

MODULE 3 – FEDERAL SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS & SURVEYS

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There are a number of surveillance systems and surveys that are available to keep us aware of the current incidence and prevalence of disorders in the United States, as well as globally. For example, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, provide updates on all diseases in the United States, based on specific populations, such as the report on children, as well as disease trends and treatment. In Florida, there is the Florida Health website that provides the Florida slice of the larger national surveys, including the Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and reports, as well as surveillance surveys for middle- and high-school students.

In the accompanying fact sheet for this lecture, you will find a number of other surveillance systems and surveys that provide information on the general and specific health and behavioral health of children and adolescents. The National Survey of Drug Use and Health, also known as the NSDUH, is an annual survey assessing the prevalence of licit and illicit substance use. It also includes data on mental disorders. It uses a nationally representative sample of noninstitutionalized United States citizens age 12 and older.

The 2013 NSDUH reported the following data regarding substance-use disorders in the United States. For example, 2.2 million adolescents are current illicit drug users, in 2013. One out of 10 adolescents had major depressive episodes. Nearly 1.5 adolescents had co-occurring major depressive episodes and a substance-use disorder. And nearly 16% of adolescents were binge alcohol users in the last 30 days prior to being surveyed. The NSDUH concluded that alcohol use constitutes one the most serious public-health issues for young people in the United States, creating negative health, social, economic consequences for adolescents, their families, and for the nation as a whole.

The National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement is a nationally representative, face-to-face survey of over 10,000 adolescents aged 13 to 18 years old in the continental US. DSM-IV mental disorders were assessed using a modified version of the fully structured World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview. Both of these surveys tell us different things, using different nationally representative samples, and with different survey instruments and foci. Both are excellent sources of information.