The fact that mental health services are generally not available outside major cities in Ethiopia indicates that more needs to be done to decentralize mental health care. This requires more human resources and funding.

**Call for Action:**

*What should be done to scale up care for Mental, Neurological, and Substance use (MNS) disorders?*

- Ensure political commitment at all levels: the establishment of a core group of stakeholders, political leaders, clinicians and health professionals is critical for programming and implementation.
- Strengthen the plans to address MNS disorders and to promote and protect the human rights of people with these disorders.
- Develop the human resource capacity to deliver the basic health care package for people with MNS disorder.
- Initiate and institutionalize dialogue with community members, clinicians, health workers, and other stakeholders.
- Raise awareness to promote care and to avoid stigma and discrimination of people with MNS disorders.
- Develop a basic health care package for people with MNS disorder.
- Strengthen the system for providing care and protecting human rights of people with MNS disorders within the existing healthcare system.

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The project:

“Scaling up services for mental, neurological and substance use (MNS) disorders within WHO mental health Gap Action Program (mhGAP)” in Ethiopia is a three year project co-funded by the Foundation d'Harcourt and the European Commission.

The essence of mhGAP is to establish productive partnerships; to reinforce commitments with existing partners; to attract and energize new partners; and to accelerate efforts and increase investments towards a reduction of the burden of MNS disorders.

Scaling up is a social, political, and institutional process that engages a range of contributors, interest groups, and organization.

What are the priority MNS Conditions?

The area of mental, neurological and substance use consists of a large number of conditions.

The priority conditions identified for mhGAP include psychosis, epilepsy, depression and alcohol use disorders.

These disorders are highly prevalent in Ethiopia and they substantially interfere with the abilities of children to learn and with the abilities of adults to function in their families, at work, and in the broader society. Because they are common and long lasting, and cause impairment and disability, they make a major contribution to the total burden of disease.

Disability is responsible for most of the burden attributable to these disorders; however, premature mortality – especially from suicide – is also substantial.

The economic burden imposed by these disorders includes loss of gainful employment, with a subsequent reduction in the family income; the requirement for care giving, with further potential loss of wages; the cost of medicines; and the need for other medical and social services.

Services of MNS in Ethiopia:

Mental Health has been one of the most disadvantaged health programs, both in terms of facilities and trained manpower. However, during the last decade, encouraging efforts have been taken to expand services throughout the country.

Notable achievements during the last decade were the training of more than 400 psychiatrist nurses and their deployment in the various health facilities of the regions which have allowed the extension of mental health service to the periphery.

Challenges and Constraints:

In view of the magnitude and increasing demand for services of MNS disorders in the country, the number of health workers trained to deliver mental health services is still very low.