Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Understanding Adolescents' Experiences with Depression and Behavioral Health Treatment

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INTRODUCTION: Depressive disorders are prevalent psychiatric disorders that comprise a cluster of affective, somatic, and physical symptoms. From childhood to adolescence, prevalence rates for major depressive disorder increase to rates similar to adults. An epidemiological study showed that 11.4% of US adolescents experienced a major depressive episode within the last year. Adolescent depression is associated with substance abuse, suicidal ideation and behaviors, academic difficulties, and interpersonal problems. There is an increased risk of subsequent depressive episodes in adolescence and adulthood. Adolescent depression is also associated with difficulties in adulthood, such as mood and other psychiatric disorders, underemployment, physical health problems, and suicidal behaviors.

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