

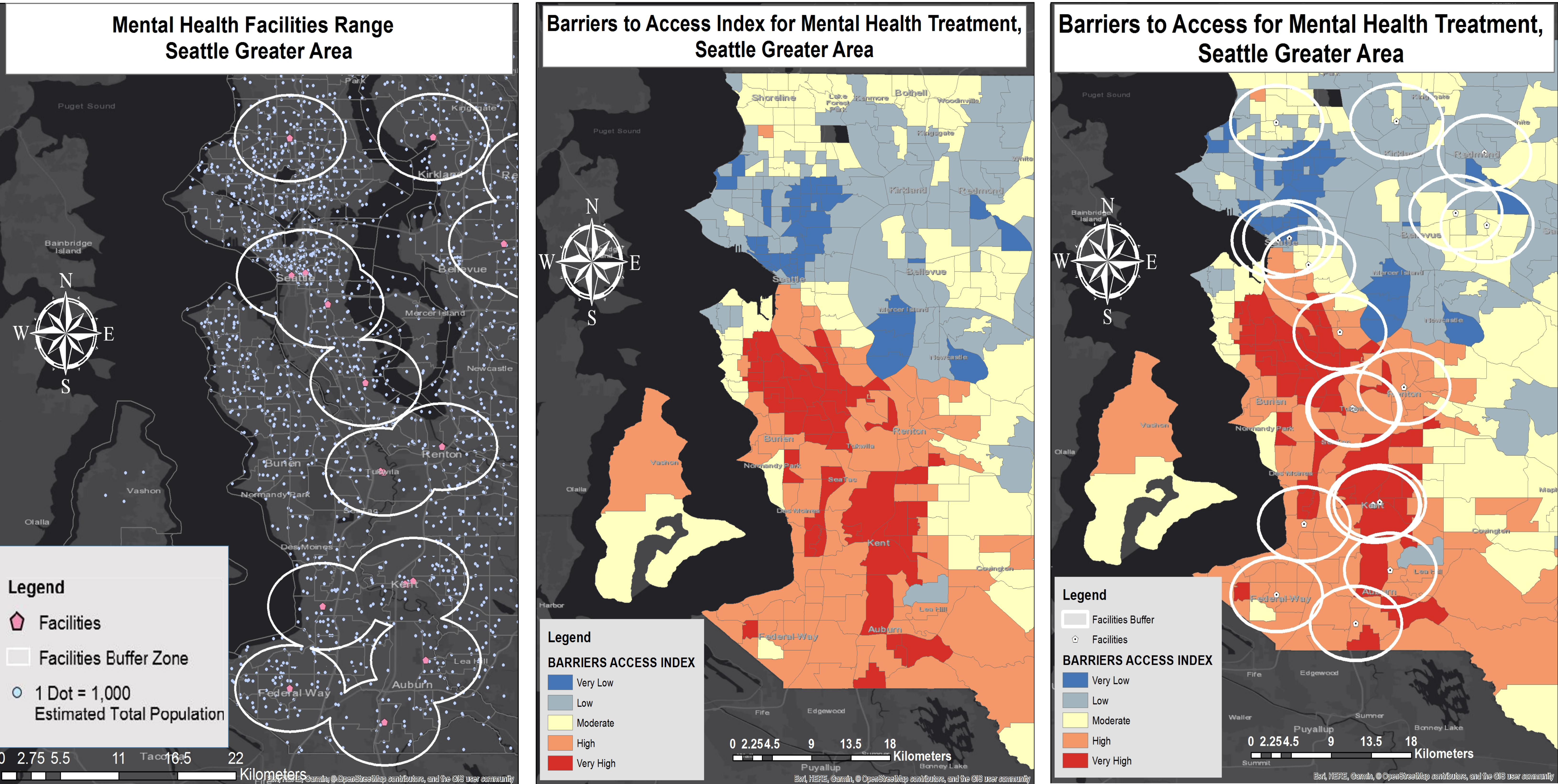
Access Barriers to Mental Health Facilities & Services

What Stress Factors Influence Access to Mental Healthcare?

By: Billy Wang, Jesse Flores, Peter Da, and Cindy Vu
University of Washington Department of Geography | Winter 2019

Introduction and Purpose:

As mental health issues continue to become a more apparent issue in today's world, access to mental healthcare and facilities becomes a growing concern. Accessibility is not just a measure of having facilities present near by, but can be a measure through other direct and indirect causation. This study will be focusing primarily on the 14 facilities in the greater metropolitan area of western King County, WA and their barriers to access care by census tract. The eligibility of these facilities are based on the financial criteria and medical necessity of the King County Behavior Health Services.



Method:

Mental Health Facilities Service Range, Seattle Greater Area Map:

- Buffer the mental health facilities of Seattle Greater Area to indicate the population range that it serves within a 3km radius.

Barriers to Access Index for Mental Health Treatments, Seattle Greater Area Map:

- Barriers we identified are: Employment, Age, Gender, Race, Awareness and Education, and Insurance Coverage. These barriers may factor in why people do not seek treatments to mental health. Not all variables will have a direct causation.
- Standardized each variables to get z-scores, and average out all variables to get the index.

Barriers to Access for Mental Health Treatments, Seattle Greater Area Map:

- Buffer of facilities in relations to the BAI.

Findings and Conclusion:

Within the 3km radius, mental health facilities cover the majority of the highly populated areas in the buffer zones which indicate high coverage from mental health facilities and services to the population in the Seattle Greater Area. We looked at different factors that affect access to mental health facilities. There is a display of higher barriers in the population towards the southern Seattle metropolitan area – these areas are underserved and people in this range are not likely to gain access to health mental health services. There are still areas that have moderate, high, and very high barriers to access mental health facilities that are not within service range such as West Seattle. With this, we can predict that people who are underserved have a harder time receiving help from mental health services.

Data Source:

- American Community Survey, 2017. *Population by Census Tracts in King County*. [online]
- King County, 2019. *Find substance use disorder and mental health providers*. [online]
- United States Census Bureau, 2017. *TIGER/Line® Shapefiles*. [online]

