Keeping in mind the principle “what gets measured, gets done”, WHO recently updated its Mental Health Atlas. This new edition offers core indicators for critical areas of mental health system development. These are: governance and financing, human resources, service availability and delivery, promotion and prevention, and surveillance. A key repository of mental health information from WHO Member States, the Mental Health Atlas provides baseline data to measure progress towards the objectives and targets of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020. Read more

First WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia

In addition to affecting the physical and mental health of individuals, dementia also places a high socioeconomic burden on their families, health systems and countries. This impact can be reduced if there is collective commitment to placing dementia high on the global public health agenda. The First WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia was held in Geneva on 16–17 March 2015. Ministers from around the world and experts and stakeholders from the research, clinical, policy-making and NGO communities gathered for the first time to discuss the global challenges posed by dementia. Read more
Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly adopts resolution on epilepsy

At the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly in Geneva on 26 May 2015, all 194 Member States of WHO adopted a new global resolution that urged enhancement of ongoing efforts at providing care for people with epilepsy. Co-sponsored by 16 countries, including the People’s Republic of China, Russia, Ghana and Maldives, the resolution highlights the need for governments to formulate, strengthen and implement national policies and legislation to promote and protect the rights of people with epilepsy. Read more

Training parents to transform children’s lives

Caregivers of children with developmental disorders often don’t have the tools to face very challenging parenting tasks. To help them acquire the knowledge and skills to better support their children’s special needs, WHO has developed the WHO Parent Skills Training Package for caregivers of children with developmental disorders, with support from Autism Speaks. The package will be used by non-specialist providers to train caregivers with the skills to help them better support their children’s development and learning processes and improve their participation in society. Pilot-testing of the package will start in August 2015. Read more
Improving mental health care in India, one step at a time

QualityRights Gujarat aims to improve the quality of care and human rights of people with psychosocial disabilities throughout the state of Gujarat in western India, while helping facilities develop a supportive and respectful recovery environment for service users. Recently, the project helped organize an awareness walk and “Flash Quiz” for World Schizophrenia Day, encouraging individuals to spread awareness and carry forward the conversation about the rights of people with mental health conditions. Thanks to the campaign, citizens of Gujarat are being called upon to act, unite and empower for mental health. Read more

mhGAP Training creates more support for vulnerable people in Syria

More than 500 Syrian health workers have been trained since 2013 to treat people with mental, neurological and substance use disorders in non-specialized health settings. Read more on how a Syrian doctor who recently received training from the WHO Country Office in the Syrian Arab Republic on assessing and managing common mental health conditions during emergencies diagnosed a refugee with depression and treated him accordingly. Read more
mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide (mhGAP-HIG)

In May 2015, WHO and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released the mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide (mhGAP-HIG) for non-specialist health workers in humanitarian emergencies. This new guide offers practical, first-line management recommendations for common mental, neurological and substance use conditions in emergencies. Read more

Thinking healthy: supporting mothers after childbirth

WHO recently released “Thinking Healthy”, a psychological intervention delivered by community health workers to support mothers with depression. Originally developed in Pakistan by Prof. Rahman and his team, this version for global use is the first in a series of evidence-based “low-intensity” psychological interventions being developed by WHO and collaborators. Read more

Dignity in mental health is the theme for World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2015

Thousands of people with mental health conditions around the world continue to be deprived of their dignity and human rights as a consequence of the stigma and lack of care or poor quality of care. Raising awareness about mental health and promoting rights and high-quality care are central to WHO’s role in ensuring that people with mental health conditions live a dignified life. Read more