



EUROPE

Recent and upcoming reports from mental health highlight services and practice throughout Europe

The mental health programme at WHO Regional Office for Europe is producing a number of documents which will be ready for distribution in the autumn of 2008. Following is a brief overview of their contents.

- **Policies and practices for mental health in Europe - meeting the challenges**
– available 10 October 2008
- **Mental health, resilience and inequalities** - available 10 October 2008
- **Stigma – an international briefing paper** – available now
- **Stigma – a guidebook for action** - available now

Policies and practices for mental health in Europe - meeting the challenges

This report allows for country by country comparisons on indicators of mental health policy and practice such as health promotion and prevention activities, numbers of psychiatrists, financing, community services, training of workforce, prescription of anti-depressants and representation of users and carers. Data for the 43 Member States involved was obtained from ministries of health. The report provides data not hitherto available on mental health policy and practice across the European Region. The more than 200 figures and tables in the report demonstrate the large diversity, and highlight important information gaps.

The report concludes that:

1. Much progress has been achieved on policy development with a clear convergence towards supporting deinstitutionalization and establishing services close to where people live;
2. Countries are gradually accepting the involvement of service users and carers as good practice, and most countries are establishing programmes for the social inclusion of service users,
3. There is large diversity across the large majority of variables;
4. A lack of precise and comparable information exists, even on fundamental information;
5. There is lack of consistency in practice and education.

Countries in the WHO European Region are committed to transforming their mental health programmes and activities, aiming to shift from institutional practices to person-centred community-based care. The very large majority of countries have made significant progress over the past few years, and several are among the leaders in the world in such areas as mental health promotion, mental disorder prevention activities, service reform and human rights.

However, this report also identifies weaknesses in Europe, some systematically so, such as the lack of consensus on definitions and the absence of compatible data collection, and others that vary more, such as the need for development and investment across several areas. It identifies gaps in information where further work must be done, and is a baseline against which progress can be measured towards the vision and the milestones of the Mental Health Declaration for Europe. *WHO report co-funded by the European Commission*

Mental health, resilience and inequalities

This report explores the wealth of evidence that mental health influences a very wide range of outcomes for individuals and communities. These include healthier lifestyles; better physical health; improved recovery from illness; fewer limitations in daily living; higher educational attainment; greater productivity, employment and earnings; better relationships with adults and with children; social cohesion and engagement and improved quality of life. These outcomes are not just a consequence of the absence of mental illness, but are associated with the presence of positive mental health, sometimes referred to as 'well-being'. Improving mental health is a key goal in itself: people value a sense of emotional and social wellbeing; in addition, good mental health has many other far reaching benefits.

The report sets out the contribution that mental health and mental illness make to a wide range of health and social outcomes and shows how a greater focus on mental health *as a determinant* can help to explain outcomes, for individuals and for communities, which cannot be wholly accounted for by material and other factors

WHO Europe and the Mental Health Foundation

Stigma – an international briefing paper

This briefing paper and accompanying guidebook have been designed to assist people in understanding discrimination, stigma and social exclusion as experienced by people with mental health problems – what they are, why they matter, where they originate – and in developing strategies and actions to fight them. It is addressed to all those who can reduce the discrimination, stigma and social exclusion experienced by people with mental health problems and by those close to them.

Published by Health Scotland – a WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion and Public Health Development

Stigma – a guidebook for action

Tackling the discrimination, stigma and social exclusion experienced by people with mental health problems and those close to them

This guidebook is designed to explain how discrimination, stigma and social exclusion affect people with mental health problems – what they are, why they matter, where they originate – and to help develop strategies and actions to fight them. It gives examples of different activities taking place across the WHO European region, and provides simple tools and ideas for action.

Published by Health Scotland – a WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion and Public Health Development

Epilepsy in the WHO European Region

- Fostering Epilepsy Care in Europe

This regional report for Europe provides a panoramic view of the present epilepsy situation in the Region, outlines the initiatives taken by WHO and other partners to address the problem, defines the current challenges and offers appropriate recommendations. The document also explores mechanisms for involving more Member States and their partners in activities to combat stigma, restore dignity and reduce the treatment gap for people with epilepsy. It is an advocacy tool and an instrument for dialogue with governments, consumer associations, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and development partners.

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