**Setting Priorities for Mental Health Care in Nepal: A Formative Study**

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**Background**

There is an urgent need to address the massive treatment gap for mental health problems, especially in low income settings. Packages of care integrated in routine primary health care are posited as a strategy to scale-up mental health care, yet more needs to be known about the most feasible and effective way to go about this.

**Methods**

The study follows a combined methods design that includes engaging an expert panel in a priority setting exercise, running workshops to develop a Theory of Change and conducting in-depth qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders. The results of each research step were taken forward to inform the subsequent one.

**Results**

There was strong endorsement for a system of care that encompasses both the perspectives of health facility and the community. Issues related to increasing access and demand, guaranteeing a sustainable supply of psychotropic medicine, adequate human resourcing, and ensuring positive family involvement came up as priority areas of attention.

**Conclusions**

The study underlines many of the known barriers in developing mental health services. At the same time it provides a distinct pathway and concrete recommendations for overcoming these challenges in Nepal.

**Keywords:** development; formative research; mental health care packages; Nepal.