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COI QUERY RESPONSE

NIGERIA – MENTAL HEALTH

A report issued in April 2024 by the *Daily Independent* states that: “Mental health conditions pose a critical challenge globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria. 90% treatment gap exists, meaning only a fraction of those needing mental healthcare receive it. This gap is exacerbated by a lack of mental health professionals, further amplified by emigration.”¹

Business Day in March 2024 states that: “Since the beginning of the year, Nigeria has witnessed a troubling increase in deaths by suicide, with many attributed to socio-economic pressures.”²

A report issued in February 2024 by *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health* states that: “Nigeria today confronts a state of emergency in mental health.”³

The *Punch* reports in January 2024 that: “...about 60 million Nigerians have mental illnesses.”⁴

A report released in January 2024 by *Cambridge University Press* states that: “With only 250 psychiatrists for 200 million people, one psychologist per 2 million people, one psychiatric nurse per 103,000 people, and no dedicated government funding for community mental health centers...Nigeria

¹ Daily Independent (6 April 2024) Nigeria Contextualises Latest WHO's Programme To Bridge Mental Health Gap

² Business Day (24 March 2024) Mental health experts urge action against rising suicide rate in Nigeria

³ Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health (16 February 2024) *Mental health challenges in Nigeria: Bridging the gap between demand and resources*, p.4

⁴ Punch (23 January 2024) Economic crisis, unemployment fueling mental illnesses, say psychiatrists

exemplifies the severe lack of mental health specialists and services that is prominent in many low- and middle-income countries.”⁵

The *Punch* in January 2024 states that: “...the lack of professionals has made it difficult to address mental health issues such as depression.”⁶

A report published in January 2024 by *Human Rights Watch* commenting on events of the preceding year states that: “Thousands of people with mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities in Nigeria continue to be shackled, chained, and locked in confined spaces in various facilities across the country, including in some traditional and religious healing centers, state-run rehabilitation centers, and even in some psychiatric hospitals.”⁷

In May 2023 the *Borgen Project* comments on: “...the poor mental health care system in Nigeria” (*Borgen Project* (28 May 2023) *Reducing Mental Health Challenges in Nigeria*, p.3).⁸

In April 2022 the *European Union Agency for Asylum* states that: “...the PHC workers are too few and do not possess the requisite skills to counsel, detect, screen for and treat mental disorders...”⁹

This document also states that: “...challenges confronting access to mental healthcare in Nigeria include weak legislative support to the review of existing laws, poor budgetary allocation (only 3.3 % of federal health budget goes to mental health, with 90 % of it spent on tertiary care), acute shortages of skilled human resources at tertiary level and dearth of non-specialised skills at lower levels of the health system to detect and manage mental health problems, failure to implement the integration of mental health into primary healthcare and lack of mental health programmes especially at lower levels of care...”¹⁰

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⁵ Cambridge University Press (12 January 2024) Integrating mental health into primary care in Nigeria: Implementation outcomes and clinical impact of the HAPPINESS intervention, pp.1-2

⁶ *Punch* (2 January 2024) How shortage of experts hinders access to mental healthcare – Psychiatrists

⁷ Human Rights Watch (11 January 2024) World Report 2024: Nigeria, p.6

⁸ *Borgen Project* (28 May 2023) *Reducing Mental Health Challenges in Nigeria*, p.3

⁹ European Union Agency for Asylum (April 2022) Nigeria, Medical Country of Origin Information Report, p.75

¹⁰ *ibid*, p.76

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