Committee: World Health Organisation

Issue: Reducing the burden of mental disorders worldwide and promoting mental health

Student Officer: Andreas Hagis

Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Andreas Hagis and I will be acting as the deputy president of the World Health Organisation (WHO) during the 5th session of the CSMUN. I have always found a way to enjoy myself in MUN be it through discussing and debating issues that I've genuinely found interesting but never had the time to delve deep into, or meeting other students from around the world. Thus, I hope you will enjoy the *"MUN experience"* as I have. This will in fact be my fifth conference, and I am honored to be co-chairing for the first time in the World Health Organisation this session.

During this session, the WHO shall be discussing two very important matters: Reducing the burden of mental disorders worldwide and promoting mental health, and the question of eradicating mosquitoes in order to combat diseases. Over the past few years both of these issues have become very prominent to the global population and world leaders and so i look forward to hearing what new innovative and effective proposals our committee will bring to the table as we try to tackle these issues as efficiently as possible.

I look forward to meeting you all and hope for a fruitful debate,

Best regards,
Andreas Hagis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

For many years mental health and mental illness have been hidden behind a stigma which only recently has begun to ease off. With a growing number of roughly 450 million people[1] suffering from some sort of mental illness it has become apparent that issues with mental health and mental disorders are now one of the leading causes of disability and ill-health across the globe. Mental disorders affect everyone from the individual and their family and communities all the way up to governments and countries. Due to the aforementioned stigma, two thirds of people with a mental disorder never seek proper medical care[2]. As a result of this, properly tackling this issue has become progressively harder over the years despite advancement in various kinds of treatments and medical knowledge. Effective treatment however is often very hard for the average person to afford as it is more often than not, supplied by the private sector in the form of rehabilitation centers/programs, prescription drugs, and service form psychiatrists and psychologists. Low-income families are often faced with the issue of not being able to afford these forms of treatment.[3] Government provided treatment is often inadequate as they tend to create large mental institutions, which fail to treat individuals sufficiently. Each case of a mental disorder is different to the next thus grouping together patients is highly ineffective and quite often, counter productive, as it often has adverse effects on their health and often isolates them from their families and the rest of society.

Promoting mental health comes hand in hand with reducing the burden of mental disorders as it stems from the prevention of such disorders through education. It aims to improve the individual's families and the society's ability to properly approach and adequately deal with mental health rather than attempting to treat or improve individuals symptoms and deficits. Promoting mental health and working with someone to improve their well being essentially compliments being aware of well being and causes for mental health issues ultimately reducing a patients vulnerability to a disorder. Mental health doesn't only relate to the actions of the individual but also their surroundings, this factors in aspects such as income, education, working conditions and social status[4]. Thus, running mental health promotion campaigns would range across a multitude of societal factors and would provide information and support for individuals that require it. Promoting mental health won't only improve individual capability and overall awareness about mental health but also everything that affects it such as child abuse, sexual abuse and substance use. This will help not only break the stigma around mental health and mental disease but also a lot of other sensitive topics that are directly related to people's well being.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Mental Health
A state of well-being dependent on whether a individual can realize their potential, cope with normal life stresses, work productively and contribute constructively to their communities.

---

[1] "NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness ...."
[2] "WHO | Mental disorders affect one in four people."
[3] "WHO | Mental disorders affect one in four people.".
[4] "Prevention and Promotion in Mental Health - World Health Organization."

Mental/Behavioral Disorders
A wide range of mental health conditions that affect an individual's mood, behavior and thinking. Examples include: anxiety disorders, eating disorders and addictive behaviors.

Mood Disorders
Psychological disorders identified by drastic changes in a person's mood, be it a sudden extreme happiness or extreme sadness. Examples include depression or bipolar disorder.

Health Promotion
The process of enabling people to assert control over their health and to thereby improve it.

Psychopharmacology
The study of the effects of drugs on mood, sensation and behavior. Psychopharmacological drugs are generally used to treat mental/behavioral disorders. They include drugs such as xanax.

RTC's
Also known as randomized controlled trials, they are "experiments" conducted in such a way that they provide results with extremely high accuracy by eliminating stand out features through examining a large sample size of randomized people. They provide information which is feasible for real life application across a large range of people i.e through promotion strategies.

Universal prevention
Targeting a large group or a whole population in order to inform them about mental/behavioural disorders.

Selective prevention
Targeting individuals who may have a increased risk of developing mental disorders.

Indicated prevention
Targeting an individual at high-risk for mental disorders.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As we can see in the timeline, prior to 1991 there hadn't been much conversation regarding mental health. At that time and prior to the 90s, talking about mental health was shunned upon to the point where patients with mental illnesses were not treated as they should have been. Besides conversation on mental health being *"taboo"* there also was an extensive lack of medical and scientific research on the matter, which meant patients who were being treated were often being treated incorrectly. Throughout the 18th century and up until the mid to late 19th century treatment of mental disorders was inhumane. Conducted in what was called at the time "Insane asylums" ,treatments were drastic ranging from electroshock therapy to lobotomies[5].

With a massive influx of mentally ill individuals after World War 1 and World War 2 the asylums quickly flooded and experimentation on a vulnerable population continued until the mid to late 19th century where asylums started getting shut down due to public outcry about the horror stories coming out of

---

[5] "Madness and insanity: A history of mental illness from evil spirits - ABC." 1 Aug. 2016,

them. Around this time proper scientific theories began to emerge about how to help mentally ill people, predominantly because of the work of figures such as Sigmund Freud[6] and B. F. Skinner[7]. By the 20th century, enough groundwork had been laid to set the path for more scientifically supported and effective methods of treatment.

Statistics (Mental Disorders)

The number of Mental illness cases has been steadily increasing for several years at a relatively alarming rate affecting people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds. The majority of chronic cases of mental illness begin by age 24 [8](75% of all cases to be exact) which means that the majority of the young global population suffers from some sort of mental illness, be it a mood disorder, anxiety disorder or behavioral disorder. Naturally this has an adverse effect on their education and subsequently their overall future[9] as mental illness tends to prevent active contribution to society, lead to difficulty with employment, and challenge their physical health and relationships .With evidence showing that a mental illness in someone's early life may possible lead to substance abuse later on in their life, it goes without saying that the effects of mental illness have a broad and deep effect on someone's life. Additionally, 90%[10] of the roughly 800,000[11] suicides every year involve an individual with some kind of underlying mental illness. These numbers are only escalating. Treatment for mental illness is in the top three most expensive treatments in the UK[12] which indications the cost of treatment for mental disorders in MEDCs. It is therefore important to note the difficulty that those in LEDCs have acquiring necessary treatment.

Consequences, Costs and effects

Mental disorders don't only affect the individuals who have them but they also affect their family and friends, employers and society. There are 3 main kinds[13] of costs that mental disorders may concur: financial costs ,productivity costs, and *"other"* costs which focus more around the personal side of things (emotional strain, etc). Family and friends often find themselves dealing with the stigma, the stress of the whole situation and even discrimination that's present in all parts of the world. Employers, usually by law, have to make contributions to the individuals treatment, and end up with reduced productivity as a result of the treatment. The costs to the countries society is also significant as, in the case of public health care, they have to cover the general medical care and provision of mental health care along with dealing with the emotional costs of loss of lives and social exclusion. Of course this doesn't include the actual price of the treatments and the amount of money lost due to those lasps in productivity. In THE USA alone, substance abuse and mental illness cost the government $85.3 billion[14] in 1997, and as previously mentioned lost $193 billion worth of profit[15] . Considering everything above, it is mandatory to develop ways to deal with the above issues as they span across a broad topic of social and economic issues.

---

[6] "Sigmund Freud - Wikipedia." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmund_Freud. Accessed 20 Aug. 2017.
[7] "BF Skinner - Wikipedia." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._F._Skinner. Accessed 20 Aug. 2017.
[8] "NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness ...." https://www.nami.org/
[9] "The Impact of Mental Illness Stigma on Seeking and Participating in ...."
[10] "NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness ...." https://www.nami.org/.
[11] "WHO | Suicide data."
[12] "Investing in mental health - World Health Organization."
[13] "Investing in mental health - World Health Organization."
[14] "Investing in mental health - World Health Organization."
[15] "NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness ...." https://www.nami.org/

Current Governmental approach

One of the main contributors to the growth of this issue is lack of action and legislation for nations governments[16]. Despite the burden that mental disorders bring upon all nations, communities and societies - 40% of countries don't have any sort of mental health policy, 30% don't have a mental health program and roughly one-fourth doesn't even have mental health legislation. Out of the nations that do have the necessary programs and legislation, 66% spend just or less than 1% of their annual budgets on mental health, and 25% of countries don't even have the three most common prescription drugs for depression and schizophrenia. Ultimately, this signifies that without state provided care or proper legislation in place to make this kind of treatment and medication affordable, a 50.1% (reference graph) of the people simply cannot afford to acquire the medication they need. As mentioned in the introduction, due to lack of government support or even old fashioned practices, treatment is now generally provided by the private sector be it though rehabilitation centers/programs or services through psychiatrists and psychologists and prescription medication. The existence of this sector stands to benefit the public as it provides specialized treatments, access to more types of medications and even priority support where you won't be put on a waiting list. Yet, the expense still remains, only emphasizing the need for improved government support and legislation.

Reasons for not receiving mental health services, source: *the private research university Emory*
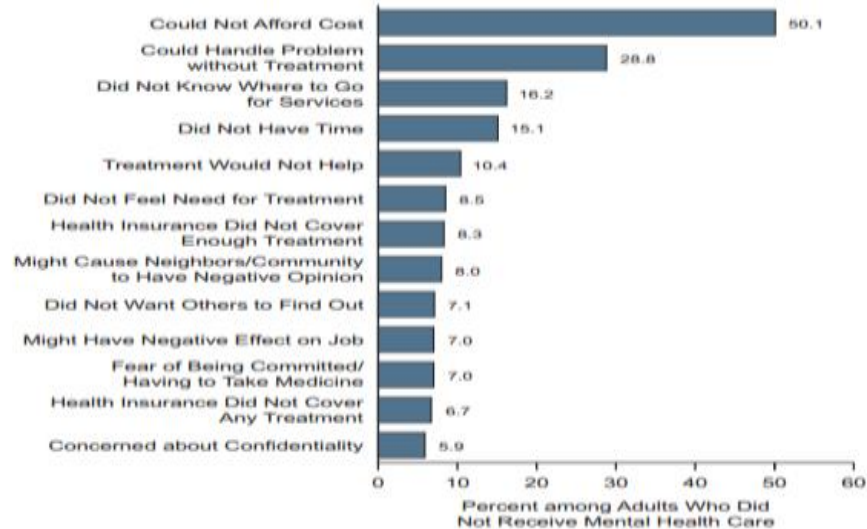
Mental health promotion programs and prevention programs

Combining prevention and promotion in mental health within public health strategies is essential to properly dealing with this problem as it reduces stigma, increases cost-effectiveness and provides a multitude of other positive outcomes such as helping individuals deal with child abuse, sexual abuse and substance.[17] Combining social and public health programs with policies that act on mental health and deal with general health problems (such as substance abuse etc) ensures that the programs can operate more efficiently and effectively as the policies and programs would work in unison. For effective good-evidence based strategies to be put into place, each country needs to adapt their policies to best fit their

---

[16] "WHO | Mental disorders affect one in four people."
[17] "Prevention and Promotion in Mental Health - World Health Organization."

people's needs. In order to provide incentives for countries to adopt prevention and promotion strategies, it has been stressed that generating evidence for the effectiveness of such strategies is an integral part of providing validity for the strategies thereby persuading nations states to adopt and look into the strategies as it makes them more viable. This can be done though RTC's and other more experimental designs. In the case of prevention strategies, often times a mix of universal, selective, and indicated prevention implemented at the right time is most effective. As far as promotion, running educational initiatives and various societal programs seems to be the most effective way of increasing individuals coping capabilities and ultimately increasing the strength of communities to deal with such issues. Studies have also shown strong links between physical health and mental health thus promoting exercise and sport in a country would provide a foundation for when it comes to promoting mental health.

COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

Most countries have conducted mental health promotion and public awareness programs. However, it is impossible to provide each and every nation with the appropriate amount of information in a single study guide. The following list will therefore only include major organisations and nations that are most evidently involved in dealing with this issue. I recommend you reference the WHO country case studies for extra information.

The United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
The UK has made significant advances in educating their population and gaining data points on mental health issues. The UK seems to be trying to gather as much data on the topic as possible through various means to try better the understanding of this issue. Besides gaining information about their population the UK and Northern Ireland have made some attempts at tackling mental illness, through education and programs manly targeted towards kids

The United States of America
The USAs effort to tackle mental health has been mainly focused around helping children in the juvenile correction system to cope with mental health issues and significantly reduce the burden of said issues within communities. Evidence has shown that treating mental illness in juvenile children is more likely to decrease the chance of repeat offenses having a proactive effect on the children's lives, families and communities. Along with this, the USA is spreading information through educational outlets and attempting to deal with a great deal of prescription drug addiction cases often linked to mental disorders.

Australia
Australia has also made considerable progress, focusing on people's families affected by mental disorders to try and reduce the burden of mental illness on the local communities. They have made attempts to run programs that break down the needs of family members providing useful insight in how to attempt to solve this issue and help the individual. Australia has also run promotional material about mental health through the schooling system and over radio broadcasts to provide useful information to individuals at risk.

China
China has tackled this issue from multiple different angles. They have gathered data and shared a field-

tested projects prevention model with other countries while developing ways to educated children on healthy methods of expressing emotions. China has also focused on anti-depression projects that work through educating the public about depression as recommended by WHO. Finally china has made an effort to help the chronically ill by trying to improve their mental health; the project has so far yielded impressive results improving a large majority of the patients conditions

WFMH

The World Federation for Mental Health is an organisation that prioritises making mental health wellbeing and recovery one of the global priorities for everyone. It's an NGO that has members of all different kinds of professions and even includes volunteering citizens

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (MSD)

This WHO department aims to strengthen policies and reliable information on substance abuse and mental health. They function as a way to provide policy support and guidance to countries as well as managing information for WHO

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Event	Year	Relevance
Establishment of the WFMH	1948	The founding of one of the first international NGOs with the intention of assisting in tackling mental health
Establishment of Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (MSD)	1953	The acknowledgment and a step toward dealing the closely related substance abuse and mental disorders
Un calls for improvement of mental health care	1991	The Start of over a decade of progress for dealing with mental health
First Celebration of world mental health day	1992	One of the first global public acknowledgements of mental health issues
International workshop held between nations for mental health at Harvard University	2000	Started a large effort to deal with the burden of mental disorders as well as the economic and social side of the issue

World health report: *"Mental health: New Understanding, New Hope"*	2001	Laid out the framework for future research and development as well as bringing the topic of mental health to international awareness
Resources of the mental health sector developed media strategies through reaching out to national medias	2004-05	The start of a proper medical mental health sector and press engagement by outreaching media sources
Helplines begin to be properly established across most countries that didn't already have them	(around) 2010	Yet another large step for the promotion of mental health and reducing burdens of mental health. It marked the first time in which people could get in contact with professionals for help if they didn't want to deal with the stigma of mental health
Investing in Mental health - WHO	2013	A publication based around explaining the over costs and gains of mental health that assisted in better spreading knowledge of damages that can be done by mental illness and what can be done to prevent those damages
Plethora of online media resources released to public containing not only statistical information but also information on how to get help	2013-2015	Internet resources became more accessible allowing people to gain necessary information regarding mental disorders. Not only would it allow them to identify issues in their life that may have relevance with inducing mental health but it would perhaps provide them with an opportunity to seek treatment from a professional .
Human rights council resolution on mental health and human rights	29 June 2016	Acknowledgment and action from the human rights council to try and link mental health with human rights. Doing this properly and successfully would most likely lead to drastic improvements form a majority of 1st and 2nd world countries

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Implementation of mental health medical care legislation and policies within governments
Governments seemingly do not provide enough care to support lower income families and thus this

must be addressed. The few big pharma companies that control psychopharmacological drugs grow and we've seen in the past prices too will increase. By implementing forms of mental health care programs, legislation and policies to support these programs governments will more effectively be able to support the treatment of their citizens. Implementing government subsidies could promote cooperation between big pharma companies, healthcare organizations and government programs by offering incentives for pharmaceutical companies to cooperate and help the government. As it has been proven that when used properly psychopharmacological drugs greatly benefit people with mental illness the co-operation of the companies in open market would be vital to helping citizens acquire the necessary expensive drugs to deal with various mental illnesses.

Running education campaigns

Running education campaigns about mental health is an integral way to improve a society's approach to mental health. Promoting awareness and understanding will not only improve an individual's ability to understand their situation and gauge whether they need treatment, but will also remove any insecurities around going and asking for help from a professional.

Anonymous data collection campaigns

Collecting data points is essential in identifying the specific issues that the population of each country faces. As stated earlier, each country and culture have their own unique issues when it comes to mental disorders and mental health issues thus collecting anonymous data from citizens of a country will allow the countries government to cater to the needs of its people allowing us to properly tackle this issue.

Providing support to employers and family members of patients with a chronic mental illness during times of distress

Providing family workshops and therapy is a vital part of reducing the burdens of mental disorders, as it allows us to ease the stress and pressure on the patient's family members. Resultantly, family members will be able to spend more time with the patient which may also help patients recover faster. By providing support to employers and compensating them in some form for the lost time and productivity will mean that it'll become periodically easier for people with a mental disorder to acquire and maintain a job as currently employers often turn down applicants with a mental disorder over a fear of loss in productivity or profits.

Introduce quality of life policies

Due to the interconnection of the overall quality of life and a mental state of well-being, attempting to increase the quality of life in communities could be a vital part of promoting mental health and preventing mental disorders. Improving the quality of life in local communities doesn't necessarily mean providing people with more luxury, but in our case is more likely to consist of offering help to people who are/have been victims of child abuse, have substance abuse issues, have family issues or even been incarcerated. By implementing clauses that bring about healthier, more natural environments, community support and proper education and counselling we would be improving quality of life within communities and ultimately assisting children and adults overcome past trauma and issues that might be causing, mental illness.

The above potential solutions only provide examples to what might be included in a resolution. In their current state, their ideas and suggestions could be used however I would highly recommend trying to come up with unique innovative ways to approach this issue as they tend to make up the best resolutions. Keep in mind that the above examples mention nothing about LEDs or dealing with the useful but addictive nature of a lot of the prescription drugs.

Recommended Extra Reading

Promoting mental health

World health report 2001

Prevention of mental disorders

Steps taken in america - Potential solutions

BIBLIOGRAPHY

http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf

http://www.who.int/whr/2001/en/whr01_en.pdf

http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/investing_mnh.pdf

http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/545.pdf

http://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/

https://www.nami.org/

https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml

http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/prevention_of_mental_disorders_sr.pdf

http://www.who.int/en/

http://www.responseability.org

http://www.who.int/nmh/about/msd/en/

http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/country_case_studies.pdf

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health#History

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._F._Skinner

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmund_Freud

Human rights council- mental health and human rights resolution