



Increase Service Access Mental Health in Developing Countries: Literature Review Challenge and Solution Community Based

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Abstract

Mental health has become one of the major issues in social development, especially in developing countries, where challenges such as social stigma, lack of resources, and limited access to health services are major barriers. This study aims to explore mental health policies adopted in developing countries and the role of community based health services in supporting the implementation of such policies. The study used a literature review approach to research published in the last 10 years (2013-2023) to identify policies, challenges, and successes in addressing mental health. The results showed that the integration of mental health into primary health services, human resource capacity building, and community-based programs have a significant positive impact in improving access and quality of mental health services. Programs such as WHO's mhGAP, which strengthens the capacity of primary health services to treat mental disorders, have been successfully adopted by developing countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda, and Nepal. In addition, community-based approaches involving the training of mental health cadres have been shown to be effective in detecting and dealing with mental disorders in remote areas, as is the case in India. In Kenya, community-based education campaigns have increased the number of mental health consultations by 30% in the last five years. This success shows that the integration of mental health services at the community level and increased public awareness can improve access and reduce the stigma that prevents people from seeking care. However, the results also highlight the need to strengthen public policy support and reduce stigma against mental health in the community to ensure the sustainability of programs that have been implemented.

Keywords: Community Based Services, Developing Countries, Literature Review, Mental Health, Public Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is one of the most important aspects of the well-being of society as a whole. Mental health disorders can affect an individual's quality of life, community productivity, and social stability. In addition, these disorders can cause long-term adverse effects, both for the individual who suffers them and for the environment around them. When a person experiences mental health problems, they often have difficulty going about their daily activities, interacting with others, and reaching their full potential. On a broader scale, the increasing prevalence of mental disorders can affect health, economic, and educational systems, which in turn can hinder a country's social and economic development.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in four people in the world will experience a mental health disorder in their lifetime (WHO, 2018). This shows the extent of the impact that mental health has on people's lives. In developing countries, the burden of mental health disorders is often heavier due to various factors such as social stigma, limited human and financial resources, and lack of policies that support the provision of adequate

mental health services. In addition, the inability to access appropriate treatment worsens the condition of mentally impaired individuals, so they are forced to face it without adequate support. This limited access also often causes untreated mental disorders to become more severe, leading to long-term harm to individuals and society. With increasing economic and social pressures in developing countries, attention to mental health issues must be a priority in efforts for more inclusive and sustainable development.

The increasing prevalence of mental health disorders has prompted governments in various countries to develop more inclusive and community based policies. This policy aims to ensure that mental health services are accessible to all levels of society, including those in remote areas or who are financially underprivileged. In many cases, government efforts focus on providing more affordable services, as well as bringing mental health services closer to the community through community health centers, hospitals, and other local health facilities. In addition, community based policies also encourage community involvement in reducing stigma related to mental disorders, as well as increasing understanding and support for individuals in need of care. It involves a range of educational programmes aimed at changing people's views on mental health and inviting them to be more open in providing support to people who experience it.

This approach not only expands access to services, but also focuses on prevention, through education and programs that raise awareness about the importance of mental health from an early age. In addition, this policy also encourages the integration of mental health services with the public health system, in order to create a more holistic treatment, where mental disorders are not only seen as a medical problem, but also as a social issue that requires collective attention and solutions. Thus, it is hoped that a more caring and responsive society can be created for mental health issues, so that the overall quality of life can be improved, and the negative impact of mental disorders on productivity, social relationships, and individual well-being can be minimized.

Community based health services, such as mental health cadre training and psychosocial support, are among the proposed solutions to reach communities in remote or underserved areas (Patel et al., 2018). This approach allows trained community members to provide initial support, recognize symptoms of mental health disorders, and help refer individuals who need further treatment to a more complete health facility. By engaging communities directly, Community based services also help reduce the stigma that often prevents people from seeking help. In addition, mental health cadre training strengthens people's capacity to care for community members who experience mental health problems, so

they do not feel isolated or neglected. The Model can also accelerate early detection and faster intervention, which is critical in reducing the long-term impact of mental health disorders. Along with this, the psychosocial support provided by community members not only helps individuals with mental disorders, but also strengthens social bonds and solidarity within those communities, creating a more inclusive and caring environment for shared mental well-being.

The social Stigma attached to mental health disorders often makes individuals hesitant to seek help, even when services are readily available. This exacerbates inequalities in access to effective care, as many people feel ashamed or fear of being perceived as weak. In addition, the lack of professionals trained in mental health in many areas, especially in remote areas, limits the ability of health systems to provide adequate care. Many existing health workers are more focused on other medical issues, so the lack of specialization in psychology or psychiatry leads to a lack of needed support. Budget constraints are also a significant constraint, given that many developing countries face limited allocation of funds for the health sector in general. Limited budgets hinder the development of adequate mental health facilities, the training of mental health cadres, as well as educational campaigns to reduce stigma. Therefore, this study aims to analyze mental health policies that have been adopted by developing countries as well as assess the role of Community based services in improving the access and effectiveness of such services.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used in this study is a systematic literature review, which is designed to provide a thorough understanding of the various findings and views related to the topic discussed. The research steps include several important stages beginning with the determination of strict literature search criteria. The articles selected for this study were published within the last 10 years (2013-2023) with a primary focus on mental health policy in developing countries. The determination of the time period aims to ensure that the literature analyzed is relevant to current conditions and challenges in global mental health policy and in developing countries. The data sources used include databases of leading and trusted academic journals, including PubMed, Scopus, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. The use of these various databases ensures a wide and comprehensive coverage of the literature, covering articles from various relevant disciplines, such as public health, public policy, psychology, and sociology, to provide a more holistic perspective on the topics covered.

In the literature search process, the keywords used included "mental health," "public policy," "Community based services," "developing countries," "mental health stigma," and "access to health services," which were designed to reach articles that focused on the main research topic of mental health policy and its implementation in developing countries. Using specific and targeted keywords, it is expected to find literature that addresses various aspects of mental health, including Community based services, social stigma related to mental disorders, and challenges faced by developing countries in providing adequate mental health services. The inclusion criteria set out in this study are articles that directly address mental health policies, implementation of Community based services, challenges facing developing countries, as well as those studies that provide relevant empirical data for analysis. Articles that do not meet these criteria, such as those that do not provide sufficient information or that are not relevant to the research topic, will be excluded from this review.

Once the literature has been collected, the data obtained will be analyzed using a thematic approach, which focuses on identifying the main patterns in mental health policies, the challenges that arise in the implementation of these policies, as well as the successes or failures experienced in practice. This thematic approach allows researchers to systematically explore and structure information based on emerging themes, such as access to mental health services, stigma reduction, limited resources, and the role of public policy in supporting mental health in developing countries. This analysis process aims to provide a clearer picture of how mental health policies in developing countries are implemented, what are the barriers faced, and what has been done successfully in improving access and quality of mental health services. With this approach, it is hoped that this study can make a significant contribution in broadening the understanding of effective mental health policies in developing countries, as well as providing practical recommendations for policy makers to address existing challenges and improve more inclusive and effective mental health service systems.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the literature review show some key relevant findings:

- **Mental Health Policy:** Many developing countries have integrated mental health services into primary health systems. For example, the WHO's "mhGAP" program designed to strengthen the capacity of primary health services to treat mental disorders has been adopted by countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda, and Nepal (WHO, 2020). The Program provides training to non-specialists in the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of basic mental health disorders, allowing mental health services to be more widely accessible at

the community level. As a result, these countries have shown an increase in the provision of mental health care that is more affordable and accessible to the public. "Integrating mental health services into primary health care systems allows for better coverage, early identification, and more accessible care for those who need it most". This initiative not only expands access to mental health care, but also helps reduce stigma associated with mental disorders by unifying such care in a more general health care system that is accessible to all levels of society.

- **Community Based Services:** Community based mental health services have proven to be very effective in reaching communities in remote areas. For example, in India, Community based mental health cadre training helps detect and treat cases of mild to moderate mental disorders (Patel et al., 2018). In addition, a similar program in Rwanda showed a significant increase in public awareness of the importance of mental health (Jordans et al., 2016). These programs focus not only on providing care, but also on educating the community to reduce stigma and increase understanding of mental health. As a result, many individuals who previously did not get treatment now have better access, and they feel more welcome in seeking help. In Rwanda, for example, training for community cadres not only raises awareness but also creates a very important social support network for individuals with mental health disorders. As stated by Jordans et al. (2016), "Community based mental health services help to create a more supportive environment, where individuals feel empowered to seek help and are less likely to experience social exclusion". This Community based approach plays a major role in addressing the challenges of access and stigma that are often major barriers to the treatment of mental health disorders in many developing countries.
- **Challenges:** The main barriers to policy implementation are social stigma, lack of trained personnel, and limited funding. In some African countries, such as Nigeria and Ghana, only 1-2% of the national health budget is allocated to mental health, so mental health services are often inadequate to meet people's needs (Saxena et al., 2014). This lack of funding has resulted in limited treatment facilities available, as well as hindering the government from training the professionals needed to effectively deal with mental disorders. Furthermore, the social stigma associated with mental health disorders exacerbates the situation, discouraging people from seeking help despite the services provided. As revealed by Patel et al. (2013), "In many low - and middle-income countries, mental health services remain underdeveloped, and stigma further prevents individuals from seeking necessary care" (Patel et al., 2013, p. 14). For this, a more holistic approach

is needed, including public education and training of medical personnel, so that mental health services can be more widely accessed and stigma can be reduced.

- **Success:** Programs that promote community education and engage local communities show significant improvements in mental health awareness and access. In Kenya, for example, community-based education campaigns have increased mental health consultation rates by 30% in the last five years (Mwiti et al., 2021). This success reflects how important it is to involve the community in mental health counseling. Community-based education programs can break down social barriers, including the stigma that often prevents individuals from seeking care. As stated by Araya et al. (2014), "Community based approaches that integrate mental health awareness into existing local structures can significantly enhance access to care and reduce the barriers imposed by stigma" (Araya et al., 2014, p. 212). Approaches like these have the potential to create a more supportive environment for those facing mental health disorders, giving them the security to seek help without fear of being judged. The success achieved in Kenya can serve as a model for other developing countries in building more inclusive and community-based mental health service systems.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve policy effectiveness, a holistic and collaborative approach between governments, international organizations, and local communities is needed. Financial support and training for mental health workers are also priorities that must be addressed immediately. In addition, it is important to involve the private sector and non-governmental institutions in the provision of better mental health resources and services. With this collaboration, it is hoped that more inclusive and sustainable policies can be created that address the challenges of access and quality of mental health services. According to O'connell et al. (2014), "Collaborative efforts between governmental, non-governmental, and local community groups are essential for creating a comprehensive mental health care system that is accessible, affordable, and effective" (O'connell et al., 2014, p. 35). With a more coordinated approach, it will be easier to identify and address challenges and maximize the positive impact of existing mental health policies.

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