

Mental Health Care Needs in the U.S. and 10 Other High-Income Countries

Findings from the 2020 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey

Prepared for World Mental Health Day, October 10, 2021

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Overview

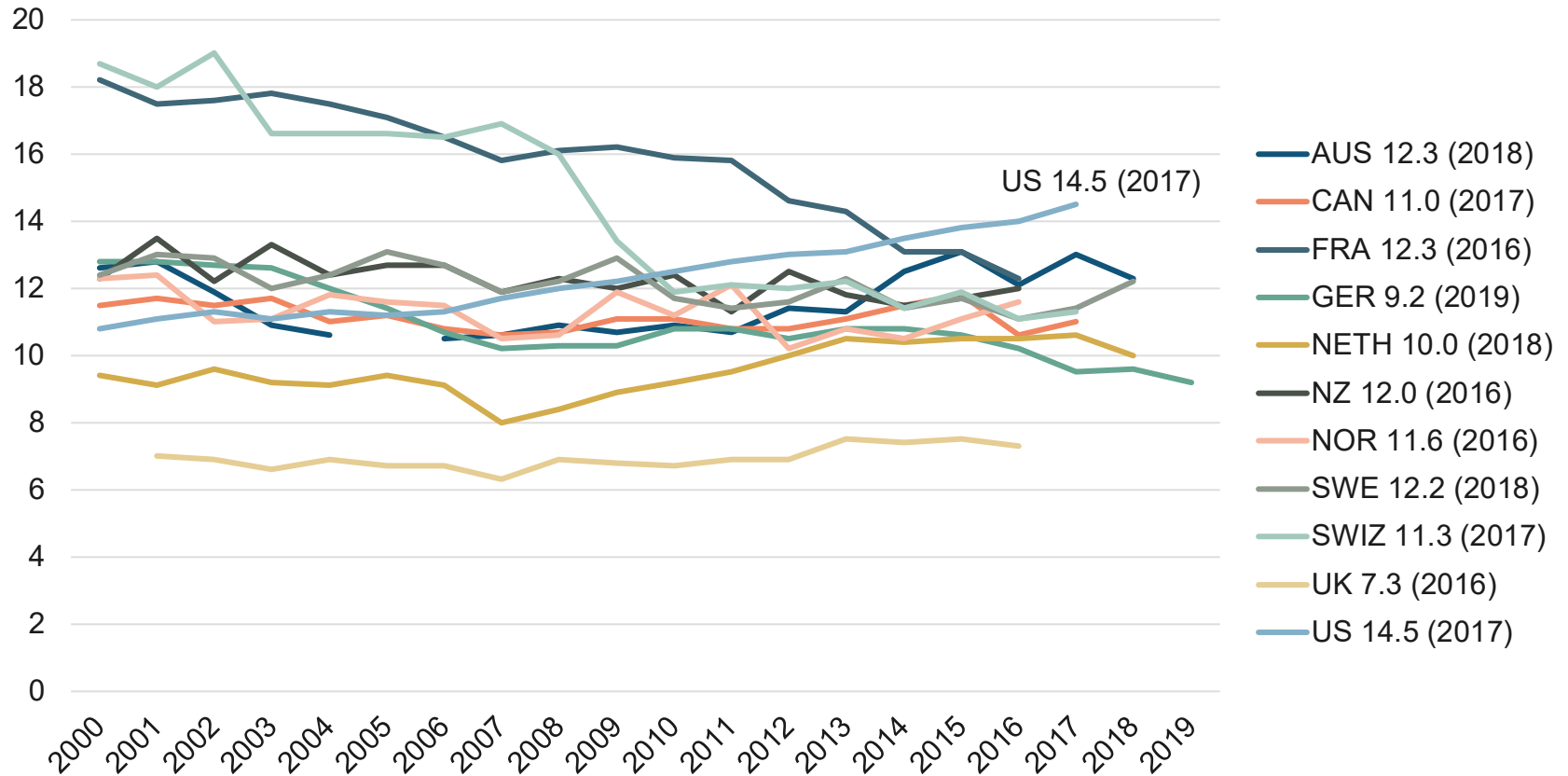
October 10 is World Mental Health Day, an occasion to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilize efforts to improve affordable access to mental health care. The day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on these issues to talk about their work and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for all who need it.

Findings from the [2020 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey](#), which included the United States and 10 other high-income countries, highlight the need for continued investment in mental health. The following charts show that, across the countries, large shares of people with mental health needs:

- experience multiple chronic health conditions
- use multiple prescription medications
- visit the emergency room for care that could have been provided by a primary care clinician
- have high rates of cost-related problems accessing care, especially among U.S. Black and Latinx/Hispanic adults.

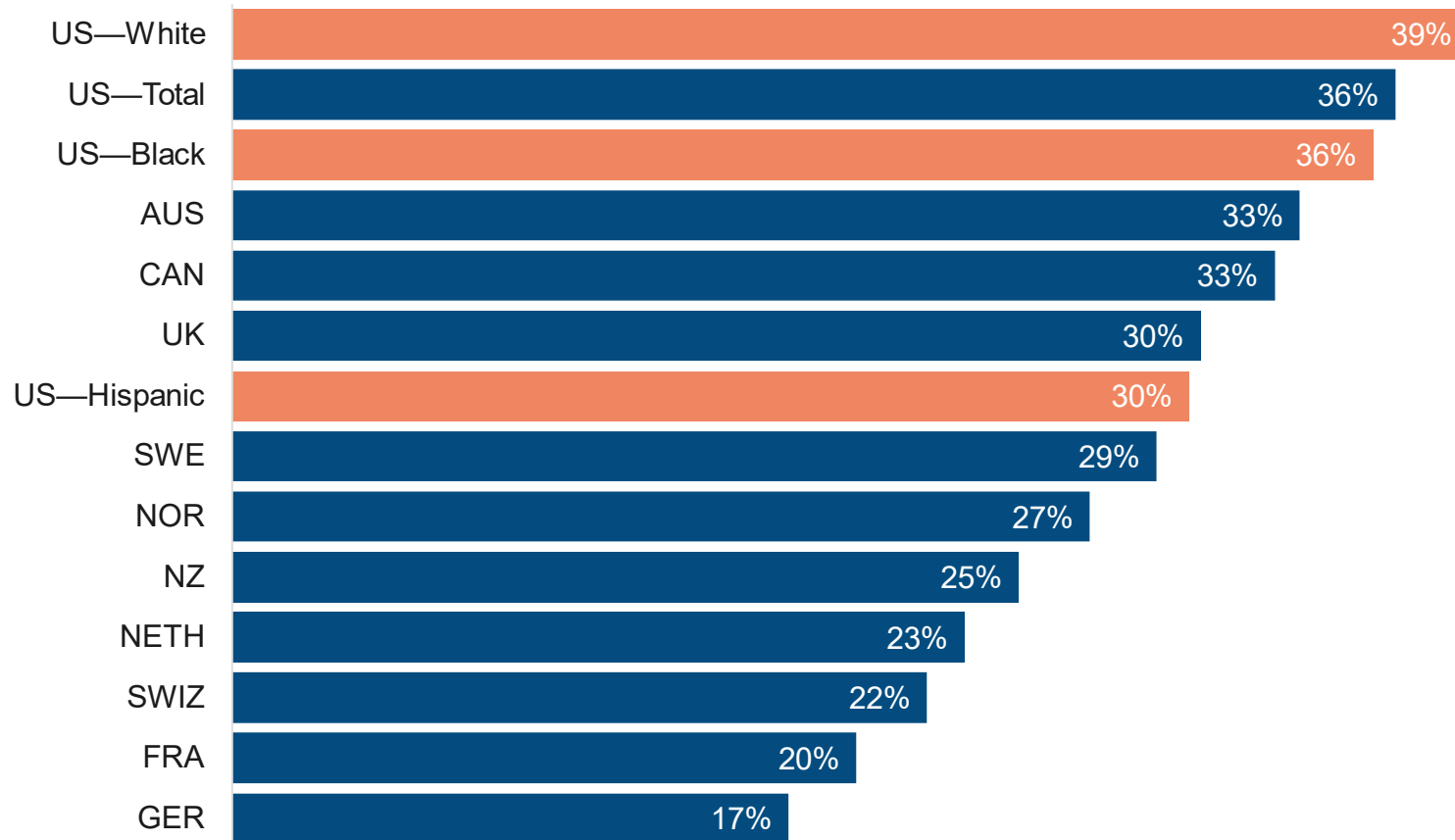
The U.S. had the highest suicide rate among the 11 high-income countries, a trend that has been worsening for nearly 20 years.

Suicide deaths per 100,000 (standardized rates), 2000–2019 (or nearest year)



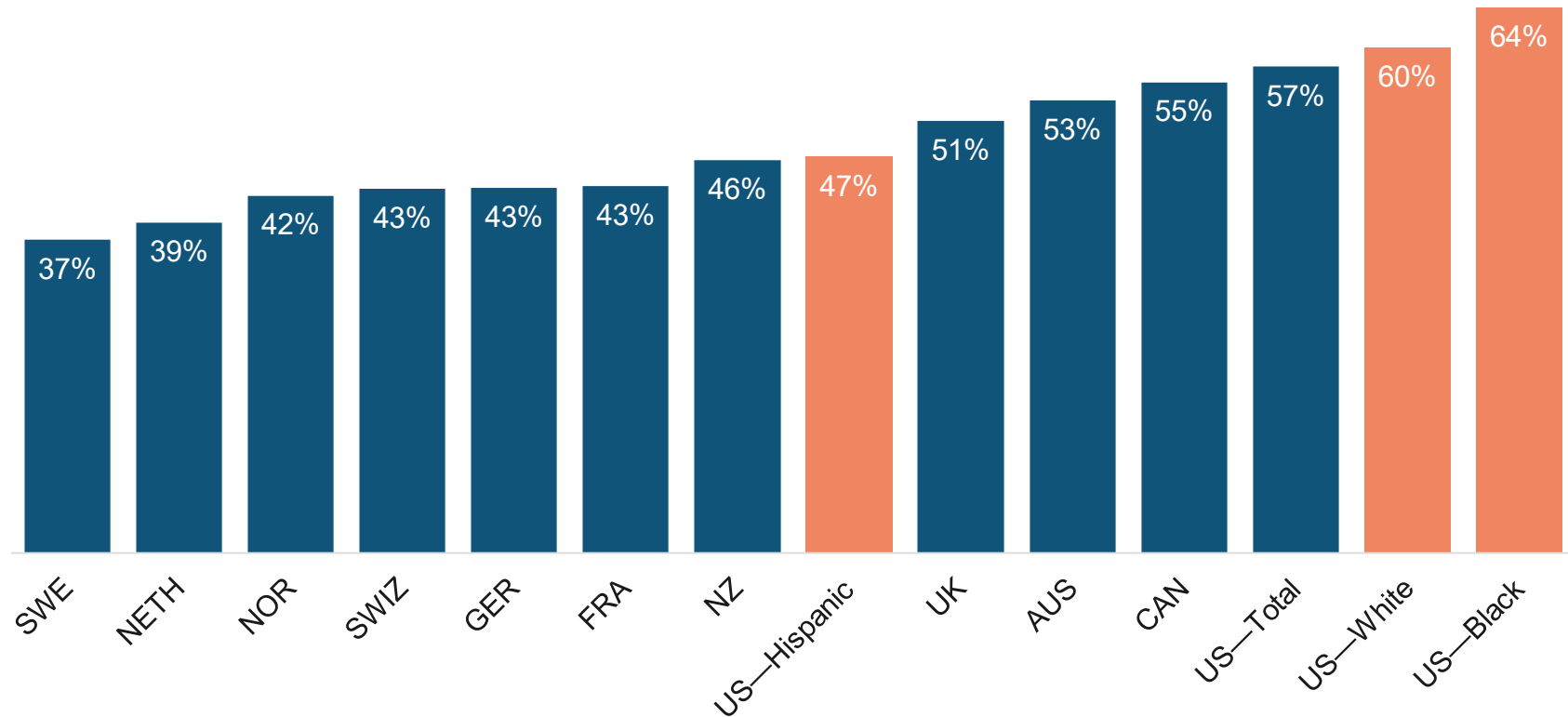
White and Black U.S. adults reported the highest rates of mental health needs.

Percentage of adults age 18+ who reported a mental health need



In the U.S., a larger proportion of adults with mental health needs have multiple chronic health conditions compared to other countries; six in 10 Black Americans with mental health needs reported two or more such conditions.

Percentage of adults age 18+ who had two or more chronic conditions, among those who reported a mental health need



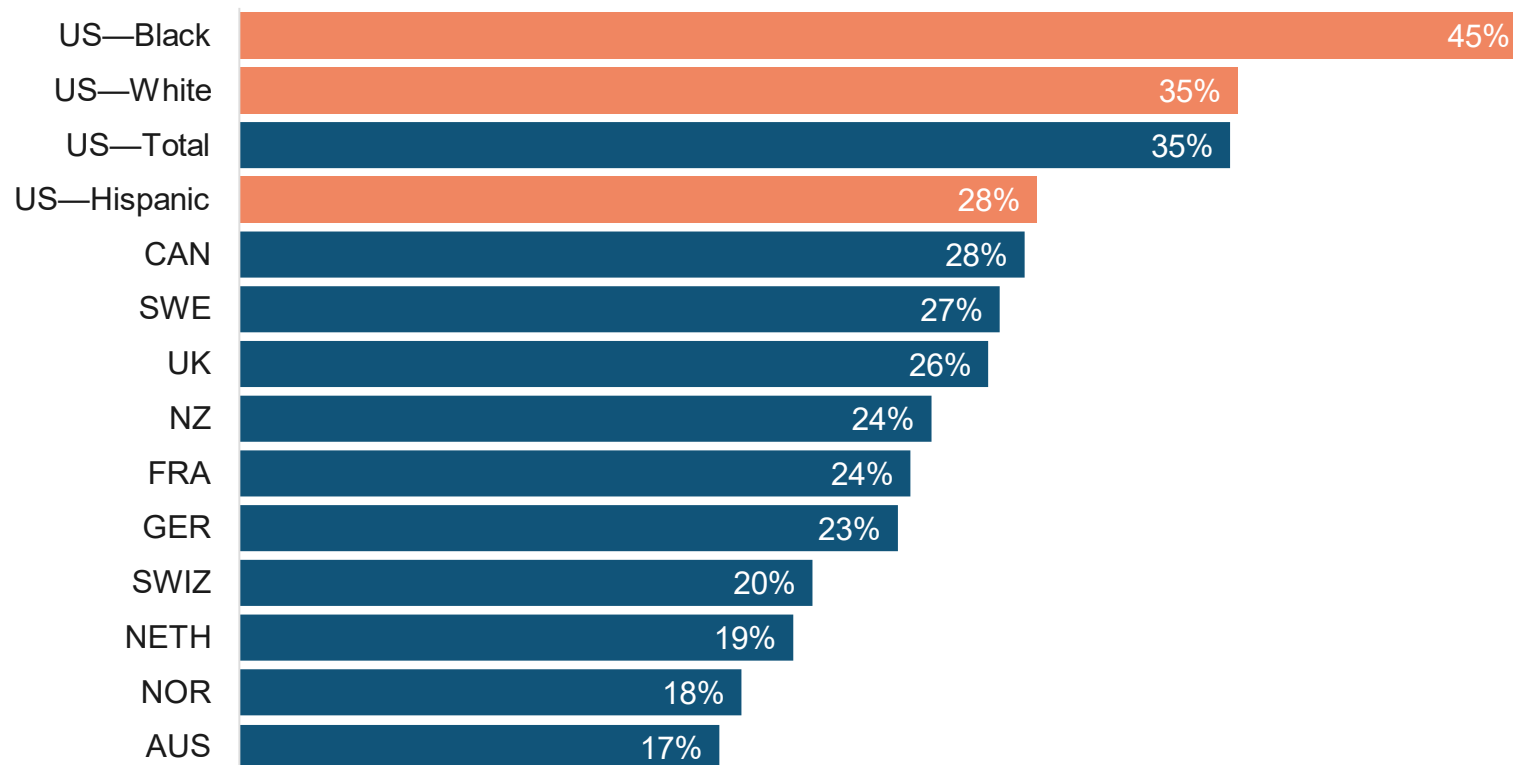
Note: Respondents reported being told by a doctor they had at least one of the following other chronic conditions: hypertension or high blood pressure; heart disease, including heart attack; diabetes; asthma or chronic lung disease such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or COPD; cancer; arthritis; stroke.

Population: Among respondents who reported they had ever been told they had depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions, or said there was a time in the past 12 months they wanted to talk with a health care professional about their mental health.

Data: 2020 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey.

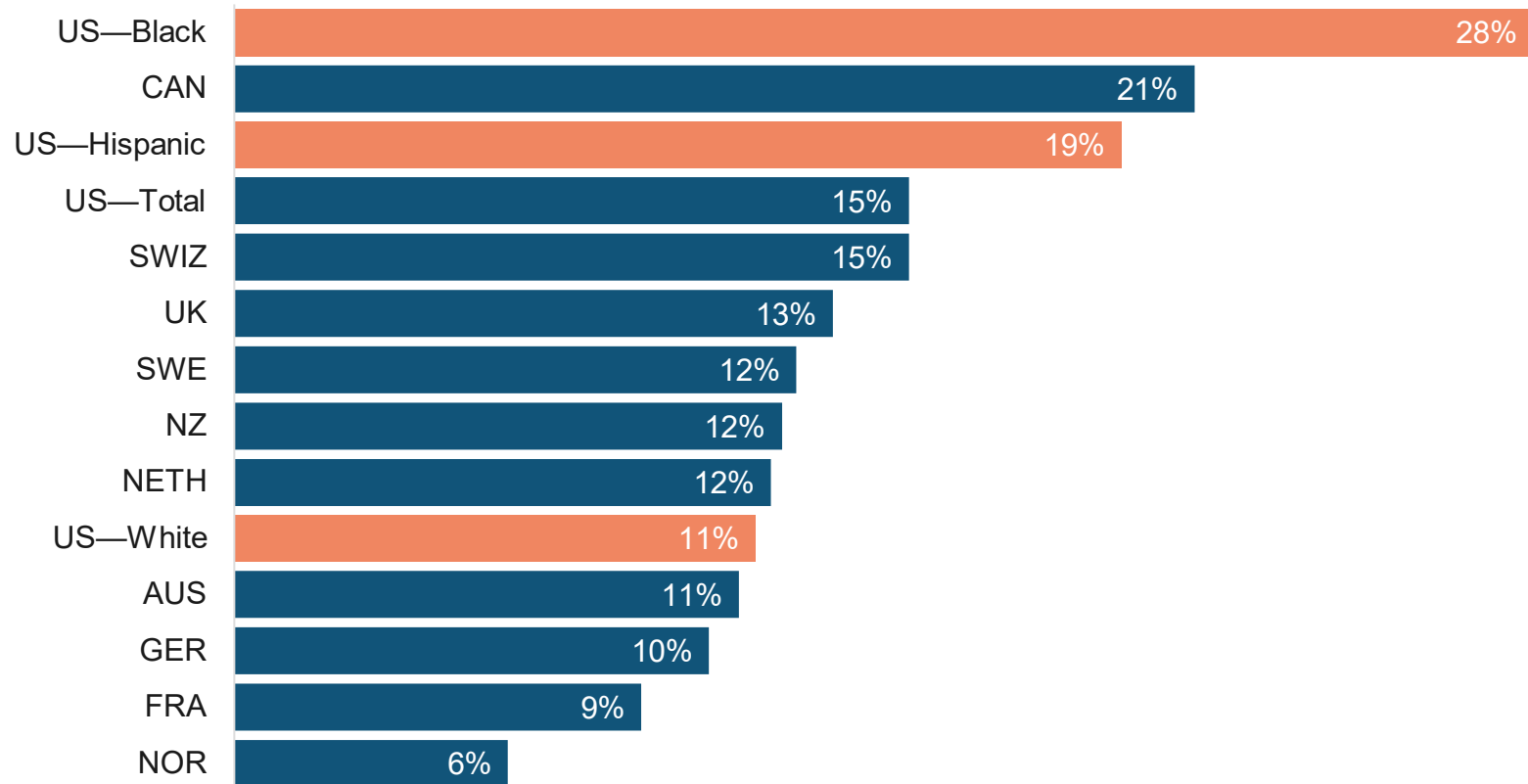
A greater share of U.S. respondents with mental health needs said they regularly take four or more prescription drugs, with rates for Black Americans the highest overall.

Percentage of adults age 18+ who reported regularly taking four or more prescription medications among those who reported a mental health need



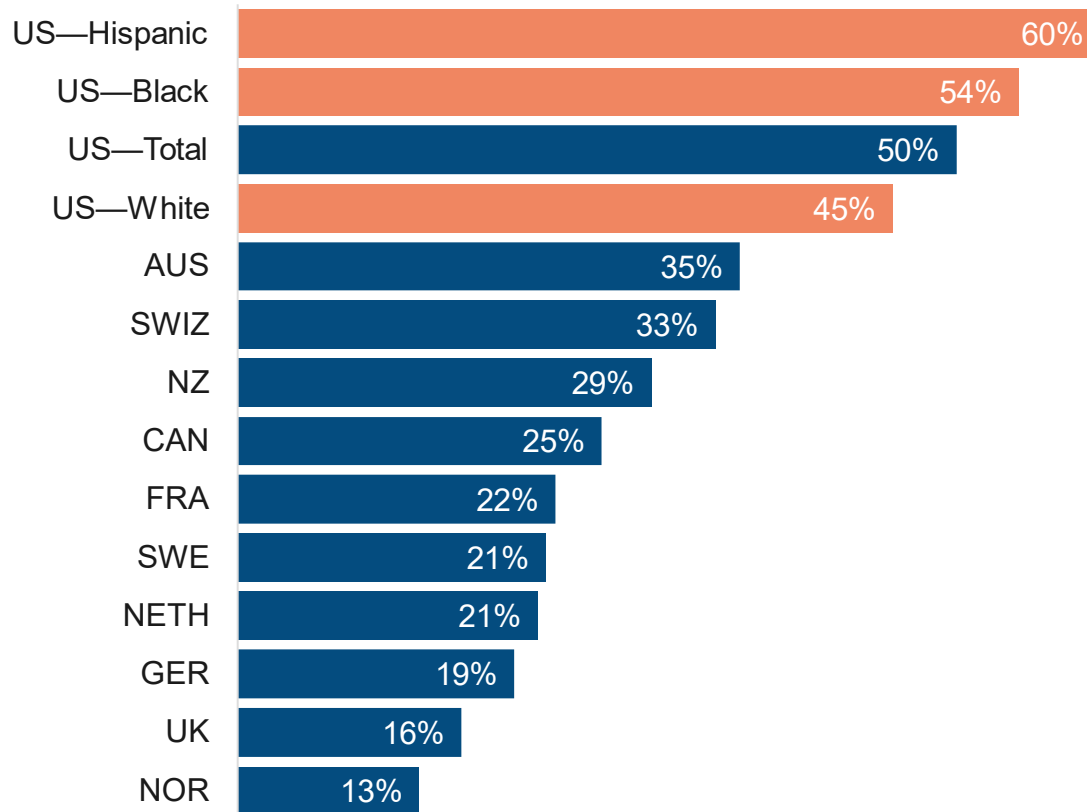
Black adults with mental health needs had the highest level of avoidable emergency room use across the countries.

Percentage of adults age 18+ who used the emergency room for care that could have been provided by a regular doctor or place of care, among those who reported a mental health need



U.S. respondents with mental health needs, particularly Black and Hispanic Americans, were most likely to report cost-related problems accessing health care.

Percentage of adults age 18+ with a mental health need who reported any cost-related access problem



Cost-related access problem: Respondent either 1) had a medical problem but did not consult with or visit a doctor because of the cost, 2) skipped a medical test, treatment, or follow-up that was recommended by a doctor because of the cost, or 3) did not fill or collect a prescription for medicine or skipped doses of their medicine because of the cost.

Population: Among respondents who reported they had ever been told they had depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions, or said there was a time in the past 12 months they wanted to talk with a health care professional about their mental health.

Data: 2020 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey.

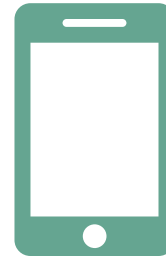
Other countries' approaches to [expanding mental health services](#) offer the U.S. important lessons on prioritizing mental health, making care more convenient, and scaling treatment approaches to help more people.



**Treat
mild-to-moderate
symptoms**



**Integrate
physical and mental
health care**



**Use digital
technology to make
care convenient**



**Address the
social determinants
of mental health**

About the 2020 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey

- Twenty-second in the Commonwealth Fund's series of international health policy surveys.
- Nationally representative samples of 22,402 adults age 18 and older across 11 countries: Australia (2,201), Canada (4,530), France (3,028), Germany (1,004), Netherlands (753), New Zealand (1,003), Norway (607), Sweden (2,513), Switzerland (2,284), United Kingdom (1,991), United States (2,488).
- Survey completed online or through computer-assisted landline or mobile phone interviews between February and May 2020.
- Learn more [about the survey here](#).