

Development, Evaluation and Scale-Up of a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP) in Nepal

Authors : Nagendra P. Luitel, Mark J. D. Jordans

Abstract : Globally, there is a significant gap between the number of individuals in need of mental health care and those who actually receive treatment. The evidence is accumulating that mental health services can be delivered effectively by primary health care workers through community-based programs and task-sharing approaches. Changing the role of specialist mental health workers from service delivery to building clinical capacity of the primary health care (PHC) workers could help in reducing treatment gap in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). We developed a comprehensive mental health care plan in 2012 and evaluated its feasibility and effectiveness over the past three years. Initially, a mixed method formative study was conducted for the development of mental health care plan (MHCP). Routine monitoring and evaluation data, including client flow and reports of satisfaction, were obtained from beneficiaries (n=135) during the pilot-testing phase. Repeated community survey (N=2040); facility detection survey (N=4704) and the cohort study (N=576) were conducted for evaluation of the MHCP. The resulting MHCP consists of twelve packages divided over the community, health facility, and healthcare organization platforms. Detection of mental health problems increased significantly after introducing MHCP. Service implementation data support the real-life applicability of the MHCP, with reasonable treatment uptake. Currently, MHCP has been implemented in the entire Chitwan district where over 1400 people (438 people with depression, 406 people with psychosis, 181 people with epilepsy, 360 people with alcohol use disorder and 51 others) have received mental health services from trained health workers. Key barriers were identified and addressed, namely dissatisfaction with privacy, perceived burden among health workers, high drop-out rates and continue the supply of medicines. The results indicated that involvement of PHC workers in detection and management of mental health problems is an effective strategy to minimize treatment gap on mental health care in Nepal.

Keywords : mental health, Nepal, primary care, treatment gap

Conference Title : ICMH 2017 : International Conference on Mental Health

Conference Location : Berlin, Germany

Conference Dates : May 21-22, 2017