
Exploring Sex-Based Differences in Inpatient Mental Health Care Within General Hospital Settings

Exploración de las diferencias basadas en el sexo en la atención de salud mental para pacientes hospitalizados en entornos hospitalarios generales

Aldrick Adorno-Adorno¹, George Scott², Ivette Mirles-Muñiz¹ & Julio Jiménez¹

¹Ponce Health Sciences University

²Sam Houston State University

ABSTRACT

Mood (78%) and anxiety disorders (16%) represent the most common mental health diagnoses (MHD) within the Latino population in the United States (US). For Puerto Ricans living in the US mood disorders account for 20.7% of MHD, as opposed to 22.5% for island residents. Moreover, while Puerto Rican females (10.5%) exhibit higher rates of MHD compared to males (8.2%), males are less likely to seek mental health services (26.4%) than females (37.5%). Our aim is to analyze sociodemographic characteristics and clinical trends among inpatients in general hospitals in southwestern Puerto Rico based on their assigned sex at birth. We conducted a retrospective exploratory analysis of chart data collected from 1,737 inpatients using databases from the Clinical Psychology Services Programs at Hospital Damas, Ponce and La Concepción Hospital, San Germán, between August 2020 to August 2023. The sociodemographic profile revealed a mean age of 63 ± 18.6 years, with 55.5% females, and 75.1% reporting a monthly income of $\leq \$1,500$. Clinical data indicated a higher prevalence of MHD among males (76.3%) compared to females (63.9%), with depression being the most prevalent (20.7% males; 18.6% females), followed by neurocognitive disorders (18.9% males; 19.5% females). Notably, both sexes demonstrated similar rates of mental health services utilization (30.5% males; 35.4% females). Furthermore, musculoskeletal (29.8% males; 19.5%) and circulatory system (15.7%; 19.5% females) diseases were the most common medical comorbidities. Additional analyses between sex differences will be presented. Future research regarding the role of culture on males' reluctance to receive mental health care is warranted.