

MAINSTREAMING HEALTH PROMOTION: RAPID REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION INTERVENTIONS

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Background

In 2010, the World Health Organisation established a task force to develop a package of evidence-based, outcome oriented health promotion actions with a focus on low and middle income countries (LMICs) and application to priority public health conditions. The Health Promotion Research Centre was commissioned to review the evidence in relation to mental health promotion. There is increasing recognition globally of the need to address mental health as an integral part of improving overall health and wellbeing (WHO, 2001; 2003; 2005). Given that more than 85% of the world's population live in the 153 countries classified as low and middle income, according to the World Bank criteria, there is an urgent need to address mental health within the wider health promotion and development agenda in LMICs.

Research Aims

This rapid review aims to analyse the current evidence on the effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions, with a particular emphasis on low and middle income countries (LMICs). The review will provide a narrative synthesis of the international evidence (including evidence from high, middle and low income countries) of systematic reviews, meta-analyses and selected individual studies on the effectiveness of interventions to promote mental health. The review will also identify gaps in the existing evidence and highlight areas for further research.

Methods

This review will classify mental health promotion actions under four headings derived from the Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986):

- Actions targeted at strengthening individuals
- Actions targeted at strengthening communities
- Actions targeted at the health sector
- Intersectoral actions on removing structural barriers to mental health.

The review will examine the evidence in relation to the general population from childhood through to adulthood with a particular focus on populations living in LMIC settings. Findings from interventions in key settings, including the home, school, workplace, health services and community settings will be included. The primary outcomes of interest will include evidence of improved mental health, reduced risk of mental health problems and wider health and social and economic benefits arising from effective interventions.

Progress to date

A written protocol for reviewing the evidence has been drawn up (Barry, Clarke & Jenkins, 2010) and electronic searches using multiple bibliographic databases is currently underway. Following this, references will be screened and data extraction, quality assessment, and coding will take place. A final review paper will be published in June 2011.