

Title: Panic or Asthma Attack: A Relation Between Asthma and Emotional Wellbeing

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Background/Purpose: Asthma rates in West Virginia (WV) are as high (CDC, 2020), and persons with asthma often report increased mental health challenges (Katon et al., 1986). Because depression is also high in WV (Muntaner & Barnett, 2000), we sought to examine the relations among age, asthma and depression in WV.

Method: Data from 4859 West Virginians who completed the 2020 BRFSS from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were analyzed using the Web-Enabled Analysis Tool (WEAT). We conducted a cross-tabulation to examine the relation between asthma and emotional wellbeing.

Results: The cross tabulation was significant (χ^2 (DF=2, N=4859) = 121.6, $p < .001$). Moreover, the relation held among younger adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults. Of note, more older adults with asthma reported zero poor mental health days (64%) compared to middle-aged (41%) and younger (34.6%) adults with asthma. Notably, only 18.3% of older adults, but 36.4% of middle-aged and 26.8% of younger adults with asthma reported 15+ poor mental health days per month. Approximately 29.6% of all participants who currently have asthma have had 14+ poor mental health days.

Conclusions: Our results highlight the emotional toll that many adults with asthma face. Results also suggest that younger and middle-aged adults with asthma may require additional supports to live healthy lives.