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## **A Comparison of Self-reported Primary Mental Health Care Utilization in the Canadian Community Health Survey with Respondents' Provincial Health Insurance Records**

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### **Abstract**

Accurate information about the timing of access to primary mental health care is critically important in order to identify potentially modifiable factors which could facilitate timely and on-going management of care. No "gold standard" measure of mental health care utilization exists, so it is useful to know how strengths, gaps, and limitations in different data sources influence study results. This study compares two population-wide measures of primary mental health care utilization data: the Canadian Community Health Survey of Mental Health and Well-being (CCHS, cycle 1.2) and provincial health insurance records in the province of British Columbia. It explores four questions: (1) Is 12-month prevalence of contacts with general practitioners for mental health issues the same regardless of whether survey data or administrative data are used? (2) What is the level of agreement between the survey data and administrative data for having had any contact with a general practitioner for mental health issues during the 12 month period before the survey interview? (3) Is the level of agreement constant throughout the 12-month period or does it decline over more distant sub-timeframes within the 12-month period? (4) What kinds of respondent characteristics, including mental disorders, are associated with agreement or lack of agreement?

The results of this study will provide useful information about how to use and interpret each measure of health care utilization. In addition, it will contribute to survey design research, and to research which aims to improve the methods for using administrative data for mental health services research.

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