Review of global mental health: A case of addressing mental health in Uganda.

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Community Problem.

Mental health disorders contribute substantially to the global disease burden, affecting one in eight people worldwide. However, mental health services remain underfunded, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. In Uganda, common mental health conditions include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorders. Adolescents, postpartum women, refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable. Barriers to accessing care include stigma, cultural beliefs, inadequate mental health personnel, limited infrastructure and insufficient integration of mental health services into primary healthcare.

Intervention Description.

The initiative, implemented through collaborations involving the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), Ugandan universities, the Uganda Behavioral Health Alliance (UBHA), Sebastian Family Psychology Practice and other allied partners, seeks to strengthen mental health research, service delivery, education and advocacy. Key interventions include integrating mental health services into primary healthcare, expanding community health workers' roles, strengthening mental health training and referral systems, promoting early identification of mental health conditions and conducting community awareness campaigns.

Implementation Experience.

Implementation involves multidisciplinary academic and community partnerships, student engagement, collaborative research, data collection, analysis, publications and dissemination. Partnerships extend across Uganda and other African countries, facilitating knowledge exchange, capacity building and community-based mental health initiatives. Particular attention is directed towards maternal, adolescent and child mental health, refugee mental health and early interventions.

Lessons Learned.

The collaborations have strengthened research capacity, student participation, interdisciplinary engagement and mental health advocacy. Student-driven initiatives have supported improved detection and referral strategies for postpartum depression and contributed to broader maternal and child health outcomes. The experiences demonstrate the importance of sustained

partnerships, community engagement and early intervention in addressing mental health service gaps.

Recommendations.
Uganda should strengthen mental health financing, integrate mental health services into primary healthcare, expand community-based interventions, invest in workforce development and strengthen academic-community partnerships to improve equitable access to mental healthcare.

Keywords: Global Mental Health, Community-Based Interventions, Mental Health Partnerships, Uganda, Health Systems Strengthening, Mental Health Advocacy.