



## THE RETURN ON THE INDIVIDUAL: TIME TO INVEST IN MENTAL HEALTH



IT'S #TIMETOINVEST IN MENTAL HEALTH

# ABOUT SPEAK YOUR MIND AND THE ROI REPORT

**Speak Your Mind** is a nationally-driven, globally united mental health campaign, powered by United for Global Mental Health. The ROI report was conceived at a global meeting of mental health campaigners in 2019 and further developed through the year.

Speak your Mind website [here](#).

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## THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

The numbers of people with common mental health conditions are truly enormous - dwarfing the rates of many common physical health conditions that receive far greater investment:

- There are 264 million people suffering from anxiety, and 322 million from depression conditions worldwide with 44% of the entire Pakistani population suffering from the latter;
- An estimated further 50 million people, including over 1 million from Pakistan alone, are living with dementia, with this number projected to triple by 2050;
- Those with severe mental health conditions have a 10-25 year life expectancy reduction.
- Half of all mental health conditions start by age 14, and three quarters by their mid-20s;
- One of the most extreme manifestations of poor mental health is suicide which claims the lives of close to 800,000 people every year – with many more attempting to take their own lives; Pakistan accounts for 15-35 cases daily, with a huge segment being daily wagers and minimum wage earners
- Tragically, suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29 years.
- Yet less than 2 per cent of national health budgets globally are spent on mental health. Even less in Pakistan as in 2019-20, Pakistan's biggest investment in mental health came from Sindh which accounted for only 0.24% of its total health budget.
- Provincial health budgets also ranged from only 5-11% of the total budget so investment in Mental Health is negligible.

For those people who want to seek treatment, care or support, there are far too many barriers. These include stigma and discrimination, a lack of resources, and too few trained health workers, teachers, peer support workers and other carers. In low and middle-income countries, between 76 and 85 per cent of people with mental disorders receive no treatment. Far too many do not seek treatment because of stigma or because they cannot access or afford it.

## THE SCALE OF THE RETURN FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

If the world increases spending to the recommended levels, not by tomorrow, but by a steady and consistent increase from now until 2030, the impact could be huge. In this report we reveal new research that estimates the health impacts following an increase in public mental health investment until 2030 for five mental health conditions: major depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, bipolar disorder and epilepsy.

The new research shows the number of cases of anxiety, depression and epilepsy alone can be decreased by nearly 60 million between now and 2030. What is more, we see

that not only a slowing in the rate of anxiety, depression and epilepsy case increase, but the beginning of an overall reduction in cases across the world.

Maybe the starkest demonstration of what adequate mental health investment could achieve is the number of lives that could be spared with adequately funded mental health systems. For example, nearly 200,000 deaths could be avoided in the three mental health conditions of depression, psychosis and epilepsy alone.

## THE RETURN FOR THE ECONOMY

Mental health and economic performance are closely interlinked. It is estimated that as many as 20 percent of the world's working population has some form of mental health condition at any given time, with the figure close to 34% in Pakistan.

With an estimated 12 billion productive days lost each year due to depression and anxiety alone, poor mental health costs the world economy approximately US\$2.5 trillion per year in reduced economic productivity and direct cost of care. This cost is projected to rise to

US\$6 trillion by 2030 alongside increased social costs. In Pakistan, it is estimated that around 58.97% of the total burden of Mental Health on the economy comes from productivity loss and 37% from medical care costs.

Whilst the underlying causes of poor mental health are complex and multifaceted, the workplace represents an effective location (or platform) for addressing mental health issues through workplace policies and interventions – interventions that can yield substantial financial benefits for employers and represent a sound return on investment.

The majority of large companies now recognise the connection between mental wellbeing, productivity and company performance. Leading companies are not only prioritising their employees' mental health but also using their public platform to encourage others to follow. However, these companies are not simply altruistic, they are successful businesses. Companies that invest in employee mental health have four times the staff retention of companies who do not effectively manage employee wellbeing. Overall companies on average receive a \$5 return for every \$1 invested in



employee mental health and well-being.

Today more and more people are working at least part time from home. In some countries that trend has been greatly accelerated in the short term by the response of governments and businesses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to an increase in conversations about employee mental health among employers across all sectors as they work to maintain and strengthen employee morale and productivity in times of uncertainty.

Moreover, reports predicting a huge impact on the global economy from COVID-19 is causing further concern - for governments, companies and individuals. Mental ill health typically rises during economic recession. Therefore, mental as well as physical resilience in the face of uncertainty is critically important. Individuals, business and society as a whole need to ensure sufficient investment in addressing mental health now and in the future as we all face uncertain times.

For daily wage workers and low income workers this is particularly important as their entire earning capacity can be crippled by their inability to access mental health support.

## THE RETURN FOR SOCIETY

Mental health is a public good and is interwoven into society. By promoting good mental health, we promote the ability of everyone to fully participate in society, whether in their social networks, workplaces, schools, communities, religious gatherings or families. The potential impact of good or poor mental health on society is enormous and not yet fully understood. In this report we look at the societal impact of mental health on three specific areas:

- **Physical health:** The link between mental health and physical health is well established - people with poor mental health have significantly worse physical health. Improved mental health can lead to reduced tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse, reduced vulnerability to infectious diseases such as HIV and Tuberculosis (TB), and reduced obesity and chronic health conditions. Around half of people with TB have depression – this makes them ten times more likely to stop treatment, leaving them at higher risk of death and of contributing to increased drug resistance.

In Pakistan, it was reported that the population lost 1.7million disability adjusted life years as of 2013 which



consisted of a huge 1.2million attributed to women alone as a direct consequence of the social factors associated to their family life.

Moreover, with Pakistan's Healthcare system already overburdened, with a study in 2015 showing only 1 hospital for every 16.43million people in the population, and that ratio only decreasing with time, investing in mental health could significantly reduce the burden and be more fiscally responsible than the economic outlay on new hospitals to counter the increase in patients due to ignoring mental health impacts. This is even more true during the COVID pandemic with hospital capacity being a huge cause for concern for the state.

- **The family unit:** Poor mental health affects entire families, particularly low income households under significant financial stress. Increased domestic abuse, violence, substance abuse and suicides can tear apart a family dynamic. The mental wellbeing of parents and carers influences the outcomes of the children they are responsible for. Globally, 10-20 per cent of children and adolescents experience mental disorders, while 15-23 per cent of children live with a parent with a mental illness, predisposing



them to having poor mental health themselves

- **Social cohesion:** Evidence is building that mental illness is a barrier to social connections - good mental health allows better connections through meeting the needs of the individual. The responsibility to improve social connectedness extends beyond the individual to the local community and broader society.

**The return on investing in mental health and wellbeing goes well beyond the financial gains.** There are significant returns for both the individual affected and wider society. This report brings together the investment arguments that go beyond simply dollars and cents, turning 'return on investment' on its head, and redefining it as the 'return on the individual'. The case is clear for revolutionary investment in mental health worldwide. But for this investment to be successful, the individual must be placed at its heart.

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*This executive summary has been adapted by Syed Muhammad Ali from **Taskeen Pakistan** to include Pakistani factors and statistics.*