

## **MHRN SCIENTIFIC INTEREST GROUP**

### **Diversity Interest Group**

#### **Goals / Mission**

The Diversity Interest Group is working on recommendations for incorporating Race/Ethnicity into analyses of mental health data as well as to discuss projects for research in this area.

#### **Research Priorities**

The racial and ethnic diversity special interest group is dedicated to understanding the role of culture in both the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and the promotion of mental health. We have completed a study of diagnosis and pharmaceutical treatment of major mental health conditions in different racial and ethnic groups across all sites in the Mental Health Research Network. Similar to other population-based studies, we found that prevalence rates for depression and anxiety were lower in racial/ethnic minority patients when compared to non-Hispanic white patients. The one exception was Native American/Alaskan Native patients who had similar prevalence rates for these conditions when compared to non-Hispanic whites. However, unlike other reports in the literature, we did not find that non-Hispanic black and Hispanic patients had higher rates of schizophrenia when compared to non-Hispanic whites. Rates of serious mental illness (bipolar, schizophrenia, other psychoses) were similar across all groups of patients. These patterns were similar when prescription rates were examined for those who had a diagnosis. There was wide variation in who received a prescription for depression, anxiety, dementia, and substance use (whites most likely, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders least likely) but consistently high rates for most patients when treating schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders were least likely of any group to receive a prescription for any mental health condition. These findings and data will be used to address meaningful use requirements from the the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) to examine the reasons why these disparities exist which in turn will lead us to partner with our healthcare systems to develop programs that will eliminate these disparities.

#### **Contact:**



#### **Karen Coleman, PhD, MS**

Research Scientist II, Research & Evaluation  
Southern California Permanente Medical Group  
100 S. Los Robles Ave  
Pasadena, CA 91101  
Phone: 626-564-3580  
Email: [Karen.J.Coleman@kp.org](mailto:Karen.J.Coleman@kp.org)