

The changing landscape of women's mental health: COVID-19 and its impact

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Gender and Mental Health

Rates of Major Depression and Dysthymia are about twice as high for women

Prevalence rates for most Anxiety Disorders are 2-3x higher in women

Eating Disorders – 80-85% in female

Risk factors

Biologic
Vulnerability

Reproductive
Events

Psychosocial
Factors

Gender based
violence (rape,
sexual abuse,
domestic violence)

Socioeconomic
status

Caregiving
responsibilities,
multiple roles



Reproductive
Events Related
to mental
health
conditions in
Women

- Menstrual Cycle
- Infertility
- Pregnancy
- Postpartum Period
- Menopausal Transition/
Perimenopause
- Hormonal Therapies

Why should “Women’s Mental Health” be any different...?

“The burden of mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety, fall disproportionately on women of childbearing and childrearing age.”

Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 2007

Prevalence of perinatal mental disorders

In LMICs **15% antenatally** (95% confidence interval, CI: 15.4–15.9) and **19% postnatally** (19.5–20.0) .

In high-income countries: Prevalence of around **10% antenatally** and **13% postnatally**.

up to 20% of mothers with perinatal mental health conditions experience suicidal thoughts or undertake acts of self-harm

Fisher 2013

Klainin P, Arthur DG. Postpartum depression in Asian cultures: A literature review. *Int J Nurs Stud* 2009; 46(10).

Fuhr DC, Calvert C, Ronsmans C, et al. Contribution of suicide and injuries to pregnancy-related mortality in low-income and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2014;1(3):213-25.

Impact of women's mental health

- Affects women's health



- poor obstetric outcomes
- can lead to suicide – a leading cause of mortality in women of child-bearing age
- Can become chronic or recurrent and lead to substantial impairments in the mother's ability for child care



- Mental health conditions in mothers is associated with

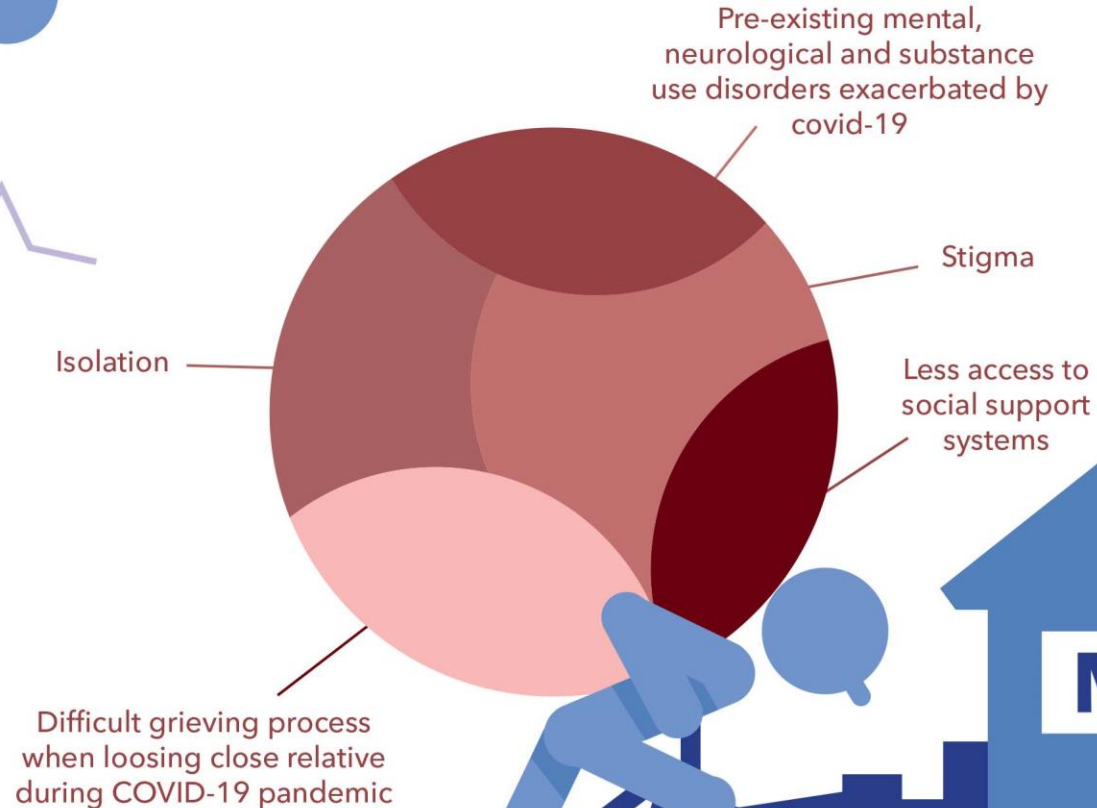
- low birth weight
- immature births
- Malnutrition and stunting
- Emotional and behavioral problems in children
- Low antenatal care
- less stimulation to the children
- Childhood depression/ Higher risk of depression in life with poor prognosis





Adversity is a risk factor for short-term and long-term mental health problems.

COVID-19 pandemic is causing widespread anxiety, panic, feeling of helplessness and uncertainty.



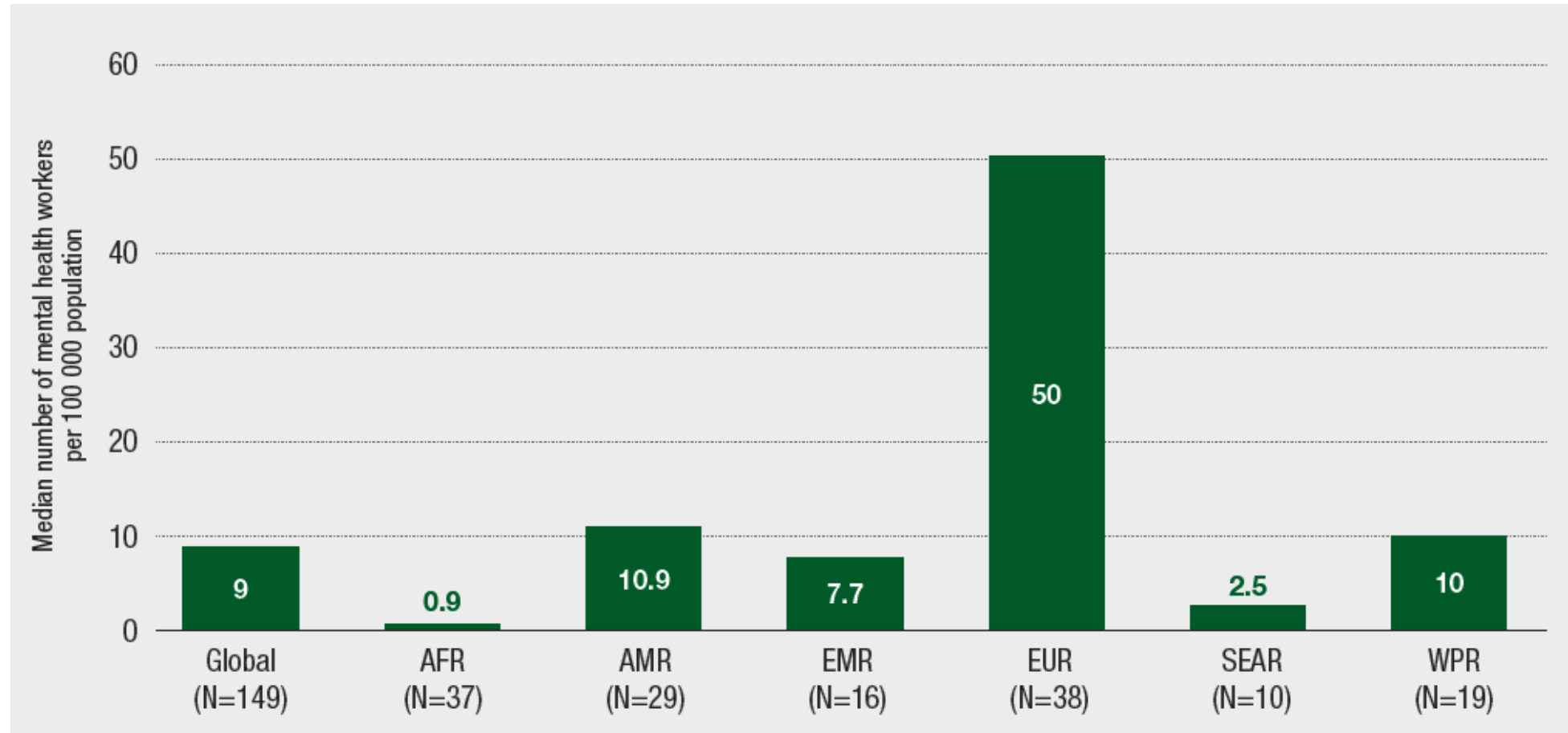
Many countries have limited community MNS Services

COVID-19 and women's mental health



- Pregnant women assessed after the onset of COVID-19 pandemic reported significantly higher rates of depressive and anxiety symptoms than women assessed before the pandemic
- 33% of women had clinically elevated symptoms of depression
- Loneliness was a risk factor for increased depressive symptoms
- COVID-19 specific adversity was linked to increases in internalizing symptoms.

Mental health workforce per 100,000 population, by WHO region



WHO Atlas 2017

Barriers and opportunities to address the treatment gap

- Lack of skilled human resources is a key barrier
- Financial constraints
- Logistical challenges i.e., transportation, childcare
- Stigma and discrimination
- Fear that children might be taken away by state

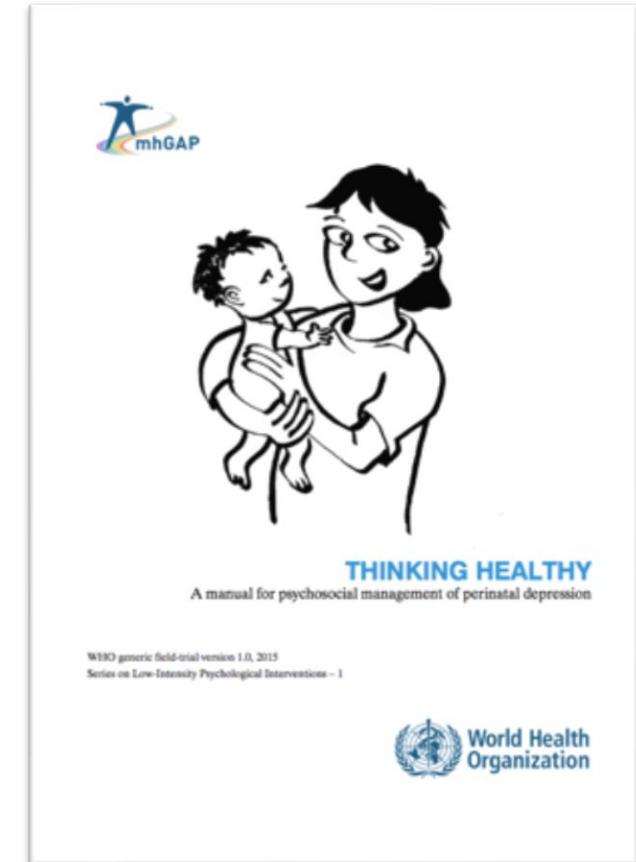
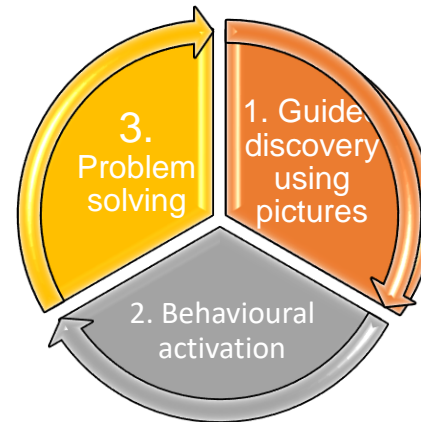
- ❖ **Interventions for perinatal mental health can improve maternal mental health as well as child health and development**
- ❖ **Emerging evidence on the effectiveness of Primary Health Care level and community-based interventions delivered by specialists and/or non-specialists.**
- ❖ **Non-specialist delivered interventions are effective and cost-effective**

The Thinking Healthy Programme

Cognitive behaviour therapy-based intervention by community health workers for mothers with depression and their infants in rural Pakistan: a cluster-randomised controlled trial

Atif Rahman, Abid Malik, Siham Sikander, Christopher Roberts, Francis Creed

Lancet 2008; 372: 902-09



The additional investment for scaling up support for perinatal depression in MNCH services is estimated to cost USD 0.1-0.2 per person per year indicating that maternal mental health interventions can be added to MNCH services at little additional cost

Richter et al. Lancet. 2017.

Integration in the healthcare system

Routine existing platforms and home visits can be used as an opportunity to screen for common mental health conditions in women and deliver interventions e.g.

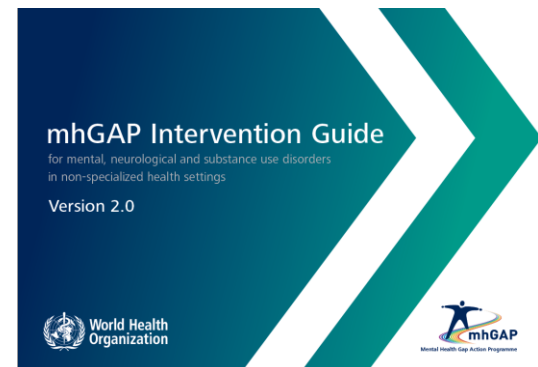
- General Medical visits;
- immunization visits;
- antenatal visits;
- postnatal visits;
- Under five visits; and
- refer to home visiting team

المجلة الصحية لشرق المتوسط
المجلد الحادي والعشرون
العدد السابع

Integration of mental health into priority health service delivery platforms: maternal and child health services

A. Rahman¹

IMPROVING
EARLY
CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT:
WHO Guideline





PROBLEM MANAGEMENT PLUS (PM+)
Individual psychological help for adults impaired by distress in communities
exposed to adversity

WHO Geneva Subtotal version 1.0, 2016
Written as Low-Literacy Psychological Intervention v. 2



A Rahman and coauthors

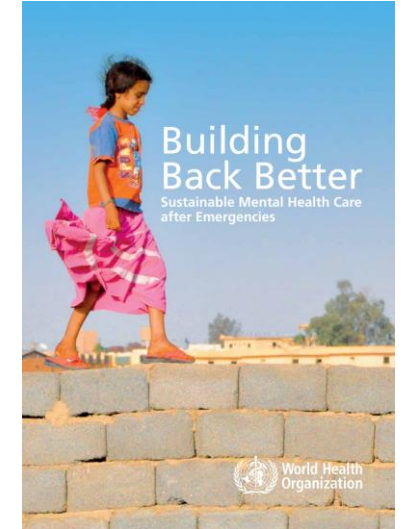
Effect of a Multicomponent
Behavioral Intervention in Adults
Impaired by Psychological Distress
in a Conflict-Affected Area of Pakistan:
A Randomized Clinical Trial

Published online November 12, 2016

Available at jama.com and on The JAMA Network Reader at
mobile.jamanetwork.com

Key messages

- Women's mental health services are essential components of essential health services.
- These can, and *should* be integrated into general health care as well as maternal and child (MCH) programmes
- Non-specialist delivered interventions are effective and cost-effective and benefit both the women and the child
- The impact of the pandemic on mental health has been and will be substantial
- COVID-19 is an opportunity to prioritize mental health including women's mental health to build back better community-based mental health services. Some of the greatest achievements of mental health during the last decade happened during or after emergencies



Questions & Answers

Thanks

Merci

Obrigado

Gracias

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Asante

شكرا

Ngiyabonga

Godiya

Jaraama