Forum: Health and Youth
Issue: The question of addressing mental health disorders in youths
Student Officer: Ravi Raman
Position: Co-Chair

INTRODUCTION

'You don't have to struggle in silence'. This is a saying that helps many youths get through their mental illnesses, however, society has a responsibility to make sure that youths have a proper support system. Furthermore, it is in our and youths' best interests to aid in preventing some mental health illnesses that can be mitigated through the removal of certain triggers.

The fact that one in five youths have some sort of mental health disorder gives rise to the importance of addressing it. For, it can have a detrimental impact on youths' physical health and a permanent impact on the course and outlook of the rest of their life.

Especially amongst youth, the stigma regarding talking about mental health still exists. Sufferers still feel reluctant and embarassed to seek help; what this means is that government can invest a hefty amount of capital into treatment, however, they can fail to attract enough users.

Overall, members of states should aim to have adequate treatments of mental illnesses amongst youth as well as circulate positive education surrounding mental health.

KEY DEFINITIONS OF TOPICS

Mental Health - A state of well-being depends on whether an individual can realize their potential, cope with normal life stresses, work productively and contribute constructively to their communities.

Mental/Behavioural disorders - A wide range of mental health conditions that affect an individual's mood, behaviour and thinking. Examples include: anxiety disorders, eating disorders and addictive behaviours.

Health Promotion - The process of enabling people to assert control over their health and to thereby improve it.
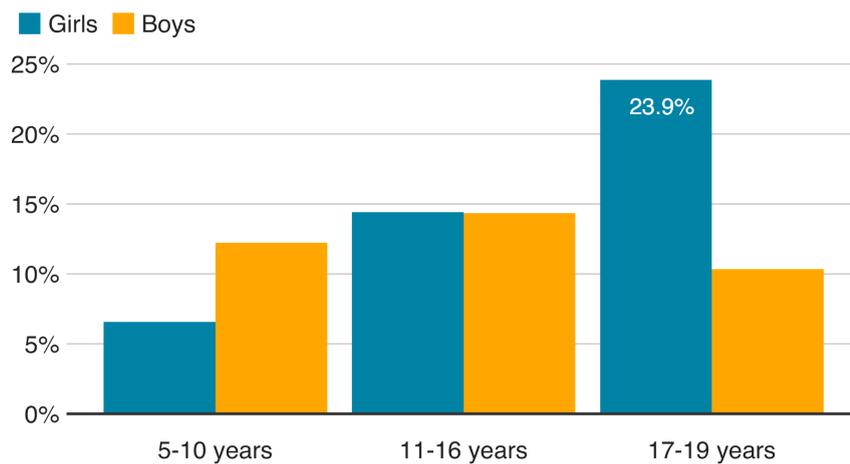
Universal Prevention - Targeting a large group or a whole population in order to inform them about mental/behavioural disorders.

Graph illustrating the sheer number of youths that experience mental illness.

Nearly 1 in 4 young women has mental illness

Prevalence of mental disorders by age, England

■ Girls ■ Boys

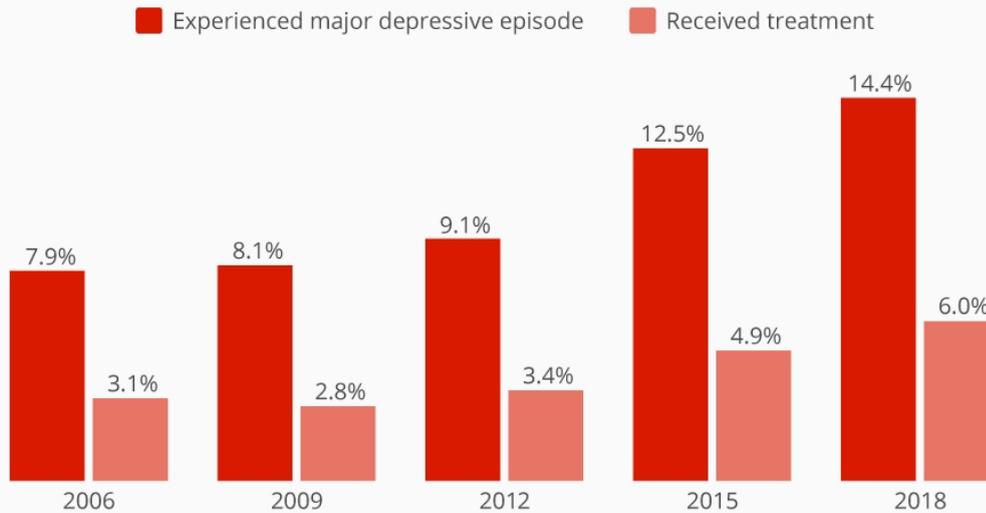|	5-10 years	11-16 years	17-19 years

23.9%

Source: NHS Digital

BBC

Graph showing the contrast between the number of youths who experience mental illnesses and the number who received treatment.

More Teenagers Are Experiencing Depression

Share of U.S. teenagers (12-17 y/o) experiencing depressive episodes*/receiving treatment

■ Experienced major depressive episode   ■ Received treatment

Year	Experienced major depressive episode	Received treatment
2006	7.9%	3.1%
2009	8.1%	2.8%
2012	9.1%	3.4%
2015	12.5%	4.9%
2018	14.4%	6.0%

* in the past year, approximately 17,000 respondents per year
Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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Major Countries and Organizations Involved

WHO – Leading advocate for mental health. Carry out the majority of the pioneering research with the backing of heavy investment.

WFMH – The World Federation for Mental Health is an organisation that prioritises making mental health wellbeing and recovery one of the global priorities for everyone. It's an NGO that has members of all different kinds of professions and even includes volunteering citizens.

MSD – Stands for the department of Mental Health and Substance abuse. This WHO department aims to strengthen policies and reliable information on substance abuse and mental health. They function as a way to provide policy support and guidance to countries as well as manage information for WHO.

China – China has tackled this issue from multiple different angles. They have gathered data and shared a field-tested projects prevention model with other countries while developing ways to educate children on healthy methods of expressing emotions. China has also focused on anti-depression projects that work through educating the public about depression as recommended by WHO. Finally, China has made an effort to

help the chronically ill by trying to improve their mental health; the project has so far yielded impressive results improving a large majority of the patient's conditions.

The USA - The USAs effort to tackle mental health has been mainly focused on helping children in the juvenile correction system to cope with mental health issues and significantly reduce the burden of said issues within communities. Evidence has shown that treating mental illness in juvenile children is more likely to decrease the chance of repeat offences having a proactive effect on the children's lives, families and communities. Along with this, the USA is spreading information through educational outlets and attempting to deal with a great deal of prescription drug addiction cases often linked to mental disorders.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Creation of the WHO Quality rights toolkit in 2012. It was a globally published guide that detailed how members of states should approach mental health in youths.

- An UN-affiliated organisation named 'Healthy Workforce' was created in 2010 which aims to improve the state of mental health among all workers regardless of age.

- The UN had an event dedicated solely to mental health in 2018 named 'Time to act on global mental health'. The agenda consisted of addressing mental health as part of the sustainable development goals by 2030.

- Establishment of World Mental Health Day by the UN to be marked on the 10th of October every year.

- 2016 saw the human rights council establish a link between addressing mental illnesses and human rights.

Timeline of Events

1991 - UN adopts the 'Principles for the protection of persons with mental illness and for the improvement of mental health care'

1996 - WHO launches a program called 'Nations for Mental health' which aims to improve all aspects of mental health in people, especially marginalised.

1999 – WHO host a conference in Geneva that 'sets the agenda' on mental health. The course for which all nations should follow is discussed and set.

2000 – In the USA, a Harvard professor holds a workshop that educates members of the 'Nations for Mental Health' on how they can address the issues in their respective countries.

2001 – During the annual gathering of the 191 members of states, the issue of addressing mental health was discussed. When put to a vote, 131 states agreed that it should be further debated upon.

2013 – WHO lays out a plan with specific financials detailed that requests for investment from members of states.

Bibliography:

[Nations for Mental Health](#)

[Microsoft Word - FInal HW Framework 31 Jan.doc](#)

[Engaging Youth for Mental Health and Wellness | The Harris Centre | Memorial University of Newfoundland](#)

[youth-mental-health.pdf](#)