



# Challenges and priorities for global mental health in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) era

## Case Study

28-29 June 2018, London

# Mental Health

---

## Context

Mental health and substance use disorders account for 7.4% of the global burden of disease and make up the greatest economic cost of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the economic impact of mental health disorders in 2010 was estimated at US \$870bn and this is projected to more than double by 2030.

Fewer than one in four people with a mental health disorder receive treatment, with access further limited in low-resource settings. Underfunded mental health services, a shortage of mental health professionals and the stigma associated with these disorders create barriers to scaling-up treatments and deter individuals from seeking help when they are available.

## Workshops

Against this backdrop, a two-day workshop of key stakeholders from the UK and LMICs was held on 28-29 June 2018, jointly organised by the Academy of Medical Sciences and the InterAcademy Partnership for Health (IAP).

Published in 2011, the Grand Challenges in Global Mental Health initiative provided a framework to guide the research needed to improve treatment and prevention of mental health disorders and expand access to mental health services. At the Academy's workshop, participants reflected on progress since 2011, focusing on specific life-course stages, and identified priorities for research into treatment and prevention, as well as enduring challenges and emerging opportunities.

## Outputs

Following the workshop, a written report was produced and disseminated to participating countries, the UK and other LMIC stakeholders to provide a summary of key themes that emerged during the workshop discussions.

A key take-home message was that the goals, challenges and many of the research questions identified by the 2011 Grand Challenges Delphi consensus exercise remain pertinent today and largely unanswered. Four of the top five challenges were associated with improving treatment and expanding access to care, and it is within this domain that most progress has been made. With more evidence available on the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions, research on their local adaptation, implementation and scale-up is now a high priority.

Many of the new research questions that emerged at the meeting relate to issues specific to different stages of the life course. The life-course perspective provides a valuable lens for understanding how mental health disorders are experienced at different stages of life, identifying age-specific risk factors, and developing appropriate models of care and prevention. Significant progress could be made by reframing the 2011 challenges and research questions in terms of life stage.

The challenges remain significant, but progress since 2011 offers encouragement that research can deliver the evidence needed to lessen the global burden of mental health disorders.

## Top three impacts

In addition to gathering evidence, the workshops and report are designed to act as a catalyst for future policy activities and build the policy capacity for our national partners in LMICs. Hardcopies were disseminated to key stakeholders in participating LMICs, UK and other LMIC stakeholders. The top three impacts from these workshops include:

- The Academy was invited to participate in a Global Mental Health Ministerial Summit in London on the 9-10 October 2018. The outcomes from the AMS workshop influenced the structure of the research workstream of the Summit programme to focus on Universal Health Coverage and the prevention and promotion of mental health.
- At the Summit, the UK committed to increase their funding for global mental health by £30 million. This was in part based on the research prioritisation during the Summit which was influenced by the Academy workshop outcomes.
- Following the workshop, there was a demand by participants to have a follow up workshop in an LMIC focusing on the social determinants of mental health. This will engage social scientists as well as clinicians to bring forward multidisciplinary next steps for mental health.

**To read the full workshop report visit:**

<https://acmedsci.ac.uk/policy/policy-projects/globalmentalhealth>

**To learn more about our GCRF work visit:**

<https://acmedsci.ac.uk/policy/gcrf>





Academy of Medical Sciences  
41 Portland Place  
London W1B 1QH

 @acmedsci

+44 (0)20 3141 3200  
info@acmedsci.ac.uk  
www.acmedsci.ac.uk

Registered Charity No. 1070618  
Registered Company No. 3520281



The Interacademy Partnership for Health  
c/o TWAS-Strada Costiera  
11-34151 Trieste, Italy

Tel + 39 040 2240 571  
Fax: +39 040 2240 688  
iap@twas.org