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Mental Health, Racial Inequities Lead 2016 Top 10 Child Health Concerns

Report Highlights

Top 10 Child Health Concerns Among All Adults

1. **Bullying (57%)**
2. **Obesity (56%)**
3. **Drug Abuse (52%)**
4. **Internet Safety (49%)**
5. **Stress (46%)**
6. **Abuse & Neglect (45%)**
7. **Sexting (44%)**
8. **School Violence (42%)**
9. **Suicide (41%)**
10. **Depression (40%)**

Contact us

A publication from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR) Unit.

In the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health 2016 survey of child health concerns, a national sample of adults reported numerous mental health issues as "big problems" for US children and teens aged 0-17 years. Overall, 7 of the Top 10 concerns reflect children's mental health: either specific mental health problems (depression, stress and suicide) or issues that often have an underlying mental health component (bullying, obesity, drug abuse, school violence).

When the 2016 Top 10 results are presented separately by the racial/ethnic groups of the adults responding, bullying is the #1 concern among black and Hispanic adults, and #2 among white adults. However, the poll shows some key differences across racial/ethnic groups:

- For black adults, racial inequities and school violence are the #2 and #3 health concerns – neither of which appears in the Top 10 list for white adults.
- Black adults are the only group with gun injuries and hunger ranked in the Top 10.
- Childhood obesity and drug abuse are in the top three "big problems" for white and Hispanic adults, but lower on the list for black adults.
- Teen pregnancy appears in the Top 10 among Hispanic adults, but not among black or white adults.
- While depression ranks #9 or #10 across all racial/ethnic groups, only white adults have suicide in the Top 10.

Top 10 Child Health Concerns in 2016



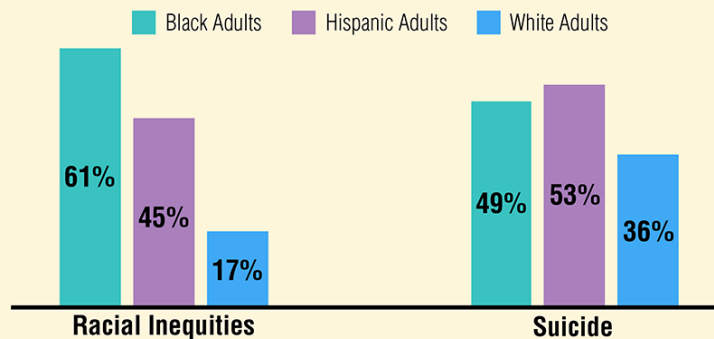
Among Black Adults		Among Hispanic Adults		Among White Adults	
1	Bullying 71%	1	Bullying 66%	1	Obesity 55%
2	Racial Inequities 61%	2	Obesity 62%	2	Bullying 52%
3	School Violence 61%	3	Drug Abuse 61%	3	Drug Abuse 47%
4	Drug Abuse 59%	4	Internet Safety 59%	4	Internet Safety 44%
5	Internet Safety 59%	5	Stress 57%	5	Stress 42%
6	Obesity 58%	6	Abuse & Neglect 57%	6	Abuse & Neglect 41%
7	Gun Injuries 56%	7	School Violence 55%	7	Sexting 38%
8	Sexting 54%	8	Sexting 54%	8	Suicide 36%
9	Depression 52%	9	Teen Pregnancy 54%	9	Smoking 36%
10	Hunger 50%	10	Depression 53%	10	Depression 36%

This report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by GfK Custom Research, LLC (GfK), for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital via a method used in many published studies. The survey was administered in May 2016 to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults age 18 and older (n=2,100). Adults were selected from GfK's web-enabled KnowledgePanel® that closely resembles the U.S. population. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 63% among panel members contacted to participate. The margin of error is ± 3-12 percentage points.

Differences in Concerns about Racial Inequities, Suicide

Consistently, black and Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to label health topics as a “big problem.” However, the magnitude of the disparity differs across topics. For example, a large gap exists between black adults (61%) and white adults (17%) citing racial inequities as a “big problem” for US children. A smaller difference is seen for suicide (53% of Hispanic adults vs 36% of white adults).

Disparities in Rating of Child Health Concerns as a “Big Problem”



Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2016

Implications

This 10th annual Top 10 survey reveals key differences across racial/ethnic groups in the issues viewed as “big problems” for children – reflecting how contemporary topics vary in importance to different communities.

Comparing the Top 10 lists across racial/ethnic groups helps to illustrate this point. For black adults, the emergence of racial inequities, school violence and gun injuries in the Top 10 mirrors national attention regarding the safety of black youth. The presence of teen pregnancy as a Top 10 child health concern among Hispanic adults may reflect cultural attitudes unique to that group. For white adults, the presence of suicide at #8 reflects the importance of this mental health issue, relative to other concerns.

Black and Hispanic adults were more likely than white adults to rate all topics as a “big problem” for US children and teens. But the magnitude of the difference varied, from large differences in black vs white views of racial inequities as child health concerns, to fairly similar ratings of suicide.

This year, several Top 10 concerns directly relate to the mental health of children. Concerns about bullying, stress, suicide and depression reflect increased attention to the complexities that affect many aspects of childhood including school performance, peer and family relationships, and successful transition to adulthood. Mental health issues can also increase children’s risk for obesity, drug abuse, and other health problems. The broad recognition of mental health as a key child health concern supports the importance of ensuring access to mental health services for all US children.

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