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Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Definition

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is often a long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (obsessions), and behaviors (compulsions) that he or she feels the urge to repeat over and over.

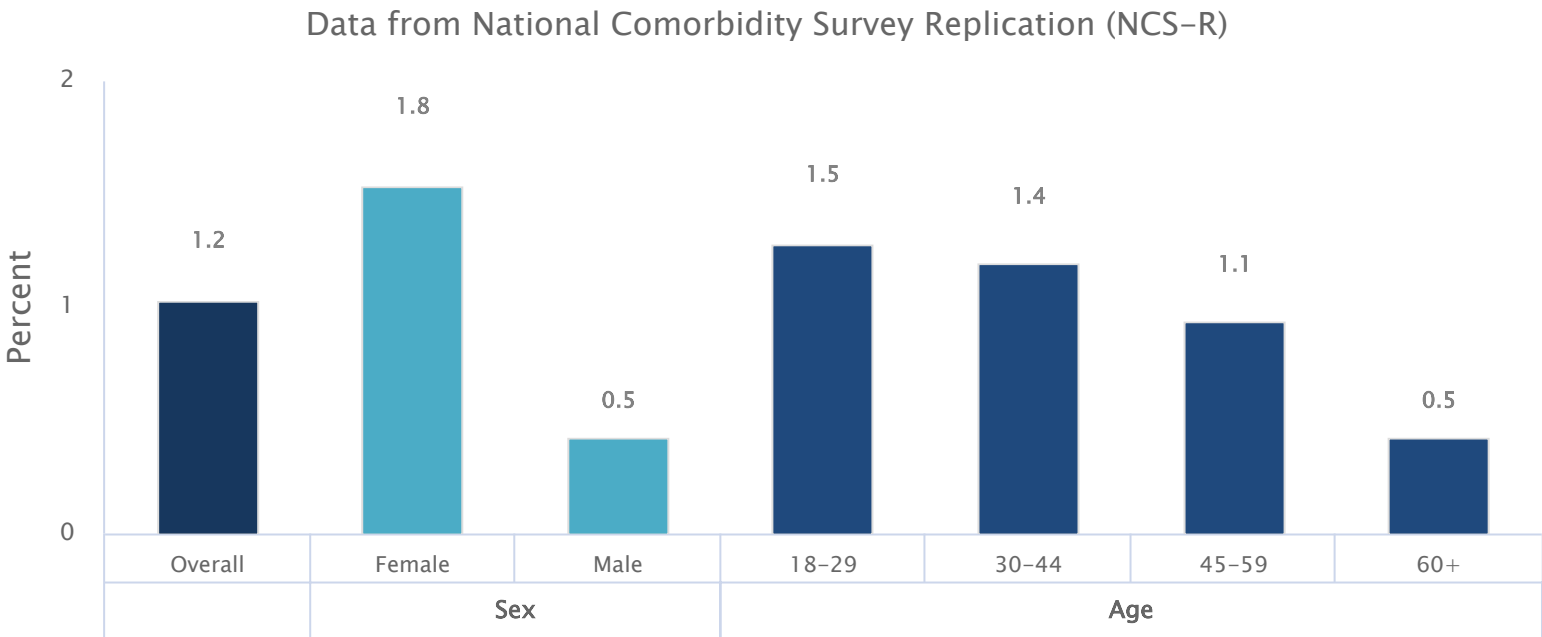
Additional information about obsessive-compulsive disorder can be found on the [NIMH Health Topics page on Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder](#).

Prevalence of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Among Adults

- Based on diagnostic interview data from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R), Figure 1 shows past year prevalence of OCD among U.S. adults aged 18 or older.¹
 - An estimated 1.2% of U.S. adults had OCD in the past year.
 - Past year prevalence of OCD was higher for females (1.8%) than for males (0.5%).
- Lifetime prevalence of OCD among U.S. adults was 2.3%.²

Figure 1

Past Year Prevalence of Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder Among U.S Adults (2001–2003)



Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder with Impairment Among Adults

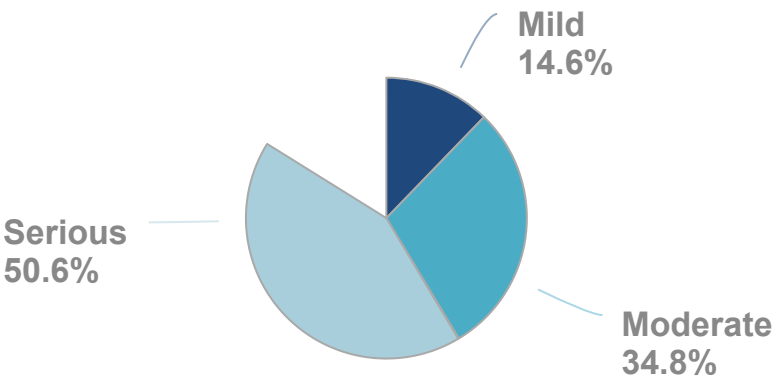
- Of adults with OCD in the past year, degree of impairment ranged from mild to severe, as shown in Figure 2. Impairment was determined by scores on the Sheehan Disability Scale.
 - Among adults with OCD, approximately one half (50.6%) had had serious impairment.¹
 - Another 34.8% of adults with OCD had moderate impairment, and 14.6% had mild impairment.¹

Figure 2

Past Year Severity of Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder Among U.S. Adults (2001–2003)



Data from National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS–R)



Data Sources

References

1. Harvard Medical School, 2007. National Comorbidity Survey (NCSSC). (2017, August 21). Retrieved from <https://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/index.php>. Data Table 2: [12-month prevalence DSM-IV/WMH-CIDI disorders by sex and cohort.](#)
2. Harvard Medical School, 2007. National Comorbidity Survey (NCSSC). (2017, August 21). Retrieved from <https://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/index.php>. Data Table 1: [Lifetime prevalence DSM-IV/WMH-CIDI disorders by sex and cohort.](#)
3. Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27. [PMID: 15939839](#)

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Statistical Methods and Measurement Caveats

National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R)

Diagnostic Assessment and Population:

- The NCS-R is a nationally representative, face-to-face, household survey conducted between February 2001 and April 2003 with a response rate of 70.9%. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) mental disorders were assessed using a modified version of the fully structured World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview (WMH-CIDI), a fully structured lay-administered diagnostic interview that generates both International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, and DSM-IV diagnoses. The DSM-IV criteria were used here. The Sheehan Disability Scale (SDS) assessed disability in work role performance, household maintenance, social life, and intimate relationships on a 0–10 scale. Participants for the main interview totaled 9,282 English-speaking, non-institutionalized, civilian respondents. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) was assessed in a subsample of 1,808 adults. The NCS-R was led by Harvard University.
- Unlike the DSM-IV criteria used in the NCS-R, the current DSM-5 no longer places OCD in the anxiety disorder category. It is listed in a new DSM-5 category, “Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders.”

Survey Non-response:

- In 2001-2002, non-response was 29.1% of primary respondents and 19.6% of secondary respondents. Reasons for non-response to interviewing include: refusal to participate (7.3% of primary, 6.3% of secondary); respondent was reluctant- too busy but did not refuse (17.7% of primary, 11.6% of secondary); circumstantial, such as intellectual developmental disability or overseas work assignment (2.0% of primary, 1.7% of secondary); and household units that were never contacted (2.0%).
- For more information, see [PMID: 15297905](#).



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