

14 August 2017 – A WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) pilot district implementation planning workshop took place in Islamabad from 9 to 10 August 2017. Implementation of WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme provides an evidence-based solution to bridge the existing huge treatment gap in mental, neurological and substance use disorders in Pakistan.

This was the consensus achieved during a two-day planning for implementation of WHO Mental Health Gap Action Plan (mhGAP) in four selected districts of Pakistan namely Hyderabad in Sindh, Quetta in Balochistan, Rawalpindi in the Punjab and Peshawar in KPK.

Following the Training of Trainers (TOTs) held in December 2016, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) supported by WHO Collaborating Center for Mental Health, located in the Institute of Psychiatry (IOP) Rawalpindi and WHO Country Office Pakistan organized this planning exercise aimed at developing a detailed plan of action for the training of General Physicians (GPs) at Tehsil level and separate trainings for paramedical staff in the relevant PHC facilities in each of the selected pilot district. The planning workshop was participated by a group of Master Trainers along with district managers from pilot districts.

The mhGAP planning workshop started with the presentation of Dr Mohammad Assai, WHO Representative in Pakistan, who advocated for integrated people-centred health services for the implementation of mhGAP in the model districts. A team from the IOP headed by Prof Fareed Minhas facilitated this workshop. The objective of the workshop is to review the mhGAP training material, brainstorm on the next steps and come out with a clear roadmap for the cascade trainings in the selected Tehsils of the pilot districts.

Dr Safi Director implementation Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination briefed the participants of the Government commitment and the process adopted for the implementation of this initiative in Pakistan.

Professor Fareed highlighted the magnitude of the mental health disorders and alarmingly low number of health workforce in Pakistan.

The participants worked in groups to come out with detailed implementation plan of action for their respective areas of jurisdiction. They held detailed discussions and presented a draft plan of action showing details as to who would be doing what, when, where and how (venues, tentative training dates for the GPs and paramedics, number of trainees in each workshop, the needed materials, training methodology and who would be doing what. It was tentatively decided that the GP's trainings would be held during September-October and for paramedics during November-December. The participants also discussed in detail the supervision and monitoring plan.

The provincial Governments will evaluate the pilot studies and scale up integration of mental health in primary health care centres through developing and funding PC1s.

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