Paraguay
WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health
Situational Assessment

Overview

Strengths

- Leveraging primary health care model for delivering mental health services at the Hospital Pediátrico Acosta Ñu
- New director of mental health department
- Progress made to decentralize mental health service delivery
- Regional Hospital of Pedro Juan Caballero as an example
- Commission of Mental Health Reform began two years ago

Challenges

- Increase in indigenous adolescent suicides
- History of human rights abuses in mental health care system
- Mental health remains stigmatized
- Discontinuity in medication supply
- Limited funding for implementing policies

Context

Source: Wikipedia. Jan 13, 2020.

- Population of 7,152,703 concentrated in both urban and rural areas (32%)
- 94% literacy and 98% of households have improved drinking water supply and electricity
- Two official languages, Spanish and Guarani, with over 80% of the population able to speak Guarani
- Life expectancy: 74.45 (71.58 males, 77.46 females), infant mortality rate: 13.2 per 1000 live births, maternal mortality ratio: 129 per 100,000 live births
- Leading causes of death are circulatory system diseases (19.4%) and tumors (15.5%)
- Low HIV prevalence (0.5%)
- 20% of women have reported physical or sexual violence from a partner
- Significant difference in health outcomes and access to health care in rural versus urban areas
- Primary areas of concern include violence against women, maltreatment of children and adolescents, suicide, and harmful substance use

Policies and Plans

Public spending on mental health ($/capita): 0.37 USD

Policy
Name: **National Mental Health Policy**
Years: 2011 - 2020
Progress: Policy not fully implemented.

Plan
Name: *n/s*
Years: *n/s*
Progress: *n/s*

Key Informant:
We have to work in an interdisciplinary way at the country level. Involve the decision-makers to help get laws for mental health established to protect the patient.

- *Mental health advocate*

Legislation
The National Mental Health Policy contains a set of laws and regulations pertaining to health and mental health, such as the rights of people with disabilities.

Elements included in policy/plan	Policy	Plan
Components PHC integration	Present	*n/s*
Decentralization	Present	--
Hospital integration	Present	--
Maternal	Absent	*n/s*
Child/adolescent	Present	*n/s*
HIV	Absent	*n/s*
Alcohol/substance use	Present	*n/s*
Epilepsy	Absent	*n/s*
Dementia	Absent	*n/s*
Promotion/prevention	Present	--
Suicide	*n/s*	--
Equity Gender	Present	*n/s*
Age/life course	Present	*n/s*
Rural/urban	Absent	*n/s*
Socio-economic status	Absent	*n/s*
Vulnerable populations	*n/s*	*n/s*

Present   Absent
n/s No data   -- Not assessed

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Prevalence and coverage

	Prevalence**	Total**	Gender ratio**	Treatment coverage‡
Major depressive disorder	1.9%	126,330	2.6% females | 1.2% males	8.3%
Bipolar disorder	1.1%	72,680	1.1% females | 1.1% males	3.1%
Schizophrenia	0.2%	12,782	0.2% females | 0.2% males	50.3%
Alcohol use disorders	2.4%	158,999	1.3% females | 3.5% males	1.1%
Drug use disorders	0.6%	37,034	0.5% females | 0.7% males	2.5%
Epilepsy	0.4%	26,156	0.4% females | 0.4% males	21.9%
Suicide deaths	5.7*	393	3.0 females | 8.3 males*	--

*rate per 100k; **GBD 2017; ‡ MSP 2020

Services

Human resources

		#	Rate per 100,000
Generalist	Doctor	20,404	289.6
	Nurse	35,458	503.3
	Pharmacist	3,133	44.5
Specialist	Neurologist	63	0.9
	Psychiatrist	136	1.9
	Psychologist	9,143	129.8
	Psychiatric nurse	12	0.2
	MH social worker	1,230	17.5

Health care facilities

*Includes general hospitals with psychiatric units and mental health hospitals

		Total Facilities	Facilities/ 100,000
Inpatient	Mental hospital	2	0.03
	General hospital psychiatric unit	2	0.03
	Forensic unit	1	0.01
	Residential care facility	6	0.09
Outpatient	Hospital mental health	59	0.8
	Community-based /non-hospital mental health	32	0.5

Mental health (MH) training	Training of non-MH specialist workers in the area of mental health
Primary health care (PHC) integration	Integration described in the MH Policy; currently implemented in the pediatric hospital
Psychosocial interventions	Ministry of Children and Adolescents runs psychosocial programs.
	In the MoH the data from the consultations can be extracted using the codes referring to psychosocial situations or problems, for example: problems with partners (Z63.0); problems in the primary family environment (Z63.1), problems with the law (Z65.3); economic problems (Z59); health advice on drugs or HIV (Z71). Psychosocial interventions may also include referrals of victims of violence who are normally charged in the SAA with the ICD-10 codes on abuse (T74).
Medication summary	Paraguay has a list of essential medications (2009), which includes antiepileptic, antiparkinsonian, psycholeptic and psychoanalleptic medications. General Directorate of Management of Strategic Supplies of the Ministry of Health oversees planning, coordinating, and monitoring the selection, estimation of needs, acquisition, storage, distribution, and rational use of medicines through the SICIAP system (Paraguay's Automated Information and Inventory Control System).
MH promotion	Mental health fairs; campaign *Vos Podés* promotes healthy living in conjunction with National Antidrug Secretary

Community and Other Sectors

Community	Sheltered housing exists across the country; telemedicine pilot for delivering mental health care; mobile outreach unit for mental health care delivery
Education	Ministry of Education working in schools to identify youth with mental health concerns
Social welfare	Economic support provided to people with diagnoses of psychosocial disabilities; Institute of Social Welfare administers homes for the elderly.
Justice	Ministry of Justice provides psychiatric medicine to people in prison with mental health conditions.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

HMIS exists and gathers basic demographic data: *n/s*
Mental health indicators in HMIS: Number of health care consultants diagnosed with Mental and Behavioral Disorders using ICD-10 Chapter V codes (F00 - F99). Number of persons consulting at health services with descriptions referring to Psychosocial Problems or Situations and number of people who consult health services referring to having been victims of violence.

Key Informant:
A national awareness campaign is needed for the general population, disseminating messages to reduce taboo and stigma related to mental health. This will help with early detection and adequate treatment for people with mental illness.
- *Mental health advocate*