



Syrian Arab Republic

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Syrian Arab Republic is a country with an approximate area of 185 thousand square kilometers (UNO, 2008). The population is 22,505,091 and the sex ratio (men per hundred women) is 102 (UNO, 2009). The proportion of the population under the age of 18 years is 44% and the proportion above age 60 is 4% (UNO, 2009). The literacy rate is 96% for men and 93% 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 62 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 2.93% and the per capita government expenditure on health (PPP int. \$) is \$78.0 (WHO, 2006). The suicide rate for males is 0.2 per 100,000 population and for females is 0.0 per 100,000 population. In the Syrian Arab Republic, neuropsychiatric disorders are estimated to contribute to 16.7% of the global burden of disease (WHO, 2008).

GOVERNANCE

An officially approved mental health policy exists and was approved or most recently revised in 2007. Mental health is also specifically mentioned in the general health policy.

A mental health plan exists and was approved or most recently revised in 2007. 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 exists and was initiated or most recently revised in 1953. Legal provisions concerning mental health are also covered in other laws (e.g., welfare, disability, general health legislation etc.).

Note: As of 2010, a new version of the mental health law was drafted.

FINANCING

Mental health expenditures by the government health department/ministry are 2.0% of the total health budget. Mental hospital expenditures are 93.59% of the total mental health budget.

Note: Values above are from the Ministry of Health, and do not include the private sector or funding from other ministries in the country.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

Primary Care

Prescription regulations authorize primary health care doctors to prescribe and/or to continue prescription of psychotherapeutic medicines. In contrast, the department of health does not authorize primary health care nurses to prescribe and/or to continue prescription of psychotherapeutic medicines. Similarly, official

Data collected in 2011

UN = information unavailable, NA = item not applicable

policy does not permit 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 not 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 not available in the majority of primary health care clinics. Official referral procedures for referring persons from primary care to secondary/tertiary care do not exist. Referral procedures from tertiary/secondary to primary care also do not exist.

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	25	0.111	5	0.022
Day treatment facilities	1	0.004	0	0.000
Psychiatric beds in general hospitals	50	0.222	20	0.089
Community residential facilities	35	0.156	UN	UN
Beds/places in community residential facilities	175	0.778	UN	UN
Mental hospitals	5	0.022	0	0.000
Beds in mental hospitals	1,370	6.088	12	0.053

Access to care

	Rates per 100,000 population)	Females (%)	Under age 18 (%)
Persons treated in mental health outpatient facilities	43.42	21%	15%
Persons treated in mental health day treatment facilities	0.22	0%	100%
Admissions to psychiatric beds in general hospitals	1.33	33%	UN
Persons staying in community residential facilities at the end of the year	1.60	20%	UN
Admissions to mental hospitals	20.6	17%	1%

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

Less than 1 year	77%
More than 1 and less than 5 years	19%
More than 5 years	4%

Data collected in 2011

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Note: Admissions to mental health resources due to military/army-related reasons are not included in the data above.

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	0.31	0.03
Medical doctors, not specialized in psychiatry	0.38	10.27
Nurses	1.21	6.11
Psychologists	0.10	1.04
Social workers	0.12	NA
Occupational therapists	0.00	NA
Other health workers	0.20	NA

Informal human resources (Family and User Associations)

	User	Family
Present in the country?	UN	UN
Number of members	UN	UN
Participation in the formulation/implementation of policy/plan/legislation?	UN	UN

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)

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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	No	No	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	Yes	Yes	Yes
Admissions in general hospitals with psychiatric beds	No	No	No
Admissions in mental hospitals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Days spent in mental hospitals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Admissions in community residential facilities	No	No	No

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

OTHER INFORMATION

A national meeting for mental health and psychosocial support, headed by the MOH, was planned for the end of 2009.

⁴ N05B & N05C

⁵ N06A

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