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mhGAP Newsletter

Mental Health Gap Action Programme



JULY 2017



Event at WHO headquarters on World Health Day - Credit: WHO/C. Black

World Health Day: putting the spotlight on depression

WHO has been leading mental health awareness activities for many decades, but **7 April 2017** will be one of the days that stands out as a highlight.

It was a day on which people came together from all around the world with common goals: to improve understanding of depression, to encourage people with untreated depression to seek help, and to learn how to offer support to people who are suffering. And it was a day on which we saw engagement from the highest levels of government, health-care centres, universities, schools and community groups.

This newsletter provides a few highlights.

Our work is not yet done however... Our focus now is service provision, supporting governments in their efforts to establish or scale-up services for people with depression to ensure that all people with depression, wherever they live, are able to both seek and get help.

*by Dr Shekhar Saxena
Director, Mental Health and Substance Abuse
World Health Organization*

How to keep the conversation going

- Use #LetsTalk in tweets that relate to the **campaign goals**
- Share information through your own communication channels about how *your* organization is contributing to the campaign
- Register any events that relate to the campaign on our **app**; it will remain live until end October 2017.

World Health Day highlights



Overcoming depression: Angelo's story

In a very honest account, Angelo, from the Philippines, explains his personal experience of depression

and how we was able to recover. He describes the essential role of his family, in particular his mother, in supporting him in the most difficult moments.

[Watch the video](#)

Prevention of suicide among adolescents

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds. This short documentary describes how Malatavie, a health service in Geneva, supports young people in severe psychological distress, working together with their families and social and educational services.

[Watch the video in English](#)

[Watch the video in French](#)



Communicating about depression through art



Samia Hamis with her winning entry. [Article published by BBC Persian](#)

WHO's regional office for the Eastern Mediterranean organized a competition inviting students to illustrate depression through art. The team received more than 10 000 entries. One of the winner's was Samia Hamasi from Afghanistan (pictured above with her winning entry). In an interview with the BBC, Samia, whose sister has struggled with depression, spoke about the impact of conflict on mental health and explained how she and her mother helped her sister overcome depression. "I could bring my sister from darkness to light" she said.

Below are some examples of communicating depression through art.



A sand sculpture by T P Mishra in Srikakulam, India.



Art was also used as a means of talking about depression during an activity in a school in Delhi, India.

Country-wide events in Cabo Verde

World Health Day events included a press conference, a roundtable at the university with more than 280 students and a discussion morning on postpartum depression with expectant and new mothers from the maternity ward at the central hospital. Health centres and local nongovernmental organizations on the island of São Vicente, the Cabo Verdean island of Art and Culture, organized the country's first-ever Festival for Health to celebrate World Health Day.

[Watch TV news report](#)



“Walk & Talk” in Beijing



A “Walk & Talk” event was held at Yuanmingyuan Park in Beijing on 7 April, partnering with Beijing MTR Subway. Participants stopped at three stations to play games and win a prize. The event was launched by Vice Minister Cui Li of the National Health and Family Planning Commission and

Chinese celebrity Da Zuo, together with the Head of the WHO China Office, Dr Bernhard Schwartlander. It was live-streamed by the Beijing Times and Tencent.

“Perspectives on depression” and more from the Centre for Global Mental Health, UK

Events organized by the Centre for Global Mental Health (CGMH), based in the UK, included a seminar titled “Perspectives on Depression”, a happiness walk to promote self-care, a leaflet stand to increase awareness of depression and mental health services available at the work place (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and beyond, a stall with bread samples from a local bakery run by people with lived experience of mental illness, and a podcast with CGMH members.

[**List of activities**](#)



OTHER NEWS



Global action plan on dementia endorsed by World Health Assembly

At the World Health Assembly in May, delegates endorsed a global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025 and committed to developing ambitious national strategies and implementation plans. The global plan aims to improve the lives of people with dementia, their families and the people who care for them, while decreasing the impact of dementia on communities and countries. It provides a comprehensive blueprint for action, in areas such as: increasing awareness of dementia and establishing dementia-friendly initiatives; reducing the risk of dementia; diagnosis, treatment and care; research and innovation; and support for dementia carers.

[Draft global action plan on the public health response to dementia](#)

[More on dementia](#)



WHO iSupport: E-programme for Caregivers of People Living with Dementia

WHO's iSupport is an online programme for carers of people with dementia. It helps carers to understand the impact of dementia, deal with challenging behaviours, provide better care, and look after their own health, which ultimately also benefit the person that they care for. iSupport is an evidence based programme developed with content that respects the dignity and human rights of people with dementia. Carers can tailor the programme to their personal needs and select as many lessons as they want. The generic English version is now ready for adaptation and field testing worldwide.

[iSupport for dementia](#)

[Read more](#)



New toolkit for care of people affected by Zika

In June, WHO Headquarters and Regional office for Americas, partnering with UNICEF, launched a toolkit to help countries provide care and support for people affected by complications associated with Zika virus. It consists of three manuals for different audiences: public health planners and managers; health-care professionals; and community workers.

[Access the publication](#)

The public health dimension of the world drug problem

At the World Health Assembly in May, delegates agreed on the need for intensified efforts to help Member States address the world drug problem. They asked the WHO Secretariat to improve its coordination and collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board and to implement the health-related recommendations in the outcome document of the 2016 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the world drug problem. It has been 26 years since the Health Assembly made a decision on this topic. The Secretariat has been asked to report back on progress in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

[Read more](#)



WHO holds 1st Forum on alcohol, drugs and addictive behaviours



During WHO's first Forum on alcohol, drugs and addictive behaviours, more than 200 participants from around the world working to reduce the health burden caused by the harmful use of alcohol, drugs and addictive behaviours shared information about their areas of work. During the Forum, held on 26-28 June in Geneva, networks were strengthened and areas of collaboration agreed in support of continued progress towards global goals.

[Read more](#)

Health staff in the Central African Republic trained on mental disorders

Between August 2016 and April this year in Central African Republic, WHO and Ministry of Health, Bangui, trained 48 non-specialist health-care providers in the clinical management of priority conditions. More than 200 non-specialists were trained in the identification and referral of people with mental disorders.

[Read more](#)



Award of the Geneva Prize for Human Rights in Psychiatry 2017

The Geneva Prize for Human Rights in Psychiatry 2017 has been awarded to a nongovernmental organization fighting for the rights of the mentally ill in Guatemala, ALAS PRO SALUD MENTAL. Founded in 2013, this organization is the only nongovernmental organization in Guatemala working to improve the access of the indigenous rural population to psychiatric care.

[Read more](#)

Coming soon : World Mental Health Day, 10 October

This year's theme for World Mental Health Day is *mental health in the workplace*. Many of you are actively working with organizations to put in place programmes for better mental health at work. The Day presents an ideal opportunity to share successes and lessons learned with a broad audience.

At WHO, we will be posting material relating to the theme on our [website](#) during the coming weeks.

