

# Breaking the cycle: Studies show improving mental health status helps improve financial status

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The first paper in The *Lancet* Series on Global Mental Health reviews the negative cycle of interaction between mental ill health and poverty in low-income and middle-income countries (LMIC). A review of published work shows that improving financial status does not always improve mental health status, whereas mental health interventions consistently improve economic status. The paper is by Dr Crick Lund, Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and colleagues.

The studies on which the findings were based came from a wide-range of LMIC: South Africa, Mexico, Ecuador, Uganda, China, India, Iran, Nigeria, and Thailand. The authors say: "The findings are important for strengthening of the economic case for investment in evidence-based [mental health](#) care. Our first recommendation therefore supports the call to scale up [mental health services](#), not only as a public health and human rights priority, but also, on the basis of evidence from this review, as a development priority.... The second recommendation is that mental health should become integrated as a central element of monitoring of the outcomes of poverty alleviation programmes."

They conclude: "In the same manner that the first Lancet Series on global mental health in 2007 drew attention to the need to address global mental health as a neglected public health priority, this study draws attention to the need to address mental health as a neglected priority in

international development economics"

Provided by Lancet

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