



## **INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH**

Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India

### **Press Release**

#### **Release of GBD India Mental Disorders Paper**

23rd December 2019, New Delhi

The first comprehensive estimates of disease burden due to mental disorders and their trends in every state of India from 1990 published in The Lancet Psychiatry by the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative show that a significant proportion of India's population faces the burden of mental disorders of varying severity. These include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, idiopathic developmental intellectual disability, conduct disorders, and autism. In 2017, 197 million Indians were suffering from mental disorders of whom 46 million had depression and 45 million anxiety disorders. The contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden has doubled between 1990 and 2017.

At the release of the GBD India Mental Disorders paper today at ICMR, Prof Balram Bhargava, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Health Research and Director General, ICMR said, "The findings of this research demonstrate important differences between the states—the prevalence of adult mental disorders is higher in the southern states and that of childhood onset mental disorders is higher in the northern states of India. The insights provided by this study are important for titrating strategies for mental health improvement in each state. Given the significant contribution of mental disorders to the disease burden in India, further research should continue to track the changing trends of mental disorders in different parts of the country."

Prof Lalit Dandona, Director of India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative said, "This study utilizing all accessible relevant data from India over the past three decades reports that mental disorders are the leading cause of non-fatal disease burden in India and their contribution to the total disease burden is increasing. The high rate of depression among the older adults reported in this study is of concern which needs attention, and the significant association of suicide with depression emphasises the need to identify and deal with depression through wider efforts in the community and in the health system."

Prof Rajesh Sagar, Professor, AIIMS, New Delhi and the lead author of the paper said, “Mental illnesses contribute significantly to the burden of disease in India as reported by this study. There is an urgent need to strengthen mental health services, integrate these with general healthcare, and remove barriers such as stigma and access to treatment. It is time to act at all levels with all stakeholders to bring mental health at the forefront to reduce the burden. An interesting finding revealed by this study is the slower pace of improvement in the burden of childhood mental disorders such as developmental intellectual disability and conduct disorder in the less developed states of the country which should be examined.”

Dr Hendrik J Bekedam\*, WHO Representative to India said, “The findings of this study underscore the need to further strengthen mental health services and support to deal with this issue that affects one in seven Indians. With Ayushman Bharat as the core of India’s current health policies the Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) component provides a great opportunity to define the role of HWCs and bring prevention, detection and support closer to the people with mental health conditions. WHO continues to support Government of India to achieve the highest standard of mental health and well- being and to advance Universal Health Coverage.”

Prof K Srinath Reddy\*, President, Public Health Foundation of India said, “The high burden of mental health disorders poses a public health challenge that calls for a concerted response that prioritises prevention through reduction in stress and strife, social support in different settings, timely detection and predominantly community based care and access to competent medical care and drugs as needed. The higher burden in children and adolescents in north Indian states is especially worrisome. Our identity as a caring society with a competent health system will be most sharply defined over the next decade by how we effectively and empathetically prevent and tend to mental health disorders.”

Prof Christopher J L Murray\* Director, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation said “Before state governments can invest substantially more in mental health services, it is imperative that health officials have an accurate accounting of how depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders are distributed across the country. This study provides a crucial first step in determining state-by-state need.”

The state-specific findings described in this scientific paper highlight the extent of the effort needed in each state to address mental health which could serve as a reference for policy makers to plan approaches for reducing the growing burden of mental disorders in a systematic way. The trends over about three decades reported in this research paper utilized all available data sources from India, which enables more robust estimates than the estimates based on individual data sources in isolation.

The findings reported in the paper published today are part of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. The analytical methods of this study have been refined over two decades of scientific work, which has been reported in over 16,000 peer-reviewed publications, making it the most widely used approach globally for disease burden estimation. These methods enable standardized comparisons of the health loss caused by different diseases and risk factors, between different geographies, sexes, and age groups, and over time in a unified framework. A key metric used for this comparison is disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), which are the sum of the number of years of life lost due to premature death and a weighted measure of the years lived with disability due to a disease or injury.

\*Were part of the research but were not present in today's programme.

*For more details:*

Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi  
 Information Interface Officer/PRO  
 Indian Council of Medical Research  
 Department of Health Research  
 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,  
 Government of India  
 New Delhi - 110029  
 proicmr@gmail.com, syed.adil@icmr.gov.in  
 9599332718

**Key findings from the paper:**

- In 2017, 197.3 million Indians (14.3% of the total population) were suffering from various mental disorders. Of these, 45.7 million had depression and 44.9 million had anxiety disorders.
- The contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden in India in terms of DALYs increased from 2.5% in 1990 to 4.7% in 2017.
- Mental disorders were the leading contributor in India to years lived with disability (YLDs), contributing 14.5% of all YLDs in 2017.
- Depression contributed 33.8% of all mental disorder DALYs in India in 2017, followed by anxiety disorders (19.0%), idiopathic developmental intellectual disability (10.8%), and schizophrenia (9.8%).
- Among the major mental disorders that manifest predominantly during adulthood, the prevalence of depression was 3.3%, anxiety disorders 3.3%, bipolar disorder 0.55%, and schizophrenia 0.25%. Among the mental disorders that have onset predominantly during childhood and adolescence, the prevalence for idiopathic developmental intellectual disability was 4.5%, conduct disorder 0.80%, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder 0.42%, and autism spectrum disorders 0.35%.
- The prevalence of predominantly childhood and adolescent onset mental disorders was higher in the less developed northern states, and that of the

mental disorders manifesting predominantly during adulthood higher in the more developed southern states.

- There was a significant association between the prevalence of depression and suicide death rate at the state level, with this association slightly stronger in females than in males.
- The prevalence of depression, anxiety disorders, and eating disorders was significantly higher among females, and the prevalence of conduct disorder, autism spectrum disorders, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder was significantly higher among boys.
- The prevalence of depressive disorders increased with age in India in 2017, with the highest prevalence in elderly.
- The burden of mental disorders which manifest predominantly during adulthood increased in India from 1990 to 2017.
- The burden of mental disorders of predominantly childhood and adolescent onset decreased in India from 1990 to 2017, but this decrease was relatively less in the less developed states.