BACKGROUND

Substance use disorder (SUD) is diagnosed in 10% of the US population across a lifetime. Although around 10% of individuals with SUD go into long-term remission each year, the disease is considered chronic and is punctuated by many periods of abstinence, relapse, and eventual long-term remission. Nevertheless, only 35-50% of individuals with SUD experience long-term remission within 17 years of diagnosis. To account for disease chronicity and varying levels of need over time, several treatment programs exist, each tailored to an individual’s current acuity and needs. These treatments include inpatient, residential, partial hospitalization program (PHP), intensive outpatient program, and outpatient treatment. Patients are assessed and referred for a specific level of treatment, and individual outcomes are superior if patients enter and complete the recommended program. However, many patients choose to reduce their lengths of stay, discharge against medical advice, or enter programs mismatched with their current acuity.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this retrospective study was to describe patient populations within the five unique SUD programs as well as variables related to program outcomes.

METHODS

Medical records were used to collect data. Eligible subjects were adults enrolled in SUD treatment at a midwestern psychiatric hospital between 1/1/17-12/31/19. Data included demographics, diagnoses, tobacco use, number and length of stays, discharges, and program type. Basic descriptive statistics were conducted. Depending on the variable, patient data were counted once at first entry of each relevant program within the study dates (e.g., age, rate/ethnicity, reason for treatment, mental health diagnoses) or upon each entry into the program (e.g., admission count, length of stay).

RESULTS

- The majority of patients receiving treatment for SUD were male, white, and under 40 years old (Table 1).
- Black patients had higher rates of admission to inpatient and lower rates of residential stays compared to white patients.
- Alcohol use (43-71%) and opioid use (24-57%) were the most prevalent reasons for treatment (Figure 1). Variations were evident across programs.
- Many patients had concurrent mental health diagnoses (Figure 2), with depression, anxiety disorders, and addiction disorders being highly prevalent.
- Inpatients were the most likely to have bipolar or psychotic disorders.
- Programs had unique length of stay and early discharge patterns (Figure 3).

CONCLUSIONS

Patients receiving treatment for SUD are highly varied, and population differences exist between programs. These data suggest opportunities for additional tailoring within programs to meet the specific behavioral needs of different patient subpopulations.