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FOSTER CARE ITS EFFECTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

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NEBRASKA COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Abstract

In the United States 60% of children who have been in the foster care system are seen to have a lifetime prevalence of mental health disorders. As adolescents go into adulthood, they experience many negative effects that lead to life changing disorders. Some of them being PTSD, bipolar disorder, suicidality, and depression. Some factors that affect mental health outcomes are placement variables and the types of abuse that were endured during their childhood. Self-stigma prevents foster youth from receiving adequate help, because they are worried about what others might say. The lack of resources given by the foster care system is the top factor as to the continuing psychological disorders on foster youth.

Key points

- Foster youth transitioning to adulthood are up to 4 times as likely to have a mental health disorder than kids who are not in foster care.
- 3.7% of foster children have attempted suicide
- There is a drop of 54%-60% in mental health services after foster care exit

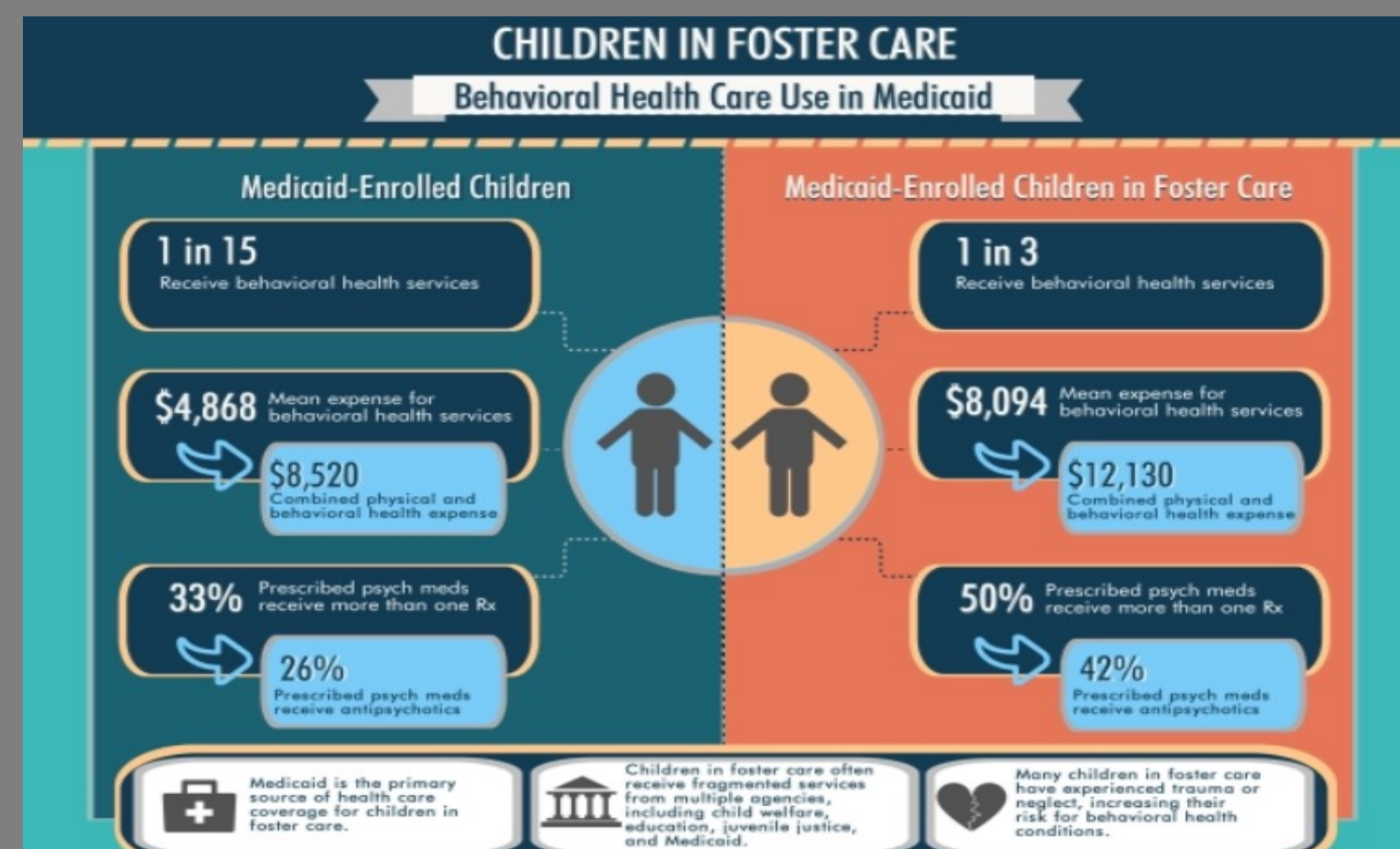


Table 2. Lifetime Prevalence of Mental Health Disorders Experienced by Children in Foster Care.

Article	Methods	Total Disease	Conduct Disorder/ Oppositional Defiant Disorder	Depression	Adjustment Disorder	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	Any Substance Use Disorder	Bipolar Disorder	Mania	Reactive Attachment Disorder	Anxiety	Suicidality	Other
Baker et al. (2007)	Child and family characteristics form, child behavior checklist (CBCL)	53%						31.3%						Anxiety/ depression: 15.7%
Harlock et al. (2013)	Literature review	Lifetime prevalence: 61-64%, 12-month prevalence: 37-49%	40-47%	27-32%	32%	13-20%	14-15%	20-37%	9%	6%				
Holtan et al. (2005)	CBCL	51.8% nonkinship, 35.8% kinship												
Lehmann et al. (2013)	Developmental and well-being assessment	50.9%	21.5%	4.0%		19%	5.0%			19.4%	8.6%			Obsessive compulsive disorder: 0.4%
Lohr & Jones (2016)	Literature review	Up to 80%					19.2-22%				Up to 40%			
McMullen et al. (2005)	Diagnostic interview schedule for DSM-IV and Childhood Trauma	47%	47%	27%		20%	14%		6%					
Onsald et al. (2016)	Questionnaire	32-44%	CD: 2-8%, ODD: 4-10%	5-15%	0.4-2.1%	10-21%				4-17%	3-12%			
Tarman, Sweeney (2006)	Literature review		CD: 17-45%	4-36%		10-30%	40-50%							4-26%
Thompson & Hain (2013)	Self-report	42%	ODD: <1%	10%		3%	2%		5%					1%
Turney & Williams (2014)	Parent report			14.2%		21.8%								Behavioral problems: 17.5%

Conclusion and Discussion

By examining the type of disorders that affect the daily lives of foster youth we can see the impactful changes that come with not receiving adequate help. It is important to acknowledge this topic because if this continuous cycle repeats itself future generations will fall into play which in the end can have negative effects on society's mental health. In the future I would like to research different ethnic backgrounds and their differences in mental health.

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