characteristics;
 - 2) Planning Reports – Provides tables that present penetration rates (i.e., the number of people served per the entire NYS population) and national outcome measures;
 - 3) Annualized Table – This is a standalone table that shows the estimated total number of clients served during the year based on the number of clients served during the survey week;
 - 4) Submission Report – This is a standalone table that displays the number of surveys submitted by each program site for the survey week;
 - 5) Historic Reports – Provides a link to static reports for PCS survey years 1999 through 2007.