

APHA Abstract

Title: Perceived Stigma and Mental Health Sequelae among Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Authors:

Section: Disability? Mental health?

Aims: Evidence suggests robust associations between stigma and mental health symptoms. However, whether perceived stigma among youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (YIDD) is associated with their depressive and anxiety symptoms is not well understood. This study aims to examine associations between perceived stigma and mental health outcomes of YIDD.

Method: We analyzed current baseline data from an ongoing clinical trial testing the efficacy of a stratified behavioral health treatment in promoting mental health in a targeted sample of 780 YIDD. Among YIDD, perceived stigma was measured by the Perceived Stigma in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Scale, depressive symptomatology by the Patient Health Questionnaire – Adolescent (PHQA), and anxiety symptomatology by the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale (GAD7). Linear regression models were utilized to examine associations between perceived stigma and depression and anxiety symptomatology.

Results: To date, baseline data have been collected from 65 YIDD, aged 13-20 years ($M = 16.7$, $SD = 2.2$). Approximately 49%, 49%, and 2% of youth identified as female, male, and transgender male, respectively and 58.5% identified as white, non-Hispanic. Average perceived stigma score was 2.6 (range: 0-10, higher scores indicating greater perceived stigma). Average PHQA and GAD7 scores were 5.4 and 4.7, respectively, indicating mild depression and mild anxiety severity. Controlling for age, gender, and intellectual disability (yes vs. no), greater perceived stigma was significantly associated with greater depression ($F(4,59)=3.91$, $p<.01$) and anxiety ($F(4,59)=4.66$, $p<.01$) severity.

Conclusion: Perceived stigma may be an important risk factor for YIDD mental health and should be addressed in services.