



Outdoor Recreation and Exercise: Help us help you.

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Background

- Exercise not only benefits cardiovascular and metabolic health, it has also been shown to improve mental health and overall wellbeing.
- Time spent in nature additionally has been shown to have health benefits including decreased blood pressure and reduced rates of anxiety and depression (Shanahan et al 2019).
- Furthermore, Cohen-Cline et al (2015) has shown a dose-response relationship with amount of time spent in nature and the benefits in physical and mental health.
- Current exercise and outdoor recreation are often unknown after initial new patient visit.
- Therefore, we are investigating the amount and type of exercise and outdoor recreation at baseline to identify ways in which we can best help our patients meet their goals, especially with regards to mental health.

Objectives

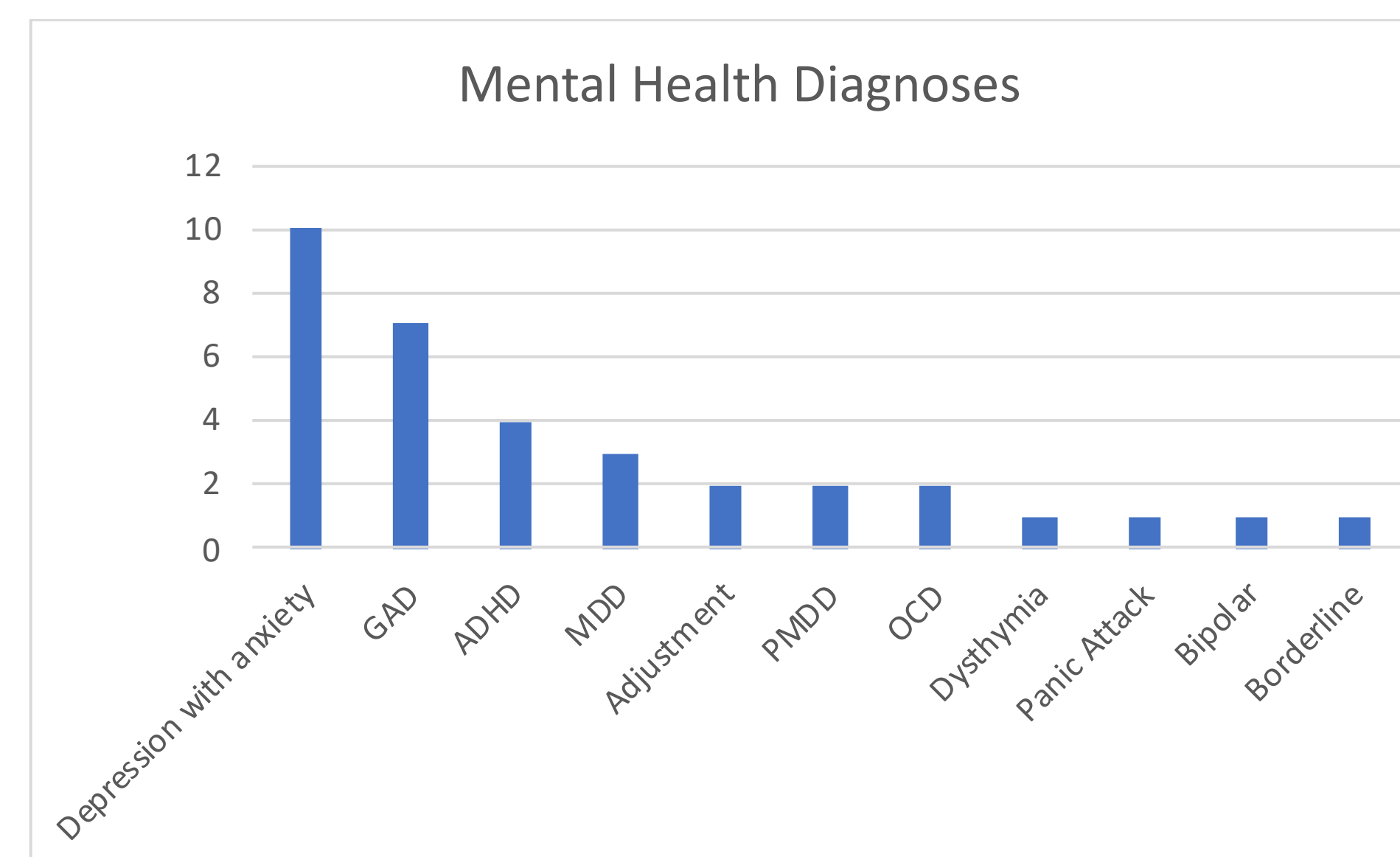
- Discover patients' baseline exercise and outdoor recreation regimens to identify patient needs. Identifying needs will help address gaps in mental health care regarding exercise and outdoor recreation counseling in the primary care setting.

Methods

- 29 patients were recruited from a family medicine clinic with a medical history of mood disorder, ADHD, or known to be struggling with mental health.
- Patients were given surveys to identify: exercise and outdoor recreation time per week, time per day, and type of activity over the last week.
- Survey asked open-response question about health goals.
- Survey asked open-response question about goals of altering exercise and/or outdoor recreation routine.
- Quantitative analysis performed on current exercise and outdoor recreation frequency and duration.
- Qualitative analysis performed on open-response questions to elucidate themes of health goals and needs of patients.

Data Analysis

Patient diagnoses



Current exercise and goals

- Average exercise: 43 minutes 2.4 days per week



Current outdoor recreation and goals

- Average outdoor activity: 54 minutes 1.41 days per week



Sample patient responses: health and activity goals

Reported health goals			
Exercise more	Yoga	Walking	Be at one with nature more often
More weights, less sitting	Stop smoking	Change job	Eat more vegetables
Less sugar	Sleep better	Downtime	Meditation
Sound therapy			

Reported exercise and outdoor recreation goals		
Hiking	Walking	More aerobic exercise
Gardening	Snowshoe	Treadmill
Find a place to play a sport	Time, motivation	Strength training
Workout class		

Discussion

- This project was initially designed focusing on motivational interviewing regarding exercise counseling.
- Due to limited patient appointments with mental health as the chief complaint during my time in clinic, surveys were distributed.
- Surveys yielded themes displayed in data analysis.
- Needs of patients were identified as increasing exercise and outdoor time, motivation, accountability, plans to make healthier dietary choices.

Future Steps

- Encourage follow-up appointment with patient
- Document individual needs and goals in EHR from current survey
- Engage in motivational interviewing discussion to further elicit current barriers and patient-specific goals regarding exercise and outdoor recreation
- Discuss with the patient perceived importance of change in exercise or outdoor recreation pattern, and provide handout on data of mental benefits of exercise and outdoor activity.
- Establish check-in call or appointment with patient in 1 month following initial follow-up appointment.

Reference

1. Shanahan DF, Astell-Burt T, Barber EA et al. Nature-Based Interventions for Improving Health and Wellbeing: The Purpose, the People and the Outcomes. *Sports* 141. 10 June 2019. doi:10.3390/sports7060141
2. Cohen-Cline, H.; Turkheimer, E.; Duncan, G.E. Access to green space, physical activity and mental health: A twin study. *J. Epidemiol. Community Health* 2015, 69, 523–529.