

Connecting People Intervention International Feasibility Study

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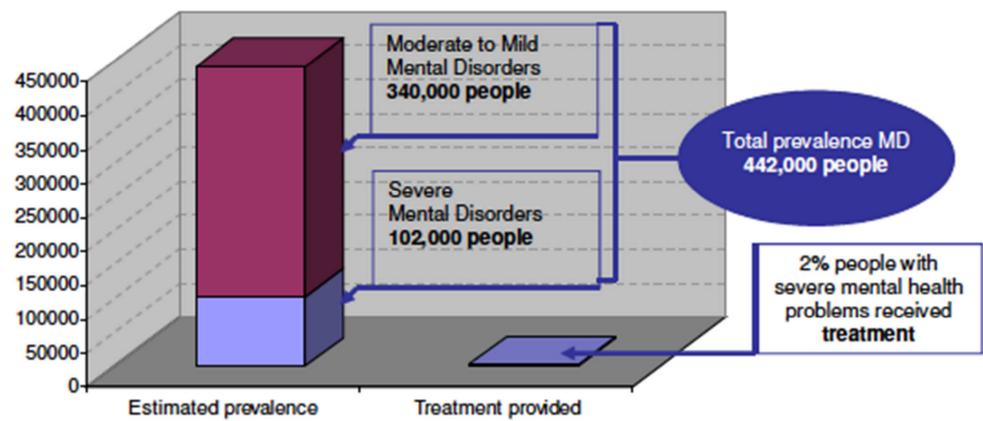
Department of Health Sciences



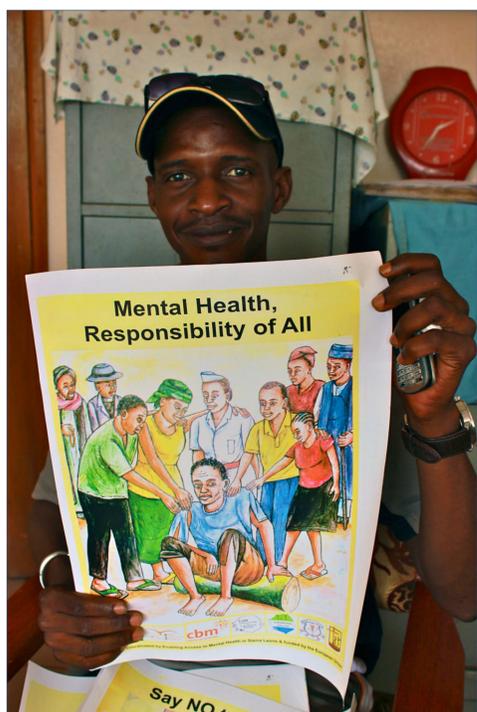
Background

Like many post-conflict societies, Sierra Leone lacks capacity in its health and social care workforce. Where an estimated 13 per cent of the adult population suffers from a mental disorder and there exists only one trained psychiatrist for a population over 4 million, the mental health treatment gap is great.

This study aims to evaluate the feasibility of adapting a UK psychosocial intervention model to meet these mental health needs.



Current Treatment gap for people with mental health problems in Sierra Leone
Source: 2012 WHO MIND Profiles on Mental Health in Development



Advocacy posters developed by Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS)

Methodology

In July University of York Research Fellow, Meredith Newlin, visited Sierra Leone to conduct interviews, focus groups and observations in a variety of mental health service settings and with a number of key stakeholders. Interview responses and observation notes from multiple sources were triangulated using the comparative method of grounded theory.

Results

Training in psychosocial approaches is greatly needed both at district and community levels in order to strengthen the care available to adults with mental health problems. Feedback from stakeholders on the adaptation of an intervention model was positive, highlighting specific elements of social capital within the cultural context:



Mental health training for Community Health Officers in Bo Hospital

Psychiatric Nurse Training at EU-funded Enabling Access to Mental Health (EAMH)



- Building of trusting relationships between the health worker and service user
- Deepening connections in the community, particularly with family members
- Enhancing public awareness of mental health thereby minimising stigma
- Traditional beliefs of mental illness impacting perceptions of recovery

Discussion

From the data collected in this feasibility study, the research team will continue to collaborate with stakeholders in Sierra Leone to enhance the psychosocial skills of mental health workers through adaptation of the intervention model and development of a training programme.