

Mauritania

General Information

Mauritania is a country with an approximate area of 1026 thousand sq. km. (UNO, 2001). Its population is 2.98 million, and the sex ratio (men per hundred women) is 98 (UNO, 2004). The proportion of population under the age of 15 years is 43% (UNO, 2004), and the proportion of population above the age of 60 years is 5% (WHO, 2004). The literacy rate is 51.5% for men and 31.3% for women (UNESCO/MoH, 2004).

The country is a low income group country (based on World Bank 2004 criteria). The proportion of health budget to GDP is 3.6%. The per capita total expenditure on health is 45 international \$, and the per capita government expenditure on health is 33 international \$ (WHO, 2004).

The main language(s) used in the country is (are) Arabic, Fula, Soninke, Wolof and French. The largest ethnic group(s) is (are) Maur, and the other ethnic group(s) are (is) African. The largest religious group(s) is (are) Muslim.

The life expectancy at birth is 49.8 years for males and 54.5 years for females (WHO, 2004). The healthy life expectancy at birth is 43 years for males and 46 years for females (WHO, 2004).

Epidemiology

There is a paucity of epidemiological data on mental illnesses in Mauritania in internationally accessible literature. According to the National General Survey on Mental Health, 16% of subjects had depressive disorders, 20% had anxiety disorders and 2% had psychoactive substance use disorders (MOH, 2004).

Mental Health Resources

Mental Health Policy

A mental health policy is absent.

Substance Abuse Policy

A substance abuse policy is absent. A decree was issued in November 1990 for the creation of the National Commission against Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

National Mental Health Programme

A national mental health programme is present. The programme was formulated in 1999.

National Therapeutic Drug Policy/Essential List of Drugs

A national therapeutic drug policy/essential list of drugs is absent.

Mental Health Legislation

The country does not have any mental health legislation. A draft legislation is in preparation.

Details about the year of enactment of the mental health legislation are not available.

Mental Health Financing

There are budget allocations for mental health.

The country spends 1% of the total health budget on mental health.

The primary sources of mental health financing in descending order are tax based and out of pocket expenditure by the patient or family.

The country has disability benefits for persons with mental disorders.

Mental Health Facilities

Mental health is a part of primary health care system. Actual treatment of severe mental disorders is available at the primary level.

Regular training of primary care professionals is not carried out in the field of mental health. Some training of primary care professionals is carried out in the field of mental health through workshops, seminars etc.

There are community care facilities for patients with mental disorders. Special units for mental health treatment have been developed in the community.

Psychiatric Beds and Professionals

Total psychiatric beds per 10 000 population	0.2
Psychiatric beds in mental hospitals per 10 000 population	0.2
Psychiatric beds in general hospitals per 10 000 population	0
Psychiatric beds in other settings per 10 000 population	0
Number of psychiatrists per 100 000 population	0.08
Number of neurosurgeons per 100 000 population	0
Number of psychiatric nurses per 100 000 population	0
Number of neurologists per 100 000 population	0.6
Number of psychologists per 100 000 population	0.1
Number of social workers per 100 000 population	0.1

Training of specialists in mental health is not adequate.

Non-Governmental Organizations

NGOs are involved with mental health in the country. They are mainly involved in advocacy, promotion, treatment and rehabilitation.

Information Gathering System

There is mental health reporting system in the country. Only hospital data collection is done.

The country has no data collection system or epidemiological study on mental health. A general survey on mental health was conducted. Data are not available as yet.

Programmes for Special Population

There are no special services.

Therapeutic Drugs

The following therapeutic drugs are generally available at the primary health care level of the country: carbamazepine, phenobarbital, sodium valproate, amitriptyline, chlorpromazine, diazepam, haloperidol.

Trihexiphenidyl (5mg) is present .