Global Perspectives on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

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Present State of Services

• Failure to appreciate the "burden of disease"
• Lack of policy to guide service development
• Lack of any continuum of care
• Lack of trained providers for child and adolescent mental health services
• Rapidly changing systems for finance and governance of services
• Public/private distortion in services
"Burden of Disease"

- More than DALYs
- Adult mental disorders begin in or identifiable in childhood
- Economic costs to society…remedial education, juvenile crime, lack of productivity, unstable family structures, lost productivity
- Societal disruption
Absence of Policy

Findings of WHO ATLAS survey of country resources for child and adolescent mental health
Absence of a Continuum of Care

- Too great a reliance on institution based care without any standards for care…children with adults, co-housing of the retarded with the mentally ill, abusive situations, lack of treatment
- Care based on preferences or offerings of NGOs without oversight or coordination
Lack of Trained Providers

• Outside of Europe and North America (which have problems with the distribution of providers) there is lack of trained providers in all disciplines to provide adequate care

• Myth of primary care provider networks

• Traditional caregivers less of a resource than assumed

• More potential than assumed, but requires planning and resources
Changes in Systems of Care

• Throughout the world there are changes in systems of care motivated by economic constraints, political considerations and competition among health conditions.
• Erosion of primary care systems due to structural re-alignment
• Introduction of managed care and insurance
Managed Care and Insurance

• Both concepts developed and suited for wealthier countries with more developed services
• Managed care can be ill-informed and simply a means to save money or can provide appropriate clinical care oversight
• Too often insurance schemes only serve to limit access or fail to provide mental heath coverage
Public/Private Distortion

• "Privatization" leading to drain of public system resources
• Reduced access based on economic considerations
• Flight of trained professionals from system
Key Issues

• Virtual absence of policy to support and guide service implementation
• Lack of trained individuals to provide needed services
• Failure to recognize the need to support "rational care", that is, service development that focuses on adequate diagnosis, use of effective and safe treatment and encourages evaluation
Contemporary Challenges

• How to treat children and youth impacted by or participating in violence…not all PTSD
• HIV/AIDS accompanied by depression, loss of parenting, long-term mental problems
• Displacement from country of origin, home and family
• Exploitation
The Way Forward
Absent Policy

WHO Module on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Policy
Lack of Trained Individuals

Expansion and enforcement of UEMS guidelines
Support for re-training of providers
"Rational Care"

Establish standards for care in policy
Identify good practices
Campaign for appropriate and safe care
Thank you