

Relationship Between Race and Attitudes Toward Government Assistance Regarding Mental Illness

Research Questions

- Does an individual's race influence the belief that the government should be responsible for providing aid regarding mental illness?
- Does this association vary by gender?

Significance

- Over 18% of the adult population in the U.S. experiences mental illness a year (NAMI, 2019).
- Mental health is increasingly recognized as a public health issue in the U.S. (Stone, 2018).
- Access to mental healthcare is limited, specifically across racial and ethnic minority backgrounds (McGuire & Miranda, 2008).

Background

- Racial differences in access and quality of mental health treatment are due to inequalities in access to good providers, differences in insurance coverage, and discrimination by health professionals in the clinical encounter (McGuire & Miranda, 2008).
- Women are more likely than men to believe they are in need of mental health aid, which attributed to societal views of men being "strong" and women as "weak" (Villatoro et al.).

Hypotheses

- Racial minorities are more likely than whites to agree that it is the government's responsibility to supply aid for mental health.
- Racial minority women are predicted to report an even higher agreement with the analyzed statement.

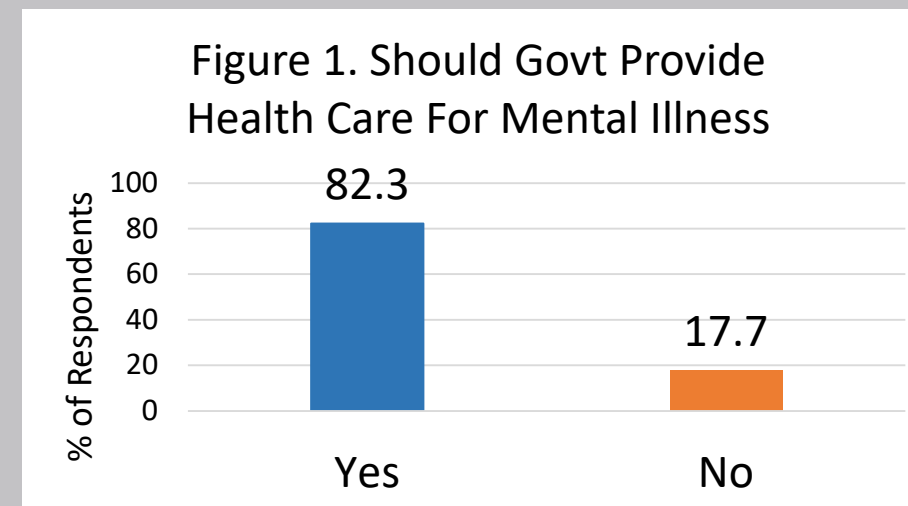
Data and Sample

- 2006 General Social Survey (GSS)
- Representative Sample of U.S adults aged 18 and older
- N = 4,510

Dependent Variable

Attitudes Towards Mental Health Care

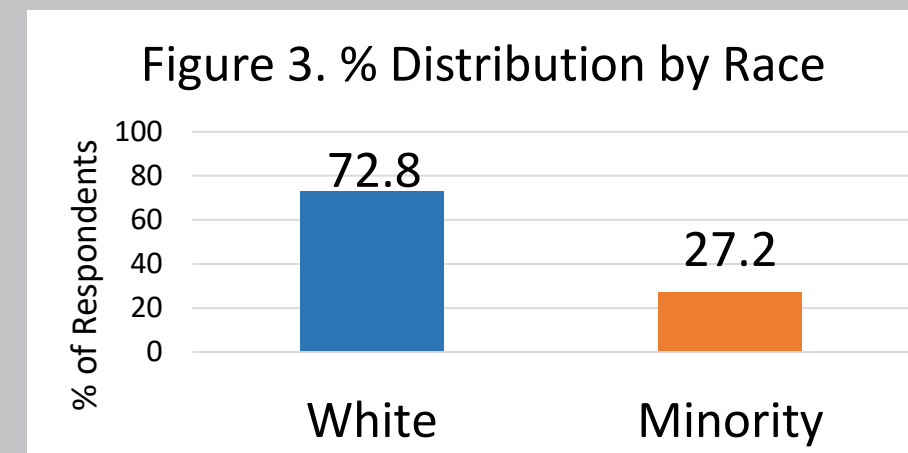
"On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to provide mental health care for persons with mental illnesses?"



Independent Variable

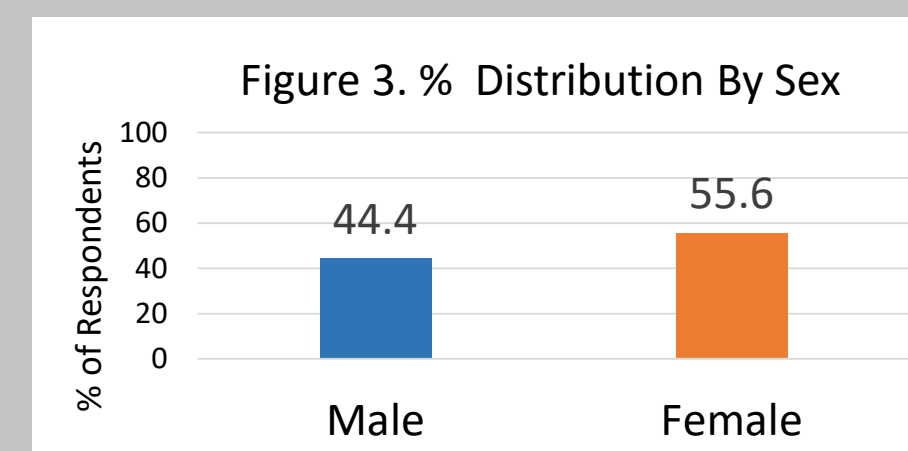
Race

"What race do you consider yourself?"



Control Variable

Sex

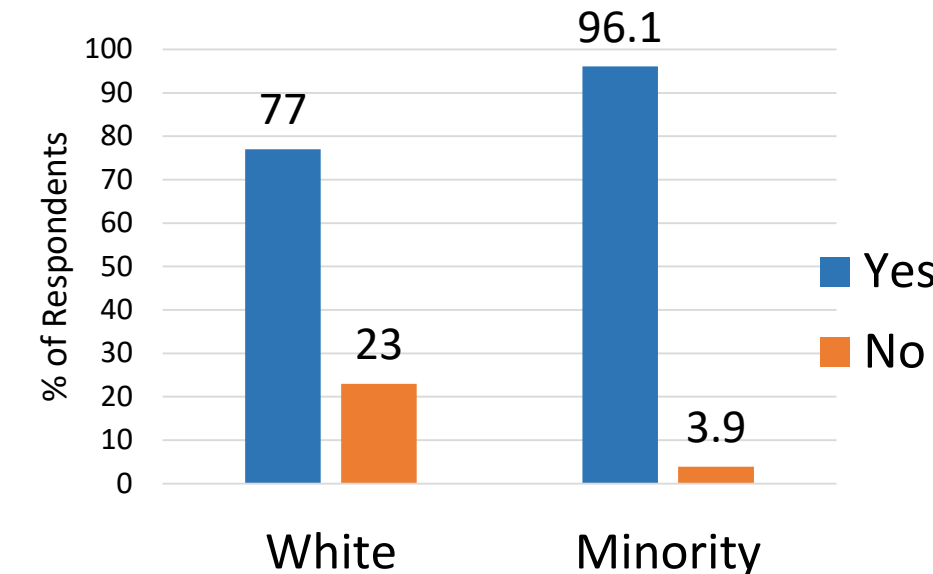


Analytical Plan

- Crosstabulation analysis and Chi-square tests using SPSS

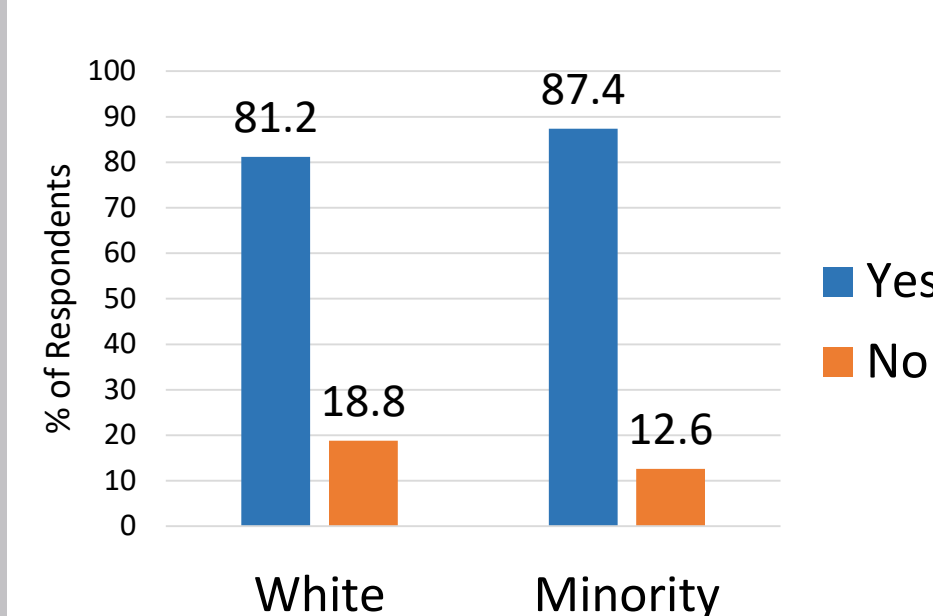
Results

Figure 4. Should the Govt Provide Health Care for Mental Illness: Males



Difference was significant: $p = 0.000$

Figure 5. Should the Govt Provide Health Care for Mental Illness: Females



Difference was not significant: $p = 0.171$

Summary of Findings

- Non-whites are significantly more likely than whites to believe that the government should provide mental health care to individuals with mental illness.
- Overall, women regardless of race were most likely to agree.
- White males were least likely to agree than other groups.
- However, majority of respondents did agree with the statement.

Future Research & Implications

- A majority of American adults believe that the government should provide mental health care.
- Mental health aid and resources are not equally available to all citizens.
- Further investigation is needed to solidify potential causes and limitations such as age, SES, education, and other sociological determining factors within race.
- To increase public support/funding, white males should be targeted in regards to the importance of mental health aid.

References

- Deb, S., & Miller, N. A. (2018). Relationships Among Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Mental Health Status in Patient-Provider Interactions. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 29*(3), 131-141.
- McGuire, T. G., & Miranda, J. (2008). New evidence regarding racial and ethnic disparities in mental health: policy implications. *Health Affairs, 27*(2), 393-403.
- NAMI. (2019). Mental Health By The Numbers. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>
- Villatoro, A. P., Mays, V. M., Ponce, N. A., & Aneshensel, C. S. (2018). Perceived need for mental health care: The intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. *Society and Mental Health, 8*(1), 1-24.