



## **Innovative provision of primary mental health care in rural India** - SMART Mental Health Programme - Nov 2017



The George Institute  
for Global Health India

### **Facts:**

- One in four people in India are affected by common mental disorders like depression, anxiety and emotional disorders
- In India, there are only approximately 1 psychologist per 2,000,000 people. In the UK there are almost 260 times more psychologists per capita.

### **Partners:**

All India Institute of Medical Sciences  
University of Hyderabad  
King's College London  
WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse

### **Supporters:**

National Health and Medical Research Council, (NHMRC)  
Australia through the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases, GACD  
Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance  
Grand Challenges, Canada

### **Background:**

- The global burden of mental disorders and treatment gap is large, especially in countries like India due to poor awareness about mental health and few available trained mental health professionals to provide care.
- In India only a small percentage of those suffering from mental disorders actually receive any mental health care.
- This is due to the lack of trained mental health professionals and stigma, and the gap is more acute in rural India.

### **Aims:**

The project aims to evaluate two main components:

1. A community-based campaign to reduce stigma associated with mental illness
2. A primary healthcare working intervention using using a mobile device based support system to treat those over 18 years old with common mental disorders (CMD).

### **Methods:**

- The preliminary work for this project commenced in early 2014, involving over 50,000 participants in over 40 villages. From 2018 the strategy will be tested over four years in a large randomised trial in Haryana and Andhra Pradesh.

### **Impact:**

- Raising awareness about mental disorders and tackling stigma is a critical step in improving access to mental health care.
- If successful, the study will support the development of a robust treatment program derived from evidence based research for a large-scale implementation, coupled with rigorous ongoing evaluation.

### **Contact:**

To find out more about the SMART Mental Health Programme and its principal investigators, Dr. Pallab Maulik or The George Institute for Global Health, please contact:  
Kannan Krishnaswamy +91 11 4158 8091  
or email [kkrishnaswamy@georgeinstitute.org.in](mailto:kkrishnaswamy@georgeinstitute.org.in)

### **The George Institute For Global Health:**

We're improving the lives of millions of people worldwide through innovative health research. Working across a broad health landscape, the Institute conducts clinical, population and health system research aimed at changing health practice and policy worldwide.