

# International Mental Health Priorities

Mental Health Action Trust, also known as MHAT. MHAT is a not-for-profit headquartered at Calicut.

MHAT delivers free, recovery oriented, comprehensive psychiatric care for the poorest of the poor spread across 64 clinics in 11 districts of Kerala and Himachal Pradesh.

**Dr Manoj Kumar**  
Chair, South Asian Division



**mhat**

## MHAT - Empowering Communities

The Mission of MHAT is to surmount the constraints of stigma, prejudice and economic barriers to bring high-quality mental health care to the underprivileged

M H A T - R e b u i l d i n g l i v e s ...

# Developing nations perspective

- Social determinants – poverty, overcrowding, illiteracy etc
- Stigma – maintained by failure of services
- Systems in transition
  - Community care lacking
- Stagnant or reducing public health spending
- The economic divide affects priorities

# Twin challenges

- Basic provision of services
  - Usually focused on severe mental disorders
  - Increasingly more in private sector
  - Community based services patchy to non-existent
  - Acute medical model – crisis-based
  - Both access and stigma issues continue
  - Increasing input from the third sector

# Twin challenges

- Additional, new demands
  - Some are demands arising out of unmet needs
    - Services for the older adults, substance misuse
  - Demand for counseling
    - More from better-off people
  - Public mental health priorities shaped by newer demands
    - Focus on 'centres of excellence' rather than the community
    - New investment in telephone helplines

# Twin challenges

- Additional, new demands
  - Increasing substance misuse
  - Increasing suicide rates
  - Climate change victims
  - Large scale disasters – temporary focus on mental health
  - Displaced / Migrant populations
  - School and work-place mental health
  - Women's mental health

# Conclusions

- Public mental health care has to be strengthened
- Investment should be in community mental health care
- Social development can not be separated from health
- New models leveraging non-professionals and technology have to be considered



# Thank you!

[www.mhatkerala.org](http://www.mhatkerala.org)

9745111005

[mk010908@gmail.com](mailto:mk010908@gmail.com)