

**NATIONS  
FOR  
MENTAL  
HEALTH**

WHO/MSA/NAM/97.1

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Foreword by M. Tansella



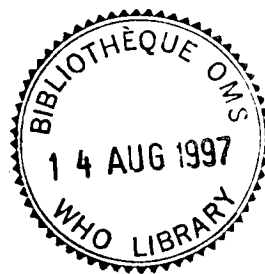
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**World Health Organization**  
Geneva

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# **Gender differences in the epidemiology of affective disorders and schizophrenia**

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Foreword by M. Tansella



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**World Health Organization**

Geneva  
1997

# **NATIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH :**

## **An Initiative for Mental Health in Underserved Populations**

### ***Objectives of Nations for Mental Health***

- To enhance the attention of the people and governments of the world to the effects of mental health problems and substance abuse on the social well-being and physical health of the world's underserved populations. A first step is to increase awareness and concern of the importance of mental health through a series of key high profile regional and international events. Secondly, efforts will be devoted to building up the will of the key political authorities to participate. Thirdly, and finally, efforts are to be directed at securing political commitments by decision-makers.
- To establish a number of demonstration projects in each of the six WHO regions of the world. They are meant to illustrate the potential of collaborative efforts at country level, with the view of leading on to projects of a larger scale.

The implementation of the programme depends on voluntary contributions from governments, foundations, individuals and others. It receives financial support from the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation. In addition, financial and technical support is also being provided by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Institute of Psychiatry at the Maudsley Hospital of London (United Kingdom), the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (Germany), the Villa Pini Foundation (Chieti, Italy), Columbia University (New York, USA), the Laboratoires Servier (Paris, France) and the International Foundation for Mental Health and Neurosciences (Geneva, Switzerland).

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The World Health Organization's Division of Mental Health and Prevention of Substance Abuse has established an initiative called «Nations for Mental Health» to deal with the increasing burdens of mental health and substance abuse problems worldwide. The main goal of the programme is to improve the mental health and psychosocial well-being of the world's underserved populations (e.g. women, children and adolescents, refugees and indigenous populations and those who suffer from acute or chronic mental illness that is inadequately treated).

During the launching of the world mental health report prepared by the Department of Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, the United Nations Secretary-General said of the UN Mission: «Our objective is to promote the mental health of and well-being of all inhabitants of the planet». The Nations for Mental Health programme embodies this mission.

Solutions to mental health and substance abuse problems entail a joint mobilization of social, economic and political forces as well as substantial changes in governmental policies related to education, health and economic development in each country. This demands an intense and sustained effort from the nations of the world, through joint cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations and the organizations within the United Nations system. The programme is of utmost importance to the work of WHO and is willing to lead and coordinate this ambitious task. Several international meetings and launchings have been organized, in collaboration with other international organizations and academic institutions. A number of demonstration projects related to the programme have already been initiated in several countries. These projects are meant to illustrate and/or demonstrate the potential of collaborative efforts at country level, with the view of leading on to projects of a larger scale.

I am very pleased to present this document as part of the global process of raising awareness and concern for the effects of mental health problems. It is hoped that this important work will be useful in providing health planners and policy-makers with an integrated framework, linked both to specific needs and to epidemiological evidence, for addressing the broad spectrum of issues related to mental disorders and psychosocial problems.

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