

Integrating mental health care: New series

April 30 2013

The first article in a landmark series to help health care workers and providers, donors, and decision makers understand the importance of including mental health care in global health programs is being published in this week's *PLOS Medicine*.

Giving a global perspective on integrating mental health into health services around the world, the series focuses on mental, neurological, and substance use (MNS) disorders. Although these disorders account for an increasing burden of disease, affected people often lack access to mental health care in high-, middle-, and low-income countries.

The authors, led by Pamela Collins from the National Institute of Mental Health in the US, explain that the goal of the series is to help achieve a [Grand Challenge](#) in Global Mental Health: "redesign health systems to integrate MNS disorders with other chronic-disease care, and create parity between mental and [physical illness](#) in investment into research, training, treatment, and prevention."

In this first introductory article, the authors explain the need for integration. They say: "The evidence demonstrating that there truly is "no health without mental health" continues to grow, and the links between HIV and depression, cardiovascular disease and [anxiety disorders](#), diabetes and depression—as well as other conditions—suggest that the best outcomes for these disorders require care that attends to all of them."

The authors argue that achieving desired outcomes for priority health

programs will be difficult without managing MNS disorders and advocate for packages of care for MNS disorders in combination with effective interventions in primary care or other priority health delivery platforms.

According to the authors, integration of care for MNS disorders with care for other conditions can occur through assimilation of activities, policies, and organizational structures at local, national, and global levels.

The authors conclude: "In the five-part series providing a global perspective on integrating mental health, we aim to help health care providers, donors, and decision makers understand the importance of including [mental health care](#) in global [health programs](#), identify entry points for integration, select interventions to be introduced into existing health services, and take steps toward action."

The five articles providing a global perspective on integrating mental health will be published weekly in *PLOS Medicine* beginning 30 April 2013.

More information: Collins PY, Insel TR, Chockalingam A, Daar A, Maddox YT (2013) Grand Challenges in Global Mental Health: Integration in Research, Policy, and Practice. *PLoS Med* 10(4): e1001434. [doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001434](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001434)

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