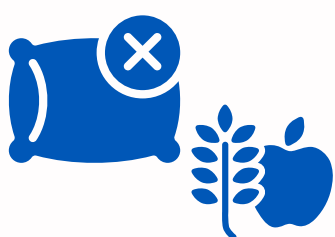


IMPACT OF COMMUNITY-BASED DEPRESSION TREATMENT: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA

15%

of adults in India need active intervention for one or more mental health issues (NFHS, 2015-16).

Symptoms of depression can include:



Disrupted sleep and nutrition



Lower productivity



Lack of willingness or ability to invest in child human capital

Depression is more prevalent among the poor and can contribute to poverty traps. Despite a high need for treatment, several barriers constrain the supply of mental health care in low-income countries. In a recent study, researchers implemented a community-based cluster cross-randomized trial offering psychiatric care and livelihoods assistance to 1000 adults with symptoms of mild or moderate depression in a peri-urban region near Bangalore, India.



What did we find?

- Both pharmacotherapy arms improved mental health outcomes for participants to an extent.
- The interventions increased human capital investment for children who are 12 or older. These results were driven by increases in enrollment and declines in labour force participation.
- The pharmacotherapy interventions and the combined interventions reduced the incidence of negative shocks.

Moreover, the combined pharmacotherapy and livelihoods assistance interventions had a significantly larger and more long-lasting impact. The study suggests that community-based using local resources may be a cost-effective way to treat depression in the community.

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