

Leading researchers call for action to end mental health related premature deaths

The report, produced by MQ Mental Health Research, outlines 18 ambitious, evidence based recommendations that can be taken by policy makers.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, May 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- People with severe mental

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Professor Rory O'Connor

illnesses die too soon and their lives are cut scandalously short. This is due to the tragedy of suicide as well as a disproportionately high rate of physical health problems with low detection.

Now, a new paper published in the Lancet Psychiatry calls for a change on a global scale to put an end to the growing mortality rates of people with mental illness and distress.

The paper is written by 40 global experts with a variety of different backgrounds and perspectives, led by Professor Carol Worthman from Emory University and including

Christine Moutier, CMO of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

The paper maps the many factors which increase the risk of early mortality for those suffering from mental health conditions. Among other things, these include adversities such as traumatic life events, unemployment, stigma and marginalization, lack of meaningful societal relationships, and poor access to healthcare. These factors are well known in broad terms, but the group suggests that more research is needed to determine how best to help.

The report, produced by MQ Mental Health Research, then outlines ambitious and concrete recommendations, calling on government policy-makers to coordinate their response to the mental health challenges we face nationally and internationally. The paper further challenges the private sector such as social media companies and employers to make the changes we need now to save lives in the future.

The 18 recommendations outlined in the paper include delivering integrated healthcare, community-based interventions, restriction of access to lethal means of suicide, reduction of inequalities as well as increased investment in mental health services and research.

The paper's lead authors are Dr. Rory O'Connor, Director of the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory at Glasgow University and board member at MQ Mental Health Research, and Dr. Carol Worthman, Professor of Anthropology at Emory University and MQ Foundation Board Member.

"Globally, too many people die prematurely from suicide and the physical health problems associated with mental illness and mental distress. These devastating losses are preventable," says Professor O'Connor. "For this first time, we have brought together a multidisciplinary global team of academic, policy, clinical, and lived and living experience experts with the specific aim of understanding the driving forces behind these deaths together with what needs to be done to tackle this public health crisis.

The authors recognize that despite the ambitious scale of the solutions, many of the factors being addressed affect all levels of human organization. "The Gone Too Soon road mapping process revealed cross-cutting factors behind mortality from both suicide and mental health comorbidities," says Professor Carol Worthman. "We also discovered that many of these factors operate across the social-ecological spectrum, from individuals through families, communities, and society.

As a parting thought, lead author Dr. O'Connor writes "the time to act is now, to rebuild health-care systems, to prioritize mental health funding, and address the effects of stigma, discrimination, marginalization, gender violence, and victimization."

This paper was made possible by funding from The William Templeton Foundation for Young People's Mental Health. The full paper will be available to view from 18:30 EST on Thursday, May 11 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(23\)00058-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(23)00058-5/fulltext).

This is a part of a larger Gone2Soon initiative. Aside from funding research like this, MQ and the MQ Foundation have funded eight international research projects through the Gone2Soon initiative to help identify and alleviate some of the more specific causes of early death among those with a mental illness.

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About the lead authors:

Professor Emerita Carol Worthman, Professor of Anthropology, Emory University, Atlanta
Professor Worthman has had a long career studying and teaching at Harvard, MIT and Emory University where she held the Samuel Candler Dobbs Chair in the department of Anthropology. She also directed the Laboratory for Comparative Human Biology. Professor Worthman also serves on the board of the MQ Foundation.

Professor Rory O'Connor, Director, Suicidal Behaviour Research Lab, Glasgow University

Professor O'Connor is a co-lead author of the paper and a Professor of Psychology. He is the Director of the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory in Glasgow, one of the leading suicide and self-harm research groups internationally, and is President of the International Association for Suicide Prevention. Professor O'Connor also serves on the board of MQ Mental Health Research.

About MQ Mental Health Research

MQ is a global charity committed to scientific research into understanding different mental health conditions, developing new interventions and championing prevention of mental illness.
www.mqmentalhealth.org

About The MQ Foundation

The MQ foundation is the American affiliate of MQ Mental Health Research. The MQ Foundation works to promote public awareness and support research into the nature, cause, diagnosis, treatment, cure, and prevention of all forms of mental illness.

https://www.mqmentalhealth.org/who-we-are/?lang=en_us

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