

MENTAL ILLNESS

Overall, mental illness affects both women and men equally and about half of all Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental disorder over the course of their lives.³⁴ However, types of mental disorders vary with sex. Women are more likely than men to experience an anxiety or mood disorder, such as depression, while men are more likely to experience an impulse-control or substance use disorder.

A major depressive episode (MDE) is defined according to the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) as a period of 2 weeks or longer during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure and at least four other symptoms that reflect a change in functioning,

such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, and self-image. In 2009–2010, an estimated 9.8 million women aged 18 years and older, comprising 8.4 percent of that population, reported experiencing an MDE in the past year, compared to 5.5 million or 5.0 percent of men.

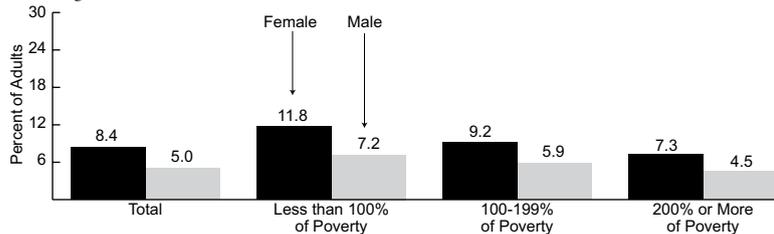
Among both men and women, MDE was reported more frequently among those with lower incomes. For example, 11.8 percent of women and 7.2 percent of men with household incomes below 100 percent of poverty experienced past-year MDE, compared to 7.3 percent of women and 4.5 percent of men with incomes of 200 percent or more of poverty.

Although women were more likely than men to experience a past-year MDE, men were twice as likely as women to experience a past-year

substance use disorder (12.6 versus 5.8 percent, respectively). Substance use disorder, as defined by the DSM-IV, encompasses both abuse and dependence on alcohol or illicit drugs; abuse relates to social problems with work, family, or the law due to substance use and dependence relates to health and emotional problems, such as tolerance or withdrawal. Women who experienced a past-year MDE were nearly four times as likely to report a substance use disorder than those who did not (17.5 versus 4.8 percent, respectively), while men who experienced a past-year MDE were 2.5 times as likely as their non-affected counterparts to report a substance use disorder (29.4 percent versus 11.7 percent, respectively).

Past Year Major Depressive Episode* Among Adults Aged 18 and Older, by Poverty Status** and Sex, 2009–2010

Source II.3: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health

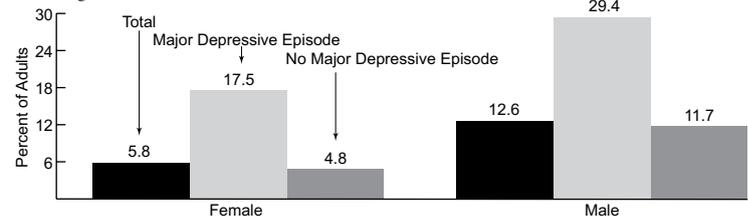


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**Poverty level, defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, was \$22,314 for a family of four in 2010; adults aged 18-22 years living in college dormitories were excluded from poverty determinations.

Past Year Substance Use Disorder,* by Sex and Past Year Major Depressive Episode,** 2009–2010

Source II.3: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health



*Substance use disorder is abuse or dependence on alcohol or illicit drugs; abuse relates to social problems due to substance use, such as problems with work, family, or the law; dependence relates to health and emotional problems, such as tolerance or withdrawal. **A past year major depressive episode is defined as a period of 2 weeks or longer during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure and at least four other symptoms that reflect a change in functioning, such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, and self-image.