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RACIAL DISPARITIES IN TREATMENT SERVICE UTILIZATION AMONG U.S. ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSERS WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

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**Introduction:** Previous studies have shown that African American youth are over-represented in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Substance use problems are common among those with CJS involvement. However, less is known regarding racial disparities, among youth with CJS involvement, in receiving substance use treatment services.

**Objective:** To examine racial disparities with regard to receiving treatment services for substance use related problems, among youth with (CJS) involvement.

**Methods:** Data were obtained from the 2006-2008 United States National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) in USA. Among White and African American adolescents (Ages 12-17) with recent CJS involvement and who met criteria for alcohol or illicit drug abuse or dependence (N=602), racial differences in receiving treatment services for substance use problems were examined. Multiple logistic regression analyses were performed to identify predictors of service access among the adolescents, to see if the racial disparity could be explained by individual-level, family-level, and criminal justice system involvement factors.

**Results:** While 31.2% of White adolescent substance abusers with CJS involvement had received treatment for substance use related problems, only 11.6% of their African American counterparts had received such treatment (P=0.0005). Multiple logistic regression analyses showed that access to treatment services can be predicted by substance use related delinquent behaviors, but that racial disparities in treatment still exist after adjusting for these factors (AOR=0.24, 95%CI=(0.09,0.59), P=0.0027).

**Conclusions:** There is an urgent need to reduce racial disparities in receiving substance use treatment among U.S. youth with CJS involvement.