

Depression and Victorians with an intellectual disability

Fact sheet issued March 2011

Depression is more common in people with an intellectual disability

According to the *Victorian Population Health Survey of People with an Intellectual Disability 2009* (VPHS-ID 2009), people with an intellectual disability are more likely to have had depression (30.4 per cent) compared with the general Victorian population (19.9 per cent).

People with an intellectual disability use mental health services more often

According to the VPHS-ID 2009, people with an intellectual disability were more likely (26.0 per cent) to have sought professional help for a mental health problem in the preceding 12 months than the general Victorian population (11.4 per cent).

Who do people with an intellectual disability consult for mental health issues?

According to the VPHS-ID 2009, people with an intellectual disability are more likely than the general Victorian population to consult a:

- private psychiatrist (37.0 per cent compared to 18.9 per cent)
- public mental health service community service (16.5 per cent compared to 6.1 per cent).

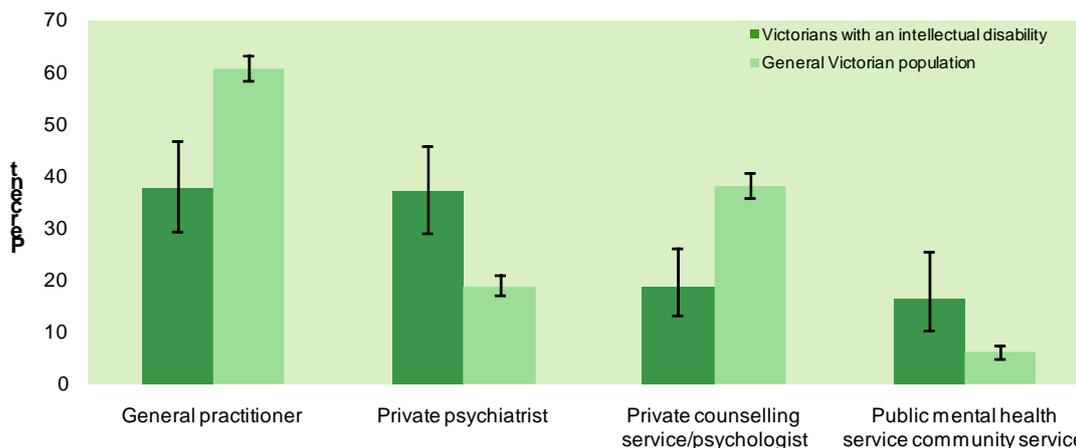
People with an intellectual disability were less likely than the general Victorian population to consult a:

- general practitioner (18.8 per cent compared to 37.6 per cent)
- private counsellor or psychologist (38.1 per cent compared to 60.7 per cent).

Coping and recovering from depression

Coping and recovering from depression requires help. Early intervention avoids symptoms becoming worse. Mild depression can be helped with healthy sleeping patterns, nutrition and planning. Serious depression requires medical help. The Mental Health Advice Line is a statewide telephone information service available to all Victorians seeking mental health information, advice and referral (for themselves or another person).

Figure: Sources of professional help for a mental health problem in the last 12 months



The black bars in the graph indicate 95% confidence interval

For further information

The VPHS-ID 2009 is a statewide survey the Department of Health undertook to collect information on the health and wellbeing of people with an intellectual disability in Victoria. This was the first time the survey has been carried out in Victoria.

The full report of the VPHS-ID 2009 is available at:
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/>

- The Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria (CDDHV) has produced a fact sheet called 'Accessing mental health services for people with an intellectual disability' that provides information about mental health services in Victoria. It is available from: <http://www.cddh.monash.org/>
- The Better Health Channel provides online health and medical information for the Victorian community. It is available from: <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>
- The CDDHV has produced a checklist for identifying possible depression in people with disabilities. It is available from: <http://www.cddh.monash.org/>

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