

Depression Risk Higher in Obese Black Women

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CHICAGO — The odds of comorbid depression are 41% greater in obese than in nonobese African American women, according to a large national study.

Based on this finding, obese African American women should routinely be screened for depression during office visits, Stephanie Sturgis said at the annual

American Psychiatric Association's Institute on Psychiatric Services.

The study involved 9,343 randomly selected African American women in 36 states who participated in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey and completed a brief depression screen.

More than 40% of the women had a body mass index of 30 kg/m² or greater,

and more than 13% were depressed as defined by their score on the depression screen, although this probably underestimates the true prevalence of depression nationally because institutionalized women were excluded, said Ms. Sturgis, a public health analyst at the CDC.

Among obese African American women, the adjusted odds of depression were significantly increased among those with a college degree, who were 2.75-

fold more likely to be depressed than were those with less education.

Depression also was significantly more common in obese African American women who were moderate drinkers than in either obese heavy drinkers or nondrinkers. After adjustment for potential confounders, the moderate drinkers were 2.1-fold more likely to be depressed. In other studies, heavy drinking has been associated with depression. ■

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