The national community mental health care project in Vietnam: a summary of 3rd stage in 2011 - 2015

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Objectives: To review the national community mental health care (CMHC) project in Vietnam and recommend improvements based on reported findings.

Background and aims: In line with the World Health Organization recommendation, CMHC carried out from 2000 has demonstrated a commitment by Vietnamese government to integrate mental health services into primary health care. The results will be reported every 5 years. The aim of this paper is to review results of the project after 3rd stage in 2011 – 2015 and recommend improvements based on reported findings.

Materials and methods: The data was gathered from site visits with mental health leaders, professionals and stakeholders in the hospital and community mental health services, and was reported at a national workshop of key service providers.

Results: The program had been carried out in all 63 provinces and cities in Vietnam. Alcohol abuse, depression and anxiety were the most prevalent mental illnesses. By 2015, CMHC covered schizophrenia and epilepsy. Among 63 provinces/cities, there were 42 ones implemented 100% of their communes /wards to take care of patients with schizophrenia, and 12 ones for epilepsy. Among 11,148 communes, the number of communes/wards deployed in management of schizophrenia and epilepsy were 9,594 and 7,037 respectively, the total number of managed patients were 183,869 and 105,907; The number of stable patients were 147,095 and 86,843, respectively. The program had been implemented by the national budget, however, the annual budget had been allocated only approximately 50% of the plan.

Conclusions: While progress in community mental health care in Vietnam has been significant, many challenges facing the CMHC project need addressing

Figure 1. The mental health services network in Vietnam

Figure 2. Prevalence of mental illness in Vietnam by 2015 (%)

Figure 3: Number of implemented communes/wards by diseases

Figure 4: Number of patients by diseases