

# Access to care, Quality of Life, and Mental Health Service Utilization among US Adults with Depression

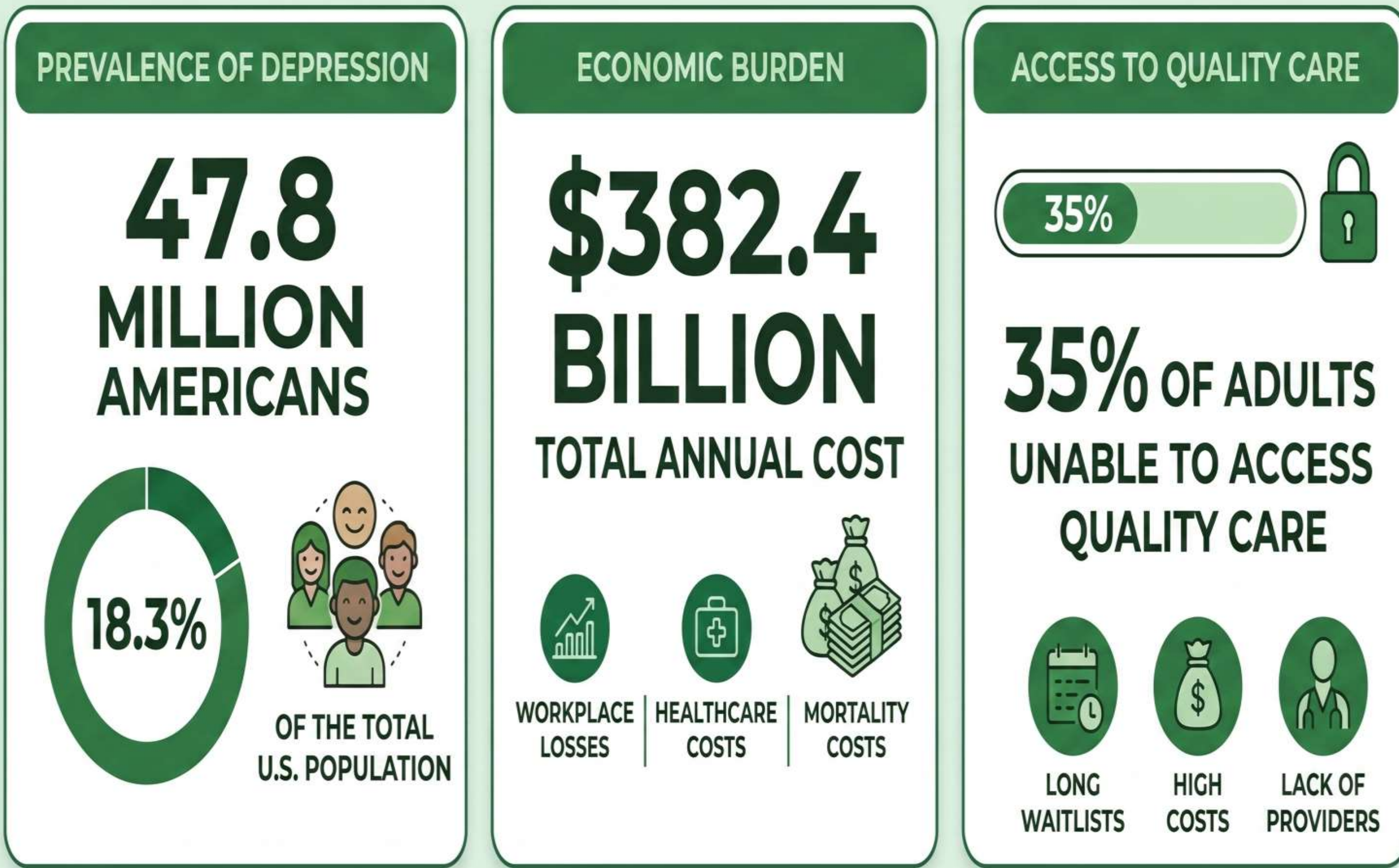
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## BACKGROUND

### DEPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES: THE KEY STATISTICS



## OBJECTIVE

This study examines the association between sociodemographic characteristics, access-to-care factors, health-related quality of life, and mental health service utilization among adults with depression in the United States.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study design

- Retrospective, observational, cross-sectional study using Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) data from 2021 - 2023

### Variables

- Outcome: Mental health service utilization (anti-depressant use and/or mental health counselling services)
- Predictors: Sociodemographic characteristics, access-to-care measures, and quality of life indicators

### Inclusion Criteria

- Adults with at least one ICD-10-CM code for depression (F32)

### Statistical analysis

- Weighted descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to summarize baseline characteristics and assess bivariate associations
- Multicollinearity was assessed using variance inflation factors, and variables with VIF values of 5 or greater were excluded from the model.
- Access-to-care measures, quality-of-life indicators, and sociodemographic characteristics were examined as predictors
- Multivariable logistic regression was used to estimate adjusted odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs)
- All analyses were conducted in SAS version 9.4

## RESULTS

Figure 1: Respondents Attrition Flow Chart

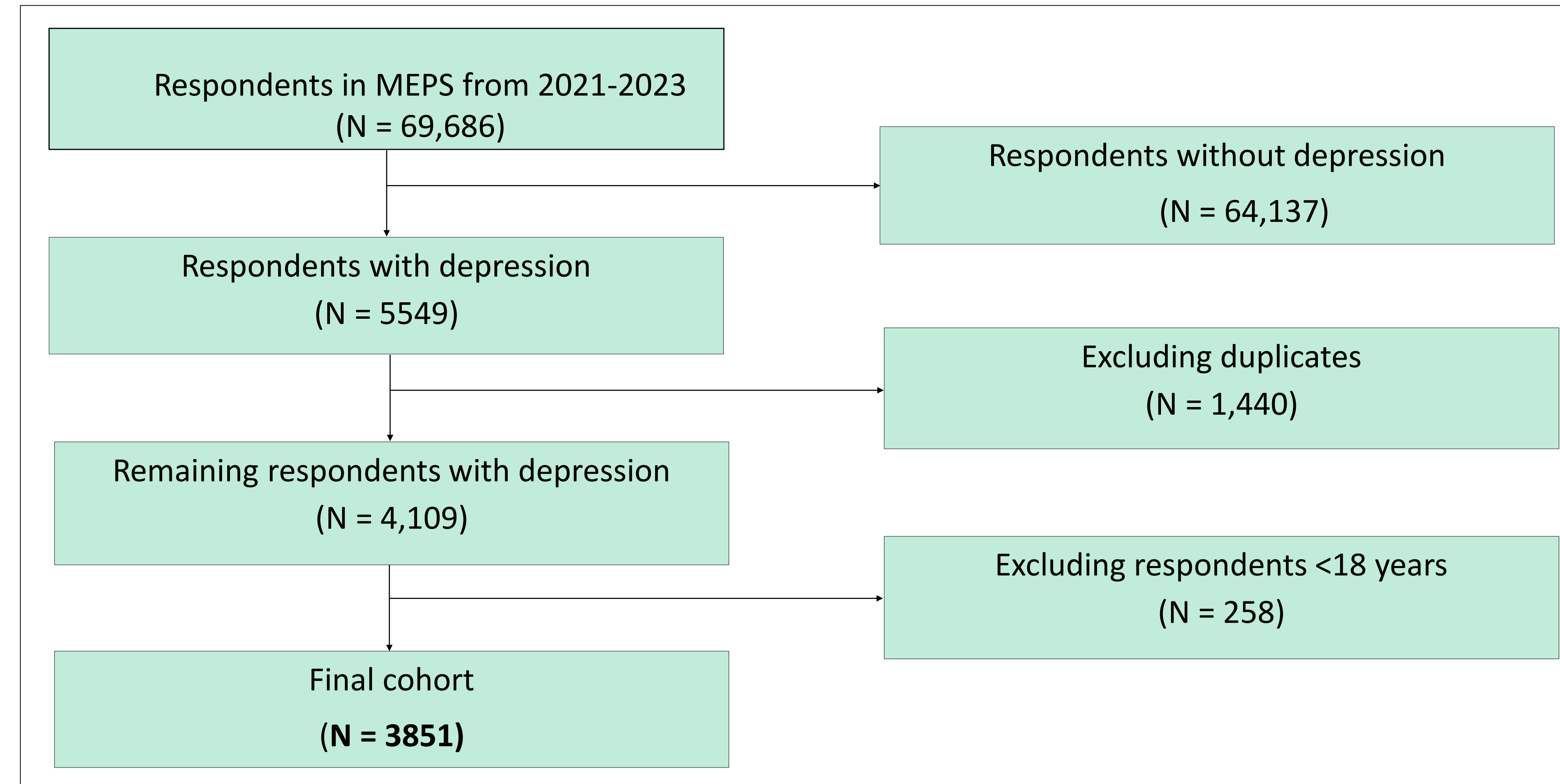


Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

Variables	Weighted frequency N(%)		p_Value
	Mental Health Service Users	Mental Health Service Non-users	
<b>Age</b>			0.005
18-24	4,472,321 (9.57%)	887,178 (10.75%)	
25-44	14,079,199 (30.12%)	2,915,186 (35.32%)	
45-64	15,086,854 (32.28%)	2,474,442 (29.98%)	
65+	10,154,893 (21.73%)	1,200,568 (14.54%)	
<b>Sex</b>			0.006
Female	32,258,855 (69.02%)	5,131,447 (62.17%)	
Male	14,482,250 (30.98%)	3,122,965 (37.83%)	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			<0.001
Hispanic	4,278,289 (9.15%)	1,309,724 (15.87%)	
Non-Hispanic Black	2,824,585 (6.04%)	673,443 (8.16%)	
Non-Hispanic White	36,809,293 (78.75%)	5,602,023 (67.87%)	
Others	2,828,937 (6.05%)	669,222 (8.11%)	
<b>Education</b>			0.654
Advanced degree	5,495,519 (11.76%)	1,124,032 (13.62%)	
Bachelor's degree	9,880,989 (21.14%)	1,856,855 (22.50%)	
High school diploma	18,891,009 (40.42%)	3,024,340 (36.64%)	
No degree	4,152,822 (8.88%)	692,029 (8.38%)	
<b>Insurance</b>			0.006
Any private	29,727,396 (63.60%)	5,970,968 (72.34%)	
Public only	15,867,804 (33.95%)	2,126,015 (25.76%)	
Uninsured	1,145,905 (2.45%)	157,428 (1.91%)	
<b>Employment status</b>			<0.001
Employed	25,639,497 (54.85%)	5,297,345 (64.18%)	
Unemployed	19,213,837 (41.11%)	2,466,713 (29.88%)	
<b>Perceived mental health</b>			0.257
Excellent	3,255,195 (6.96%)	759,420 (9.20%)	
Fair	12,517,611 (26.78%)	2,271,180 (27.51%)	
Good	26,921,252 (57.60%)	4,712,865 (57.10%)	
Poor	3,941,739 (8.43%)	487,223 (5.90%)	
<b>Perceived physical health</b>			0.003
Excellent	5,721,672 (12.24%)	1,489,468 (18.04%)	
Fair	8,455,097 (18.09%)	1,497,193 (18.14%)	
Good	28,888,141 (61.80%)	4,929,588 (59.72%)	
Poor	3,584,741 (7.67%)	314,439 (3.81%)	
<b>Chronic condition burden</b>			0.004
0	17,829,857 (38.15%)	3,901,900 (47.27%)	
1	11,320,766 (24.22%)	1,902,462 (23.05%)	
2+	17,590,482 (37.63%)	2,450,049 (29.68%)	
<b>Delayed care</b>			0.485
Delayed	6,983,108 (14.94%)	1,422,645 (17.24%)	
No delay	39,429,904 (84.36%)	6,785,305 (82.20%)	
<b>Usual source of care</b>			0.213
No	7,365,831 (15.76%)	1,537,864 (18.63%)	
Yes	38,091,452 (81.49%)	6,396,648 (77.49%)	
<b>Telehealth use</b>			<0.001
No	39,395,526 (84.28%)	7,684,597 (93.10%)	
Yes	6,374,992 (13.64%)	396,486 (4.80%)	

Table 2: Multivariate analysis of Sociodemographic variables, access-to-care measures and Quality of Life Indicators

Variable	Odds ratio	95% CI	p-value	
Age	25-44	Reference		
	18-24	0.77	0.49-1.21	0.26
	45-64	1.10	0.84-1.44	0.49
	65+	1.27	0.90-1.79	0.18
Sex	Female	Reference		
	Male	0.66	0.54-0.80	<0.01
Race/Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic White	Reference		
	Hispanic	0.42	0.32-0.55	<0.01
	Non-Hispanic Black	0.55	0.38-0.78	<0.01
	Others	0.84	0.56-1.27	0.41
Education	High school diploma	Reference		
	Advanced degree	0.75	0.55-1.04	0.08
	Bachelor's degree	0.72	0.55-0.95	0.02
	No degree	0.87	0.62-1.22	0.42
Insurance	Any private	Reference		
	Public only	1.34	1.06-1.70	0.02
	Uninsured	1.84	0.91-3.71	0.09
Employment status	Unemployed	Reference		
	Employed	0.73	0.56-0.94	0.02
Perceived mental health	Good	Reference		
	Excellent	0.97	0.67-1.41	0.89
	Fair	1.24	1.18-1.46	0.03
Perceived physical health	Poor	1.27	0.81-2.01	0.30
	Good	Reference		
	Excellent	0.72	0.53-0.98	0.02
Chronic condition burden	Fair	0.88	0.67-1.14	0.32
	Poor	1.29	0.80-2.08	0.29
	0	Reference		
Delayed care	1	1.22	0.94-1.58	0.13
	2+	1.36	1.04-1.78	0.02
	No delay	Reference		
Usual source of care	Delayed	0.84	0.60-1.17	0.30
	Yes	Reference		
Telehealth use	No	0.77	0.59-0.98	0.04
	No	Reference		
Telehealth use	Yes	0.96	0.62-1.47	0.84

## CONCLUSION

Mental health service utilization among adults with depression was uneven across population groups, suggesting that need alone does not determine who receives care.

Men were significantly less likely to use mental health services than women, which may reflect stigma, lower help-seeking behavior, or weaker engagement with mental health care pathways.

Greater overall health burden appeared to increase service use. Adults with multiple chronic conditions and those reporting fair mental health were more likely to utilize services.

Access to the healthcare system appears to play a major role in whether adults with depression receive mental health services

These findings suggest that quality of life is not just an outcome of depression, but also a factor shaping care-seeking behavior and service utilization.

## REFERENCES

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