

DEPRESSION REMAINS A NEGLECTED GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS, SAYS REPORT

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

The world is failing to tackle the persisting and increasingly serious global crisis of depression it is facing, a Lancet and World Psychiatric Association Commission on depression has stated. The document was released Tuesday night.

It has estimated that 5% of adults worldwide suffer from depression each year, and yet it remains a neglected global health crisis. Poor understanding of this condition and lack of psychosocial and financial resources are already impacting on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and the economic prosperity of nations.

There is abundant evidence that much can be done to prevent depression and aid recovery even in resource-limited settings, and yet the burden of people living with depression, many of them not diagnosed and consequently not treated. While in high-income countries, about half of people suffering from depression come under this category, this rises to 80-90% in low- and middle-income countries.

Pandemic influence

As expected, the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges, with the hardship, bereavement, isolation, and uncertainties, besides limited access to health care exacerbating mental health conditions, and bringing more people to the brink. The document was authored by 25 experts from 11 countries, and advised by people with experience of depression.

Commission Chair Professor Helen Herrman said: "Depression is a global health crisis that demands responses at multiple levels. This Commission offers an important opportunity for united action to transform approaches to mental health care and prevention globally. Investing in reducing the burden of depression will give millions of people the chance to become healthier, happier and more productive members of society, help to strengthen national economies, and advance the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030."

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