



Evaluation of mhGAP-HIG training outcomes

We are pleased to share our recent publication entitled "[Evaluation of mhGAP-HIG training outcomes across multiple domains among primary care physicians in three humanitarian contexts in Pakistan: A mixed-methods study.](#)"

The study evaluated the effectiveness of training on a broader set of interrelated competencies to assess the physicians' knowledge, skills, confidence and attitudes for desirable clinical outcomes, highlighting that the contextualized, competency-focused mhGAP-HIG training can significantly strengthen PCPs' ability to identify and manage mental health conditions in Pakistan.

In collaboration with Health Departments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, the MHPSS pilot implementation in Kyber Paktunkhwa was supported by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through GIZ Pakistan and their grant partner, International Medical Corps, Pakistan; International Organization for Migration, Pakistan in Balochistan; and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Pakistan in Baltistan.

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Evaluation of mhGAP-HIG training outcomes across multiple domains among primary care physicians in three humanitarian contexts in Pakistan: A mixed-methods study

Research Article

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Abstract

Humanitarian settings in Pakistan face major gaps in mental health service delivery, with limited specialist resources and a high burden of untreated conditions. Though the World Health Organization's mhGAP-Humanitarian Intervention Guide aims to strengthen the capacity of primary care physicians to identify and manage common mental health conditions, the evidence for multidimensional training outcomes remains limited. This study evaluated the effectiveness of mhGAP-HIG training outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and confidence among physicians across different humanitarian contexts in Pakistan. As part of implementing an evidence-based digital MHPSS service model, seven mhGAP-HIG workshops were held across two provinces and a federal area. We conducted a quasi-experimental, mixed-methods evaluation where a total of 149 physicians completed standardized assessments of knowledge (mhGAP-HIG), therapeutic skills (ENhancing Assessment of Common Therapeutic Factors), attitudes (Mental Illness: Clinician's Attitudes Scale-v4) and confidence, before and after the training. Paired sample *t*-tests and ANCOVA were used to assess within-group and between-group changes, respectively. Quantitative feedback and qualitative reflections were also evaluated. We found significant improvements across the domains of knowledge, skills, confidence and a modest improvement in attitude. The participants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa showed greater gains in knowledge, while participants from Baltistan showed greater gains in skills, as compared to other provinces. Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction, reporting improvements in knowledge, confidence and ability to identify and manage common mental health conditions. Systematic efforts to adapt and implement mhGAP-HIG may lead to significant improvements across multidimensional competencies of physicians.

After nearly a decade of navigating the challenges of training primary care physicians in Pakistan, we are proud to share that we have developed and tested a comprehensive and scalable implementation approach which includes five key components:

- Contextualised mhGAP training guide and a mobile app for implementing the guidelines
- Training programme for primary care physicians
- Contextualised tools to evaluate training outcomes
- Training programme for trainers
- A supervision mechanism

We believe this evidence base provides a strong foundation to scale up capacity-building efforts for primary care physicians across Pakistan, a critical step toward the meaningful integration of mental healthcare at the primary care level.