

Current Status of Mental Health in HIAs



Photo source: www.yourmindyourbody.org

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Why Mental Health?



Former Surgeon General David Satcher: there is no health without mental health (paraphrased)

WHO definition of health: “a state of complete physical, *mental* and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

Mental health has often been shown to play a mediating role between social determinants such as exclusion, racism, and poverty, and physical health outcomes in many health impact assessments

The role of mental health in mortality and morbidity is projected to grow in the future

Preliminary Findings Study of Mental Health in HIAs by Kim Gilhuly, Human Impact Partners

- Identified 195 HIAs to review through Health Impact Project website
- Reviewed 59 full HIA reports from the following sectors (considered most likely to include mental health impacts):
 - criminal justice, economic policy, education, gambling, housing, labor/employment, natural resources/energy, physical activity, and climate change
- Still to review: 136 HIA reports from the built environment, transportation, and agriculture/food sectors

Preliminary Findings

- Approximately 3/4 included mental health in the scope
- More than half made a prediction of change in mental health status
 - only two quantified this prediction
 - Almost all predictions were based on literature review

Preliminary Findings

- Only perhaps 1/4 measured baseline mental health conditions
- Determinants and outcomes measured include:
 - outpatient visits to community health clinics with MH diagnoses
 - hospitalization with primary complaint of mental health disorders
 - substance use/abuse
 - suicide
 - self-reported mental health
 - stress
 - trust in neighbors
- Measurements included secondary data as well as primary data collected through surveys

Preliminary Findings

- Most HIAs have 3 to 8 physical health outcomes they consider, which are often described in some level of detail (i.e., diabetes, asthma, injuries from collisions, etc).
- By contrast, most HIAs usually only have one mental health outcome and it is often described in more general terms (i.e., stress, psychological distress, mental health, social capital).