

Countries investing in well-being allocate resources to child and adolescent psychiatry

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A new research report shows that a high ranking in the Human Development Index is connected with the availability of mental health services. In a comparison between 17 European and Asian countries, Norway, Switzerland and Finland had the highest ratio of child and adolescent psychiatrists. The report was compiled by the Eurasian Child & Adolescent Mental Health Study (EACMHS) network established by the Research Centre for Child Psychiatry at the University of Turku, Finland.

In both European and Asian countries, the ratio of child and [adolescent](#) mental health experts per population size was higher in countries that ranked highly in the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is put together by the United Nations Development Programme and it summarises the key dimensions of human development, such as having a long and healthy life, and a decent standard of living.

According to the report of the EACMHS network, Norway, Switzerland and Finland had one child and adolescent [psychiatrist](#) for 2,100-2,200 children aged 14 years or younger, Lithuania had one psychiatrist for 7,300 children, and Russia had one for each 18,800 children. However, the ratio of child and adolescent psychiatrists was considerably lower among Asian countries with a high HDI when compared with similarly ranked European countries.

"For example, Singapore had 12 times and Japan 25 times less child and adolescent psychiatrists than Finland," says Adjunct Professor Roshan

Chudal from the University of Turku.

"In the most densely populated countries, such as China and India, there were only one child and adolescent psychiatrist for over a million children," Dr. Chudal continues.

In addition to the Human Development Index, the study results could also be affected by sociocultural characteristics and geographic distribution. Professor of Child Psychiatry Andre Sourander, who led the study, says that there is a great need for training in child and adolescent psychiatry especially in low- and middle-income Asian countries.

"Particularly in countries that are industrialising quickly, children and families are experiencing great social changes that often have a negative impact on the mental health development of children and adolescents. The scale of the problem is highlighted by the fact that over half of the children in the world live in Asia."

He believes that Finland has an excellent chance to profile itself as a transnational education expert in child and adolescent psychiatry. In the report, the number of [child](#) and adolescent psychiatrists was compared with the number of [children](#) aged 14 years or younger in the 17 member countries of the EACMHS network. Countries included in the comparison were Bahrain, Indonesia, India, Israel, Japan, China, Greece, Lithuania, Nepal, Norway, Singapore, Finland, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, Russia and Vietnam.

More information: Andre Sourander et al, Unmet needs of child and adolescent psychiatrists among Asian and European countries: does the Human Development Index (HDI) count?, *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s00787-017-1095-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-017-1095-7)

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