



Belize

GENERAL INFORMATION

Belize is a country with an approximate area of 23 thousand square kilometers (UNO, 2008). The population is 312,928 and the sex ratio (men per hundred women) is 97 (UNO, 2009). The proportion of the population under the age of 18 years is 41% and the proportion above age 60 is 4% (UNO, 2009). The literacy rate is 76% for men and 77% for women (UN Statistics, 2008). The life expectancy at birth is 74 years for males and 77 years for females (UNO, 2005-2010). The healthy life expectancy at birth is 57 years for males and 77 years for females (UNPD, 2010). The country is in the lower middle income group (based on 2010 World Bank criteria). The total expenditure on health as a percentage of gross domestic product is 5.06% and the per capita government expenditure on health (PPP int. \$) is \$182.0 (WHO, 2006). The suicide rate for males is 13.4 per 100,000 population and for females is 1.6 per 100,000 population. In Belize, neuropsychiatric disorders are estimated to contribute to 17.3% of the global burden of disease (WHO, 2008).

GOVERNANCE

An officially approved mental health policy exists and was approved, or most recently revised, in 2009. Mental health is also specifically mentioned in the general health policy.

A mental health plan exists and was approved, or most recently revised, in 2010. The mental health plan components include:

- Timelines for the implementation of the mental health plan.
- Funding allocation for the implementation of half or more of the items in the mental health plan.
- Shift of services and resources from mental hospitals to community mental health facilities.
- Integration of mental health services into primary care.

Dedicated mental health legislation does not exist and legal provisions concerning mental health are not covered in other laws (e.g. welfare, disability, general health legislation etc.).

FINANCING

Mental health and mental hospital expenditures by the government health department/ministry are not available.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

Primary Care

Prescription regulations authorize primary health care doctors to prescribe and/or to continue prescription of psychotherapeutic medicines. The department of health also authorizes primary health care nurses to prescribe and/or to continue prescription of psychotherapeutic medicines, but with restrictions. In addition, official policy enables primary health care nurses to independently diagnose and treat mental disorders within the primary care system.

The majority of primary health care doctors and nurses have received official in-service training on mental health within the last five years. Officially approved manuals on the management and treatment of mental disorders are available in the majority of primary health care clinics. Official referral procedures for

Data collected in 2011

UN = information unavailable, NA = item not applicable

referring persons from primary care to secondary/tertiary care exist, as do referral procedures from tertiary/secondary care to primary care.

Mental Health Services

Availability of mental health facilities

	Total number of facilities/beds	Rate per 100,000 population	Number of facilities/beds reserved for children and adolescents only	Rate per 100,000 population
Mental health outpatient facilities	9	2.88	UN	UN
Day treatment facilities	0	0.0	NA	NA
Psychiatric beds in general hospitals	4	1.28	UN	UN
Community residential facilities	1	0.32	UN	UN
Beds/places in community residential facilities	36	11.5	UN	UN
Mental hospitals	0	0.0	NA	NA
Beds in mental hospitals	NA	NA	NA	NA

Access to care

	Rates per 100,000 population)	Females (%)	Under age 18 (%)
Persons treated in mental health outpatient facilities	4116.92	52%	13%
Persons treated in mental health day treatment facilities	NA	NA	NA
Admissions to psychiatric beds in general hospitals	18.85	46%	15%
Persons staying in community residential facilities at the end of the year	11.5	50%	0%
Admissions to mental hospitals	NA	NA	NA

Long term care in mental hospitals (% of persons staying):

Less than 1 year	NA
More than 1 and less than 5 years	NA
More than 5 years	NA

Note: Belize's only mental hospital was closed down in 2008. However, an alternate long term facility was created in the community with the capacity of attending to 36 patients. Additionally, out of the 7 general hospitals in the country, 6 have allocated beds for patients with psychiatric disorders.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Workforce and training

	Health professionals working in the mental health sector Rate per 100,000	Training of health professions in educational institutions Rate per 100,000
Psychiatrists	0.96	NA
Medical doctors, not specialized in psychiatry	0.0	NA
Nurses	7.67	8.31
Psychologists	0.0	NA
Social workers	0.0	5.11
Occupational therapists	0.32	NA
Other health workers	2.24	NA

Note: There is no medical school in the country, however there is one university that offers allied health programs. The nursing and social work programs are only offered at the undergraduate level.

Informal human resources (Family and User Associations)

	User	Family
Present in the country?	Yes	No
Number of members	5	NA
Participation in the formulation/implementation of policy/plan/legislation?	Frequently	NA

MEDICINES

Expenditures for medicines for mental and behavioral disorders at country level

Type of Medicines	Expenditures at country level per year and per 100,000 population (in USD)
All the psychotherapeutic medicines ¹	UN
Medicines used for bipolar disorders ²	UN
Medicines for psychotic disorders ³	UN
Medicines used for general anxiety ⁴	UN

¹ N03AG01, N05A, N05B, N05C, N06A

² N03AG01, N05A, N05B, N05C, N06A

³ N05A (excluding N05AN)

⁴ N05B & N05C

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Medicines used for mood disorders ⁵	UN
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INFORMATION SYSTEMS

	Data on number of people/ activities are collected and reported	Data on age and gender are collected and reported	Data on patient's diagnosis are collected and reported
Persons with mental disorders treated in primary health care	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interventions (psychopharmacological and psychosocial) delivered in primary health care for people with mental disorders	Yes	Yes	Yes
Persons treated in mental health outpatient facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contacts in mental health outpatient facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Persons treated in mental health day treatment facilities	NA	NA	NA
Admissions in general hospitals with psychiatric beds	Yes	Yes	Yes
Admissions in mental hospitals	NA	NA	NA
Days spent in mental hospitals	NA	NA	NA
Admissions in community residential facilities	Yes	No	No

Note: A specific report focusing mental health activities has been published by the Health Department or any other responsible government unit in the last three years.

⁵ N06A

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