

Health Disparities among the Asian Population

There are around 20 million people who identify as Asian in the United States—6% of the total population.¹ The Asian population traces its roots to more than 20 countries in East and Southeast Asia, as well as to the Indian subcontinent.²

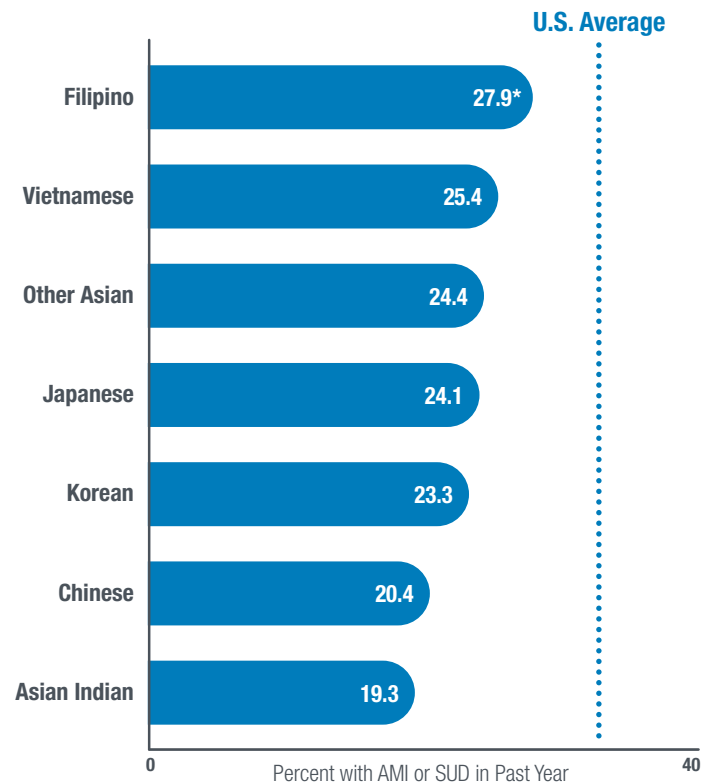
Health data aggregation very often results in findings that may inaccurately reflect the experiences of smaller subpopulations and lead to inappropriate resource allocation. Disaggregated data should be used to better inform public health interventions.

According to combined 2021-2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) data, the percentages of adults aged 18 or older who had either any mental illness (AMI) or a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year were 22.8% among the Asian population and 32.8% among the U.S. population.

Disaggregated data show the prevalence of AMI or SUD varied among Asian subgroups. Adults aged 18 or older of **Filipino** origin were **more likely** to have had either AMI or an SUD (27.9%) compared with **Chinese** (20.4%) or **Asian Indian** adults (19.3%).

Culture has both positive and negative influences on views about, and acceptance of, substance use and mental disorders. Examining the history and culture of diverse Asian subgroups enhances understanding of factors that impact mental health.

Prevalence of AMI or SUD in the Past Year: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older; by Asian Origin, 2021-2023



* Significantly different at the .05 level from Chinese and Asian Indian subgroups presented in the chart.

Note: "Multiple Asian" subgroup not shown due to low precision.

Note: "Asian" refers to people identifying themselves as Asian only. People identifying as Asian and Hispanic or Asian and another racial group are not included.

Definitions

AMI among adults refers to the presence of a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder in the past year of sufficient duration to meet criteria from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition,³ excluding developmental disorders and SUDs. AMI was estimated based on a statistical prediction model. For more details on the estimation of AMI, see the *2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): Methodological Summary and Definitions* report.⁴

SUD is characterized by impairment caused by the recurrent use of alcohol or other drugs (or both), including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home. Respondents were classified as having an SUD in the past year if they met criteria specified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition.⁵

References

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Data Source

The 2021-2023 **National Survey on Drug Use and Health** (NSDUH) is a household survey of people aged 12 or older. NSDUH collects information on tobacco, alcohol, and drug use; mental health; and other health-related issues in the United States. NSDUH uses a complex sampling method. Interviews are conducted in person and via the web. Nearly all (99.9%) Asian adults aged 18 or older took the survey in English, and 0.1% took it in Spanish. Estimates presented are weighted to the noninstitutionalized, civilian U.S. population.