

Editorial

The case for change: The Global Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020

Gabriel Ivbijaro MBE, MBBS, FRCGP, FWACPpsych, MMedSci, MA

Editor in Chief *Mental Health in Family Medicine*, Chair of the Wonca Working Party on Mental Health, Vice President Europe, World Federation for Mental Health, Chair Waltham Forest Clinical Commissioning Group, London, UK

In May 2012 the World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA 65.4, 'The global burden of mental disorders and the need for a comprehensive, co-ordinated response from health and social sectors at the country level' and charged the World Health Organization (WHO) with the development of an action plan to respond to this. The zero draft of the Global Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020¹ is a discussion paper which, although not yet the official position of the WHO, is worth reading and thinking about.

For this action plan to be successful it needs to have the same impact as the Alma Ata Declaration had for primary care in 1978.^{2,3} Despite all the evidence for good mental healthcare, people with long-term mental health conditions continue to die young as a result of the complications of mental health problems and have a higher mortality as a result of other chronic health difficulties. The relationship between mental health and access to health has been addressed by the WHO on many occasions and also by the World Federation for Mental Health in many of its annual World Mental Health Day Calls to Action.⁴

The zero draft of the Global Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020 proposes a global vision and some core principles including universal access and equity in mental health; the promotion of human rights; the application of evidence-based practice; the adoption of a life course approach; the adoption of a multisectoral approach and the empowerment of

people with mental disorders. If these principles are adopted and implemented they will definitely result in a difference for mental health service users, and their families, globally.

I urge all those with an interest in promoting good mental health to support the WHO in ensuring that the Global Mental Health Action Plan can be developed to become a global reality.

REFERENCES

- 1 World Health Organization. *Zero Draft Global Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020*. Version dated 27 August 2012. Available at: www.who.int/mental_health/mhgap/mental_health_action_plan_EN_27_08_12.pdf (accessed 11/11/2012).
- 2 World Health Organization. *Declaration of Alma-Ata. International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, USSR, 6–12 September 1978*. Available at: www.who.int/publications/almaata_declaration_en.pdf (accessed 11/11/2012).
- 3 Ivbijaro G, Kolkiewicz L, Lionis C *et al*. Primary care mental health and Alma-Ata: from evidence to action. *Mental Health in Family Medicine* 2008;5:67–9.
- 4 Ivbijaro G, Garrison P and Funk M. Mental health in primary care gap: now is the time to act. *Mental Health in Family Medicine* 2009;6:1–4.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Gabriel Ivbijaro. Email: gabriel.ivbijaro@nhs.net

