



10 October 2023, Sana'a, Yemen – While some health issues are evident, others remain unseen. The focus of health actors on risks that lead directly to death has kept the attention away from mental health risks. Yet mental health conditions have severe consequences for communities.

The need for mental health and psychosocial support is rapidly increasing. People in Yemen are suffering from trauma and problems exacerbated by violence, displacement, unemployment, hunger and poverty. Such health needs remain among the most culturally stigmatized and least prioritized. The Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 indicates that only 120 000 of the 7 million people reported to require mental health treatment and support have uninterrupted access to these services.

“The country’s pre- and post-conflict health system struggles to integrate mental health services into the public health structure. It is also unable to provide adequate support or obtain thorough data owing to cultural stigma,” said Dr Arturo Pesigan, WHO Representative in Yemen. “The community, on the other hand, especially adults and elderly people, have increasing needs yet are faced with unavailable services and social rejection.”

A study on mental health conditions among Yemen’s population was carried out in 2019 by EPOS Consulting and Health Services, with the support of the European Commission and in partnership with Yemen’s Ministry of Public Health and Population. This study, which represented 42% of the Yemeni population, found that post-traumatic stress disorder was the mental health condition with the highest rate of prevalence (45%) among Yemen’s people. This was followed by depression (27%), anxiety (25%), schizophrenia (18%) and phobia (4%).

These rates are met with limited to no access to specialized services, and limited social acceptance of the conditions, especially in hard-to-reach areas and groups. People are left to handle their trauma on their own. This includes women, children and other vulnerable groups.

In regard to children, the ongoing interrupted access to quality education remains a concern in terms of the cognitive and emotional development, as well as mental health, of 10.76 million school-aged girls and boys in Yemen.

In 2022, the Ministry of Public Health and Population, with support from WHO, finalized the [National Mental Health Strategy \(NMHS\) 2022–2026](#)

. NMHS supports the development and integration of curative and preventive mental health services that will ensure comprehensive access for all. Since then, WHO has supported the establishment and rehabilitation of 47 mental health units, across many of Yemen's governorates, to ensure the availability of safe services for communities.

For more information visit: [Yemen Health Emergency](#)

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About WHO: Since 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been the United Nations agency dedicated to advancing health for all, so that everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health. WHO leads global efforts to expand universal health coverage, direct and coordinate the world's responses to health emergencies and connect nations, partners and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

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