New Imperatives for Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Mental Illness

Fourth World Conference on Promotion of Mental Health and the Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders

Oslo, Norway
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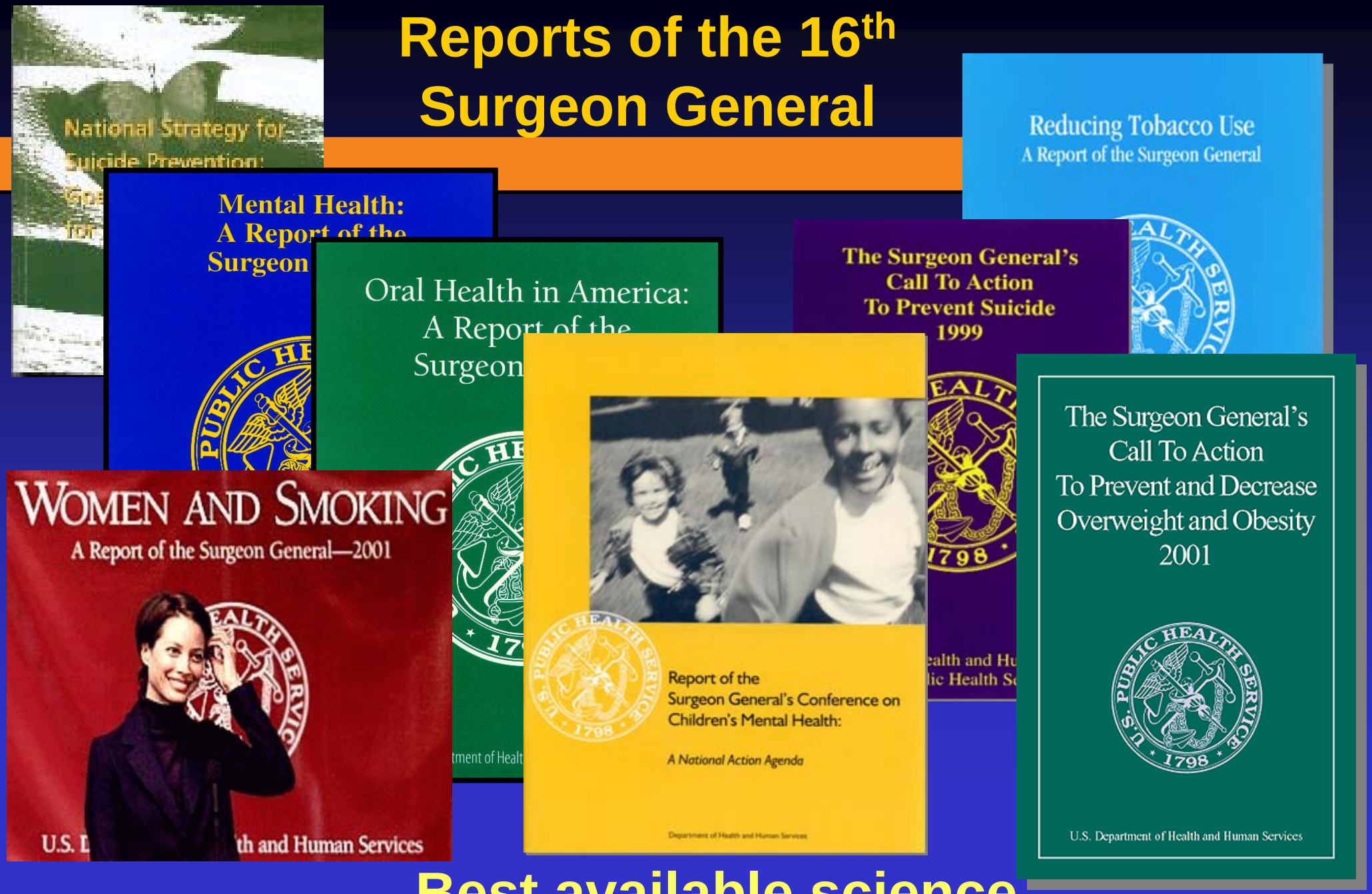
Reports of the 16th Surgeon General



Best available science

Surgeon General's Mental Health Reports

Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General
December 1999

Supplements

- **Children's Mental Health**
  January 2001
- **Culture, Race & Ethnicity**
  August 2001
- **Mental Retardation**
  February 2002

Mental Health

The successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with others, and the ability to adapt to change and to successfully cope with adversity.

Key Messages

- **Mental health is fundamental to overall health and well-being.**
- **Mental disorders are real.**

Key Messages

Mental disorders are physical disorders.

"The greatest mistake in the treatment of diseases is that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, although the two cannot be separated." ***-- Plato***

Key Messages

Mental disorders are common (U.S.).

- 1 in 5 Americans has a diagnosable mental disorder each year.

44 million adults

13.7 million children

Key Messages

Mental disorders are disabling.

Mental disorders are as disabling as cancer or heart disease in terms of premature death and lost productivity.

The Good News

Research has improved our ability to recognize, diagnose, and treat conditions effectively.

- 80-90% of mental disorders are treatable using medication and other therapies

The Bad News

Of those with a diagnosable mental disorder...

- Fewer than half of adults get help
- Only one-third of children get help

New Imperatives for Promoting Mental Health

New Knowledge: We can do more because we know more

- New understanding of brain and how it works.
- New information about cost of providing comprehensive parity of access and its affect on cost
- New information about how to minimize stigma

Stigma Deters Treatment

Individual

- keeps people who are experiencing a problem from acknowledging problem and seeking help

Family/Community/Societal

- keeps people from recommending help or acknowledging problem for family and friends

Policy Arena

- keeps government and private sector from addressing problems

New Imperatives for Promoting Mental Health

New challenges based on manmade and natural disasters

- Mental health consequences of natural and manmade disasters, i.e. Tsunami, Katrina, Iraqi war
- Increase in **number of natural disasters**
- Exposure to severe trauma associated with chronic anxiety and depressive reactions.
- 1 of 3 survivors have severe stress symptoms, putting them at risk for lasting PTSD and aberrant behavior.

The Toll of Natural Disasters

1975
100 disasters

2005
> 400 disasters

- 157 million people worldwide were affected by natural disasters in 2005.
- 20% of a population affected by a disaster suffers mild or moderate mental disorders, from a baseline prevalence of 10%

New Imperatives for Promoting Mental Health

New models for integrating mental health and primary care

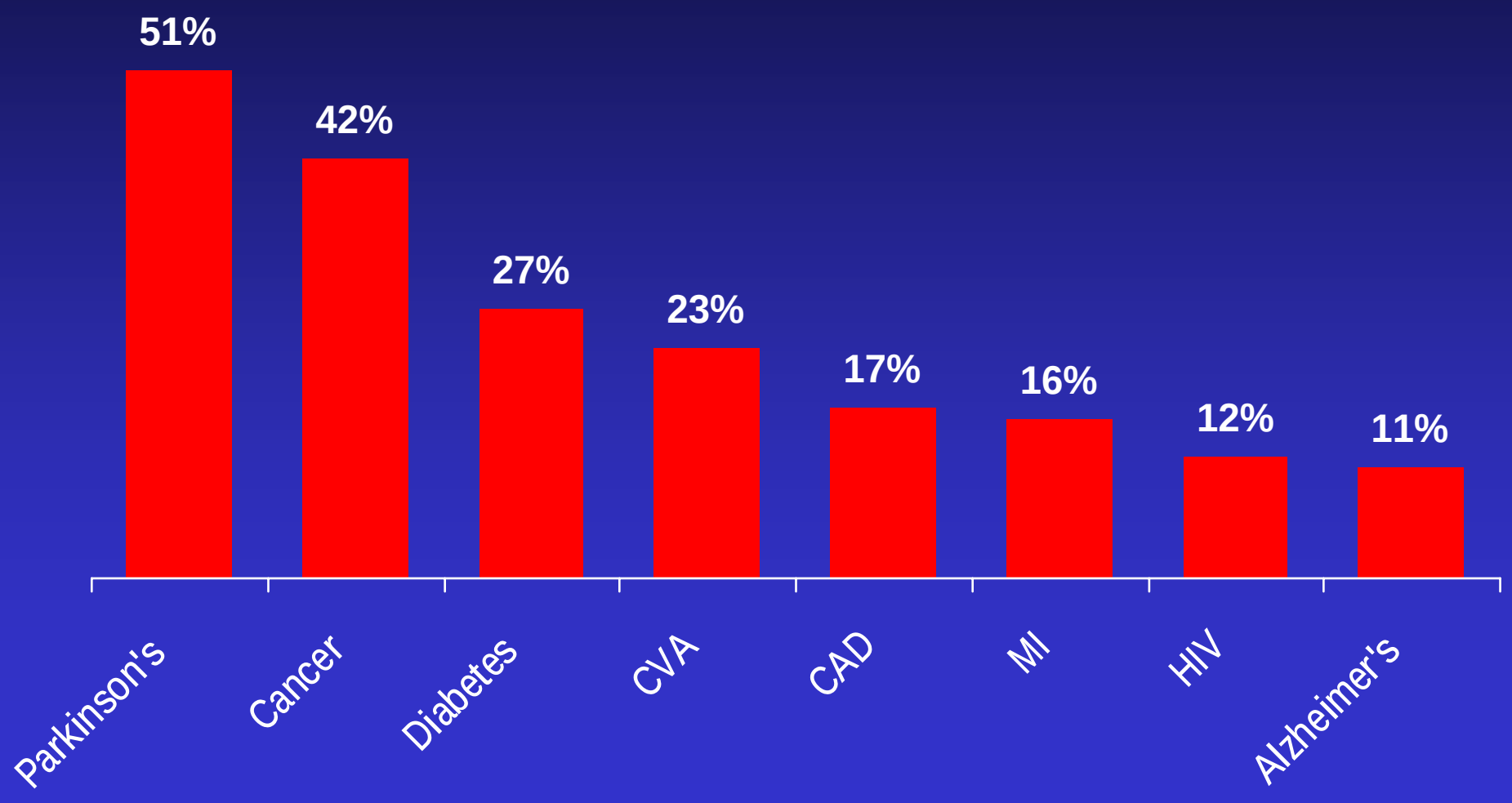
- Need to integrate to facilitate: screening for early recognition, diagnosis, referrals
- Reducing stigma
- Primary care providers should improve ability to diagnose and treat major mental illness including depression and substance abuse.
- Primary care providers should provide follow through.

President's New Freedom Commission On Mental Health

- Mental health problems are not adequately addressed in primary care settings.
- Despite their prevalence, mental disorders often go undiagnosed, untreated, or under-treated in primary care.
- A significant percentage of patients in primary care shows signs of depression, yet up to half go undetected and untreated.

Recommendation: Expand screening and collaborative care in primary settings

Prevalence of Depression in Chronic Disease



A Global Mental Health Policy Response

- Minimizing exposure to violence
  - Improving the physical, social and economic environments
- Work to reduce stigma
- Availability of and access to culturally appropriate mental health services
- Mechanisms for disaster early detection and intervention
- Post disaster response strategies, including empowerment strategies to restore social capital

“The breach between what we know and what we do is lethal.”

Night Falls Fast

Kay Redfield Jamison

PRESCRIPTION

(Not to be used to obtain medication or to contradict your own doctor's advice)

16th Surgeon General of the United States

Best Health Wishes

- Moderate physical activity, at least 5 days a week, 30 minutes per day
- Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- Avoid toxins—tobacco, illicit drugs, and *abuse* of alcohol
- Responsible sexual behavior: abstinence plus optimal protection when sexually active

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