

Description of Research Dr. Novins, a member of the research team at the National Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research (NCAIANMHR), conducts research critical for improving the mental health of American Indian children and adolescents. These include ongoing and completed studies in the areas of psychiatric epidemiology, developmental psychobiology, and mental health services research. Research opportunities include participation in every stage of the research cycle: 1) articulating and prioritizing research questions; 2) study design; 3) study implementation; 4) data analysis; and 5) information dissemination.

Psychiatric Epidemiology: The NCAIANMHR has recently completed the first large-scale study of the prevalence of psychiatric disorders, related risk and protective factors, and service utilization among a multi-tribe sample of 3,086 American Indians age 15-54. Analyses will focus on a wide variety of issues, including prevalence of DSM-IV disorders, psychiatric comorbidity, alcohol and drug-related health disparities, other nosological issues such as the relationship between impairment and diagnosis, and the key correlates of psychiatric diagnostic status.

Developmental Psychopathology: The NCAIANMHR is completing a series of linking longitudinal studies that follow a large sample (approximately 4,800 participants) of American Indian high school students into young adulthood (a total of 7 years of data). To date, analyses have focused on the development of psychiatric symptomatology (e.g., depression, suicidal ideation) and substance use among this sample.

Mental Health Services Research: NCAIANMHR studies cover a number of areas encompassed by services research. Analysis of data from our epidemiological studies focuses on issues of service utilization, particularly the use of biomedical treatment and traditional healing options. Studies in the area of clinical epidemiology have examined the prevalence of psychiatric disorders and use of mental health services among American Indian juvenile detainees as well as the prevalence of comorbid psychiatric conditions among Indian youth receiving treatment at a residential substance abuse treatment facility and the relationship of comorbidity to treatment process and outcome. In addition, the NCAIANMHR is currently in the process of building its portfolio in two other areas of services research: quality of care and dissemination of research.

Methodology Treatment; Systems, Epidemiology and Outcomes

Clinical and special developmental populations Adolescents; American Indians; Depression

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Mentor since 7/1/2000