

Let's Get Real: Media Alarmism vs the Data on Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in the U.S.

Media Version	The Actual Data	TCPR's Take
<p>"Most Will Be Mentally Ill at Some Point, Study Says" <i>New York Times</i>, June 7, 2005 (Read it at http://nyti.ms/gekHy8)</p>	<p>Approximately 50% lifetime prevalence of any disorder found in DSM-IV</p>	<p>We're not surprised or alarmed—when spider phobia and adjustment disorder are considered "mental illnesses," the 50% estimate seems low, if anything</p>
<p>"1 in 5 Americans are mentally ill" <i>New York Post</i>, November 19, 2010 (Read it at http://nyp.st/ahetU2)</p>	<p>20% to 30% <i>one year prevalence</i> of any DSM-IV disorder</p>	<p>Again, considering that simple phobias, dysthymia, alcohol abuse, etc, are mental illnesses, the 1 in 5 figure is not surprising</p>
<p>"1 in 20 Americans severely mentally ill" (Rarely reported)</p>	<p>Lifetime prevalence of schizophrenia (1%) + bipolar disorder (1% to 2%) + other psychosis (2% to 3%)= 5% to 6% lifetime prevalence of severe mental illness</p>	<p>That about 1 out of 20 Americans will develop severe mental illness at some point seems believable, <i>and</i> alarming</p>

Source: Dr. Ronald Kessler's estimates, derived from his work with the National Comorbidity Survey (NCS) and National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/index.php

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