

United Arab Emirates

General Information

United Arab Emirates is a country with an approximate area of 84 thousand sq. km. (UNO, 2001). Its population is 3.051 million, and the sex ratio (men per hundred women) is 185 (UNO, 2004). The proportion of population under the age of 15 years is 25% (UNO, 2004), and the proportion of population above the age of 60 years is 2% (WHO, 2004). The literacy rate is 75.6% for men and 80.7% for women (UNESCO/MoH, 2004).

The country is a high income group country (based on World Bank 2004 criteria). The proportion of health budget to GDP is 3.5%. The per capita total expenditure on health is 921 international \$, and the per capita government expenditure on health is 698 international \$ (WHO, 2004).

The main language(s) used in the country is (are) Arabic. The largest ethnic group(s) is (are) South Asian, and the other ethnic group(s) are (is) Emiri and Iranian. The largest religious group(s) is (are) Muslim.

The life expectancy at birth is 71.3 years for males and 75.1 years for females (WHO, 2004). The healthy life expectancy at birth is 64 years for males and 64 years for females (WHO, 2004).

Epidemiology

There is substantial epidemiological data on mental illnesses in the United Arab Emirates in internationally accessible literature. No attempt was made to include this information here.

Mental Health Resources

Mental Health Policy

A mental health policy is absent.

Substance Abuse Policy

A substance abuse policy is present. Details about the year of formulation are not available.

National Mental Health Programme

A national mental health programme is present. The programme was formulated in 1991.

It aims at the universal provision of mental health and substance abuse services by their incorporation in primary health care. The strategies for realizing this aim are through training of personnel in mental health at all primary care levels, strengthening existing centres and opening new ones, streamlining referral services and providing essential drugs, linking community and other sectoral services to it and developing manpower.

National Therapeutic Drug Policy/Essential List of Drugs

A national therapeutic drug policy/essential list of drugs is present. Details about the year of formulation are not available.

Mental Health Legislation

There is a Federal Mental Health Act. It contains sections on definition of mental disorders, the role of authorities and police and on some details on detention and psychoses. The law needs to be reviewed. There is no specific mental health law on mentally abnormal offenders. The Sharia Islamic law addresses such issues. A national forensic psychiatric committee is being set up in collaboration with the ministries of health and justice. Attempted suicide is a crime.

The latest legislation was enacted in 1981.

Mental Health Financing

Details about disability benefits for mental health are not available.

Details about expenditure on mental health are not available.

Details about sources of financing are not available.

Details about disability benefits for mental health are not available.

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. There are extensive primary care services which cater to all kinds of mental disorders.

Regular training of primary care professionals is carried out in the field of mental health.

There are community care facilities for patients with mental disorders. Facilities for rehabilitation are available through CBR approach. Community care services are not well developed and this is compensated by the primary care services.

Psychiatric Beds and Professionals

Total psychiatric beds per 10 000 population	1.4
Psychiatric beds in mental hospitals per 10 000 population	
Psychiatric beds in general hospitals per 10 000 population	
Psychiatric beds in other settings per 10 000 population	
Number of psychiatrists per 100 000 population	2
Number of neurosurgeons per 100 000 population	
Number of psychiatric nurses per 100 000 population	11
Number of neurologists per 100 000 population	
Number of psychologists per 100 000 population	1
Number of social workers per 100 000 population	1.2

There are 7 occupational therapists. A psychiatric hospital opened in 1995 with facilities for general psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, addiction, emergency, child and adolescent psychiatry, consultation-liaison and community care. It has an attached day treatment centre. There are other psychiatric facilities in different cities. The private sector is well established. Most professionals work in the hospital in Abu Dhabi. In the other parts of the Emirate the number of personnel are limited and most have 1 or 2 psychiatrists only.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Details about NGO facilities in mental health are not available.

Information Gathering System

Details about mental health reporting systems are not available.

The country has data collection system or epidemiological study on mental health.

A central psychiatric register has been established by the Ministry of Health for collection of data and research statistics regarding mental health, and data from all over the Emirate would be pooled into this information system.

Programmes for Special Population

The country has specific programmes for mental health for elderly and children. There are services for the mentally retarded and delinquents.

There are also school health centres in some areas which deal with early detection and intervention of psychological problems in school-children. Residential centres for delinquents are also present in some areas.

Therapeutic Drugs

The following therapeutic drugs are generally available at the primary health care level of the country: unknown.

Other Information

Psychiatric services are based on the public health system which is organized on an emirate by emirate basis. A federal ministry has a coordinating role. Abu Dhabi has the most extensive services followed by Dubai. A special committee was established to advise on planning and development of psychiatric services nation-wide.

* The verification of this country profile is still being awaited from the Ministry of Health of the United Arab Emirates.

Additional Sources of Information

•Kraya, N. (2002) Thirty years on: psychiatric services in the United Arab Emirates. *Australasian Psychiatry*. 10, 168-171.

•Kronfol, N.M. (1999) Perspectives on the health care system of the United Arab Emirates. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*. 5, 149-167.