

Ghana

WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health Situational Assessment

Overview

Strengths

- National mental health legislation and governing board
- Strong public Psychiatric Hospitals
- Policy and strategy focus on de-centralization and integration of mental health services
- Innovative anti-stigma and awareness campaigns
- Substantial mental health research in the country

Challenges

- Limited mental health resources in the northern region and community-based services
- Limited mental health integration and human resources
- Psychotropic medication shortages/partial funding
- Stigma continues to limit help-seeking

Context



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ghana>
December 30, 2021

- Population of 31 million, majority urban (57.3%)
- 79% literacy. 28% of households have improved sanitation, 93% have clean water, and 81% have electricity
- Life expectancy: 64, infant mortality rate: 34 per 1000 live births, maternal mortality ratio: 333 per 100,000 live births
- Leading causes of death are Malaria, stroke, and lower respiratory infections
- Relatively low HIV prevalence (1.7%)
- 19% of women report exposure to intimate partner violence
- Trend toward polysubstance use, including marijuana, heroin, and cocaine
- Mental disorders often attributed to supernatural or spiritual causes

Policies and Plans

Public spending on mental health (\$/capita): USD 0.64

Policy

Name: Mental Health Policy

Years: 2019 – 2030

Progress: n/s

Plan

Name: Mental Health Authority Strategic Plan

Years: 2019-2022

Progress: n/s

Legislation

Mental Health Act of 2012

Key Informant:

The country recently launched a mental health policy and strategic plan to complement the mental health law that can help bring about many changes needed to improve mental health in Ghana – Mental Health Advocate

	Elements included in policy/plan	Policy	Plan
Components	PHC integration	Present	Present
	Decentralization	Present	Present
	Hospital integration	Present	Present
	Maternal	Present	Present
	Child/adolescent	Present	Partially included
	HIV	Present	Present
	Alcohol/substance use	Present	Present
	Epilepsy	Present	Partially included
	Dementia	Present	Partially included
	Promotion/prevention	Present	Present
Equity	Suicide	Present	Present
	Gender	Present	Partially included
	Age/life course	Present	Partially included
	Rural/urban	Present	Present
	Socio-economic status	Present	Present
	Vulnerable populations	Present	Present

■ Present
 ■ Absent
 ■ Partially included

Prevalence and Coverage

	Prevalence ¹	Total ¹	Gender ratio ¹	Treatment coverage ²
Major depressive disorder	2.6%	785,510	3.1% females 1.9% males	0.6%
Bipolar disorder	0.5%	157,544	0.5% females 0.5% males	1.7%
Schizophrenia	0.2%	59,793	0.2% females 0.2% males	33.2%
Alcohol use disorders	0.5%	155,249	0.5% females 0.5% males	2.4%
Drug use disorders	0.5%	163,386	0.3% females 0.7% males	2.4%
Epilepsy	0.4%	130,866	0.4% females 0.5% males	14.4%
Suicide deaths	6.6 ³	2,065	1.2 females 11.8 males ³	--

¹GBD 2019; ²Ministry of Health Internal report; ³estimate rate per 100k

Services

Human resources

	N	Rate per 100,000
Generalist		
Doctor	3294	10.60
Nurse	84,239	271.10
Pharmacist	1460	4.70
Specialist		
Neurologist	--	--
Psychiatrist	39	0.13
Psychologist	26	0.08
Mental health nurse	362	1.17
Mental health social worker	2463	8.10
Occupational therapist	6	0.02

Health care facilities

	Total	Facilities/ 100,000
Inpatient		
Mental hospital	3	0.01
General hospital psychiatric unit	260	0.84
Forensic hospital	n/s	n/s
Out-patient		
Hospital mental health	n/s	n/s
Community-based/ non-hospital mental health	1016	3.27

Key Informant:

Most of the mental health professionals, like the psychiatrists and psychologist, are based in the southern part of Ghana - Service User

MH training	Pre-service training is provided for PHC workers; Training in managing common mental health conditions has been provided for primary care providers (e.g., physician assistant) in last 3 years
PHC integration	Half of the regional hospitals and fewer than half of district hospitals provide psychiatric services. Mental health care is primarily provided by 3 psychiatric hospitals.
Psychosocial interventions	Problem-solving Therapy, Behavioral Activation Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Interpersonal Therapy, positive psychotherapy, and brief alcohol interventions provided in many general and specialist hospitals
Medication summary	Medication availability is unreliable. Limited funds, no framework contract for stable pricing and guaranteed supplies, and small quantities procured, limit availability.
MH promotion	Mental Health Authority launched QualityRights initiative to promote positive attitudes and practices among stakeholders

Community and Other Sectors

Community	Faith healers practice throughout country; Self-help groups focused on mental health and welfare
Education	Guidance and counselling units in some senior high schools
Social welfare	Ghana has social protection schemes such as LEAP, national health insurance, school capitation grants and feeding programs, but these do not adequately benefit poor people with mental illness
Justice system	An estimated 2% of incarcerated individuals in need of mental health care receive it. The strategic plan aims to develop guidelines for incorporating mental health into the criminal justice system

Monitoring and Evaluation

National health information system: **Yes** – Health management information systems exists and gathers basic demographic data.