



Global Mental Health: Personality Disorders

Until the beginning of this century, little was known about the prevalence of personality disorders worldwide. One complicating factor was that countries used different diagnostic approaches to determine the presence of personality disorders. In order to address this problem, the WHO surveyed individuals in 13 countries using the same screening questions based on *DSM-IV* (Huang et al., 2009; Kessler & Üstün, 2008). The screening included face-to-face interviews. In all, 21,162 individuals responded to the survey questions. Those who were screened were chosen to reflect the demographics of their particular country. The 13 countries were widely distributed and included both economically developed and developing countries, including one in Asia (China), two in Africa (Nigeria and South Africa), six in Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, and Spain), one in the Middle East (Lebanon), and three in the Americas (Colombia, Mexico, and the United States).

Table 14.3 shows the prevalence of personality disorders by cluster. In addition to the data presented in the table, there were several other interesting findings related to the prevalence of personality disorders worldwide. First, more men than women were found in Cluster A and Cluster C. Second, all three clusters showed an inverse relationship with education. Third, over half of the individuals with a personality disorder also met criteria for an additional *DSM* disorder such as anxiety, mood, substance use, or externalizing disorders. Those areas with the highest SES showed greatest percentage of respondents in treatment. Besides the United States at 37.3%, Western Europe was 21.6% and South Africa was 19.9%. The least were Nigeria (6%), China (6.6%), and Lebanon (7.8%).

Thought Question: What follow-up research questions would you want to study next after reviewing the data in this table or in the related findings presented here?

TABLE 14.3 Prevalence of Personality Disorders Worldwide

	CLUSTER A % (SE)	CLUSTER B % (SE)	CLUSTER C % (SE)	ANY PERSONALITY DISORDER, % (SE)	N
Colombia	5.3 (0.6)	2.1 (0.4)	3.6 (0.5)	7.9 (1.1)	2381
Lebanon	4.2 (1.7)	1.7 (0.9)	2.9 (0.8)	6.2 (1.7)	10.31
Mexico	4.6 (0.7)	1.6 (0.4)	2.4 (0.5)	6.1 (0.8)	2362
Nigeria	1.6 (0.5)	0.3 (0.2)	0.9 (0.3)	2.7 (0.7)	2143
People's Republic of China	3.1 (0.7)	1.3 (0.7)	1.4 (0.6)	4.1 (1.1)	1628
South Africa	3.4 (0.5)	1.5 (0.3)	2.5 (0.5)	6.8 (0.7)	4315
USA	40.4 (0.4)	2.0 (0.3)	4.2 (0.4)	7.6 ^b (0.5)	5692
Western Europe ^a	1.1 (0.6)	0.4 (0.3)	1.2 (0.5)	2.4 (0.9)	1610
Total	3.6 (0.3)	1.5 (0.1)	2.7 (0.2)	6.1 (0.3)	21162

IPDE, International Personality Disorder Examination; WMH, World Mental Health.

^aIncludes Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

^bThis prevalence estimate differs from the estimate reported in a previous study based on US data owing to the use of an improved imputation equation in the current analysis.

Source: Huang et al. (2009).