Conceptual and Programmatic Issues in the Treatment of Comorbid Disorders

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1. 3% of the U.S. population has co-occurring disorders
2. Of those people with co-occurring disorders
   a. 72% received no treatment in previous 12 months
   b. only 8% received both mental and substance abuse treatment
   c. only 23% of those in treatment received “appropriate treatment”
Current Situation in Treatment Systems:

- Comorbid rates are high
- Patients with multiple disorders are most costly to treat and less responsive to treatment
- The same patient may be offered different services depending on whether he or she enters mental health or substance abuse treatment system
- Treatment programs are burdened with multiple levels of oversight
- Expectations of managed care organizations are often unrealistic
- Mistrust and misunderstanding between mental health and substance abuse treatment systems
Resource/Funding Needs

- Adequate psychiatric coverage
- Adequate general medical and laboratory coverage
- Access to appropriate pharmacotherapy
- Funding for case management
- Housing
Enlightened Treatment System Would:

- Recognize addiction as a type of mental illness
- Recognize “dual diagnosis” as a misnomer
- Recognize chronic and relapsing nature of comorbid disorders
- Provide integrated treatment and preserve treatment continuity
- Expect realistic outcomes within a realistic time frame.