



# Mental health disorders and associated factors among people living in informal settlements of Kathmandu and Pokhara Valley of Nepal



## Authors

Situ KC<sup>1</sup>, Jiban Karki<sup>2</sup>, Barsha Rijal<sup>1</sup>, Urmila Adhikari<sup>1</sup>, Alisha Karki<sup>1</sup>, Saugat Joshi<sup>1</sup>, Srijana Basnet<sup>1</sup>, Bikash Koirala<sup>1</sup>, Anjita Khadka<sup>1</sup>, Jyoti Lamichhane<sup>1</sup>, Srijana Yogi<sup>1</sup>, Rudra Neupane<sup>1</sup>, Rachel Tolhurst<sup>2</sup>, Sally Theobald<sup>2</sup>

## Affiliation's

<sup>1</sup> PHASE Nepal

<sup>2</sup> Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK

# Background

- Over half of the global population resides in urban areas, which is projected to be 70% by 2050. Nearly one third of the urban residents are living in informal conditions [1].
- South Asia has the highest urban poverty levels in Asia and the Pacific with countries like Bangladesh (71%), Nepal (59%), and India (32%) reporting high proportions of urban populations living in slums [2].
- The National Mental Health Survey in Nepal reported 10% of any mental disorder in their lifetime and 4.3% currently had any mental disorder among the adult population of aged 18 years and above [3].



# Background



- Earlier literatures from low- and middle-income countries demonstrated the linkage between mental health and different factors such as age, socioeconomic factors, gender, education etc. among people living in informal settlements [4,5].
- There is paucity of research focusing on mental health and its determinants, particularly in informal settlements in Nepal.



## Objective

To assess the status of mental health and to identify sociodemographic factors associated with mental health among people living in informal settlements in Nepal as a basis for developing interventions

## Methodology

- Study design: a cross-sectional study
- Study site: Kathmandu and Pokhara
- Study population: people living in informal settlements in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- Sampling procedure: Purposive section of cities followed by random selection of informal settlements in each city and selecting study population from informal settlements using simple random method
- Tools used to assess mental health: General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)
- Crude and adjusted Odds Ratios were estimated using logistic regression analysis.
- Statistical software: SPSS version 25

- Among the total study participants (n= 2009) from informal settlements, 18.3% had common mental disorders.
- Common mental disorder was observed mostly among female, people with older age, and those who were married, illiterate and unemployed.
- Increased odds of common mental disorders were found among people who were widowed (OR 2.11, 95% CI 1.07-4.16) and divorced/separated (OR 3.06, 95% CI 1.07-8.74), compared to those with unmarried.
- People living in informal settlement who were unemployed and had informal employment had a significantly 1.6 fold increased risk of mental disorders than those who were formally employed.

## Conclusion

- The risk of mental health is high among people living in informal settlements in Nepal.
- Increased risk was found among people who were unemployed or with informal employment and those who were widowed or separated.
- These findings underscore the need for targeted mental health interventions tailored to the unique socio-demographic characteristics and circumstances of informal settlers in Nepal.



## Acknowledgements

The UKRI GCRF Accountability for Informal Urban Equity Hub is a multi-country Hub with partners in the UK, Sierra Leone, India, Bangladesh and Kenya which we call ARISE. The Hub works with communities in slums and informal settlements to support processes of accountability related to health. It is funded through the UKRI Collective Fund.



1. United Nations. Sustainable Development goal report. 2023. Available from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>
2. Asian Development Bank. Gender and urban poverty in South Asia—Proceedings report of the 2012 subregional workshop. Mandaluyong City, Philippines. 2013. Available from: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30099/gender-urban-poverty-south-asia>
3. Nepal Health Research Council. 2020. Report of National Mental Health Survey: Nepal. Available from: <https://nhrc.gov.np/publication/national-mental-health-survey-nepal-2020-factsheets-adults/>
4. Abdi F, Rahnemaei FA, Shojaei P, Afsahi F, Mahmoodi Z. Social determinants of mental health of women living in slum: a systematic review. *Obstet Gynecol Sci.* 2021;64(2):143-155. doi:10.5468/ogs.20264
5. Chauhan, S.K. and M. Dhar, Prevalence and Predictors of Mental Health Disorder Among the Adolescent Living in the Slums of Lucknow, India: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Community Ment Health J*, 2020. 56(3): p. 383-392.

## Researcher's bio

Dr. Situ KC is a public health researcher, with PhD in health sciences/Epidemiology. She is currently affiliated with PHASE Nepal in the research project “Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity (ARISE)”. Her area of interest is maternal and child health, perinatal health and access to health services. She has high interest to work in research areas among vulnerable and marginalized population and hard to reach population.



THANK YOU