

other early-career psychiatrists to the Network, who can join at any time. Stronger cooperation will enrich both the Network and the programme.

Further information is available at <http://ypsnet.org>

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## Africa and the World Health Organization

**Sir:** It was disappointing to see that Africa was missing from the summaries of the mental health activities of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the thematic papers in *International Psychiatry's* November 2012 edition, as this does not reflect the tremendous work that is being done on the continent by the WHO, governments and other groups.

Africa, which in WHO Regions mainly refers to sub-Saharan Africa, is estimated to have a mental health treatment gap of 85%, which of course

constitutes a major barrier to the fight against poverty. It is therefore appropriate that during the development of the WHO's Mental Health Gap Action Plan (mhGAP), significant attention was paid to ensuring the practical translation of the evidence on which it was based, so that it would be appropriate to the typical African context. This has started to bear fruit, with several large-scale mhGAP-based programmes taking root, for example in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, and its use as an advocacy and teaching resource following local contextualisation. Africa also provided a strong voice in the campaign to include mental health in the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases, discussed by Vijay Ganju in Guest Editorial in the same issue (pp. 79–80).

There has also been a recent strengthening in research, which has become increasingly focused on the particular needs of Africa. The *African Journal of Psychiatry*, *International Psychiatry's* sister publication, has provided an important platform for dissemination. This is essential, given the scarcity of research focused on African needs, and has contributed to an increase in resources for advocacy, for example to increase government prioritisation of mental health and its mainstreaming into other sectors. The PRIME programme, for instance, is starting to produce excellent policy briefs that help to make research evidence available for advocates (see <http://www.prime.uct.ac.za>).

Of course, there is much to do, but there is no doubt that Africa has taken significant steps to address its mental health treatment gap and made an important contribution to global mental health in recent years, and this should be acknowledged.

**Julian Eaton**

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