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# Global mental Health Crisis: Causes, challenges and Solutions

## Outline

### 1) Introduction

The ever increasing global mental health crisis has its roots in various socioeconomic and psychological factors; faced with number of challenges to countries. However, this crisis can be mitigated by solutions like increased awareness, ~~legis-~~<sup>policy</sup>lative reforms in health sector, alongwith global cooperation and support.

### 2) Causes of Global mental Health crisis:

(1) Economic causes of global mental Health crisis

(a) Poverty - 100 to three times more at risk (WHO)

(b) Unemployment - 2008 financial crisis led to 40% increase in mental

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health disorders  
case study of: covid-19 and  
mental health crisis due to  
unemployment.

2.2) social factors; leading causes  
to global mental health crisis:

- (a) social stigma and labelling
- (b) social isolation contributed  
by urbanization and  
digitalization
- (c) Trauma due to conflicts and  
wars.

2.3) Environmental factors causing  
Global mental health crisis:

- (a) climate change
- (b) Environmental degradation

2.4) Psychological and Biological  
causes:

- (a) Genetic predispositions
- (b) Substance Abuse.

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### 3) Challenges to Global Mental

#### Health Crisis :

(3.1) Low awareness

(3.2) Social stigma towards mental health and its treatment.

(3.3) Inadequate funding for mental healthcare and lack of trained professionals

(3.4) Economic challenges and access to mental healthcare.

### 4) Solutions to Global Mental

#### Health Crisis :

(4.1) Increase awareness of mental health crisis via an integrated and inclusive approach.

(4.2) Policy reforms aiming at increasing access to mental health care.

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(4.3) Global cooperation by institutions like UN and WHO.

(4.4) Technological integration and utilisation to enhance mental health.

## 5) Conclusion

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## Essay

In 2019, 970 million people globally were effected by mental health disorders, with anxiety and depression being the dominant ones : says the Report by WHO. This global mental health crisis was further exacerbated by global pandemic of covid-19 and psychologically straining international environment characterized by wars and chaos. Mental health as defined by world health organization is the state of mental well-being of an individual which allows ~~peop~~ efficient coping in face of ~~sinors~~ and setbacks of life. However, living in 21st century, the global picture of mental health is extremely disturbed and in crisis. According to project Hope, half of the global population will experience mental illness, with one in four people experiencing mental

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illness at a point in their lives. This ever increasing global mental health crisis has its roots in various socioeconomic and psychological factors; along with number of challenges to counter this crisis. However, the solutions to mitigate this crisis lie in increased awareness about mental health, policy reforms in health sector, along with global cooperation and support. Thus in the face of this global crisis, a planned and coordinated effort is required to counter its existence.

Starting with the causes of global mental health crisis, economic causes play one of the leading role on the development and propagation of mental illness around the globe. Firstly, poverty is strongly linked with mental health crisis, all across the globe. According to

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the report by WHO, people living in poverty are two to three times more prone to develop mental health issues compared to those living in high income areas. Likewise low income countries have reportedly more cases of mental health issues compared to the developed countries. Additionally, along with poverty, unemployment also marks to be the paramount factor contributing towards mental health crisis. Unemployment has become the leading cause of mental illnesses like anxiety, stress and depression etc. According to a research, unemployment is linked to a 20-30 percent increase in the risk of developing mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. Long term unemployment (over 6 months) is associated with a two to three times higher risk of suicide compared to employed individuals. This impact of unemployment can

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be analyzed by the events like financial crisis of 2008 and covid-19 pandemic, which led to unemployment and ultimately increased ratio of prevalence of mental issues due to unemployment. Thus, economic causes like poverty and unemployment have become the major contributors to the global mental health crisis.

Secondly, social factors <sup>are</sup> also playing a prominent role in global mental health crisis. The social stigma and labelling associated with mental health issues seems to be an important of existence of mental health issues with such persistence. In some cultures, either there is no concept like mental illness or it is labelled so negatively, which eventually exacerbates the illness. According to WHO report, 60-70% do not seek treatment due to fear of stigma and discrimination.



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Moreover, social isolation brought about by digitalization and urbanization also contributes to global mental health crisis, by increasing feelings of loneliness and weak social connections. According to a research <sup>People in</sup> Urban areas are more prone to develop mental health conditions, like depression and anxiety as compared to the ones living in rural areas. Likewise, despite of being digitally connected, people report feeling lonely and isolated. Research suggests 30-40% increase in anxiety, depression and loneliness due to heavy social media usage. Excessive online interactions have replaced face to face interactions, leaving individuals in closed cages of screens, moving further their social conditions of conflicts and wars <sup>trauma brought about by</sup> also contributing to global mental health crisis. In conflict affected areas, one in every five individuals experience mental health conditions like

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PTSD, depression and anxiety concludingly, social factors like stigma, social isolation and trauma inflicting social environments have a hallmark of contribution in the global mental health crisis.

Thirdly, environmental factors like climate change and environmental degradation are contributing to global mental health crisis significantly. Global survey has revealed that around 59 percent of young individuals express extreme worry about climate change accompanied by sadness, anxiety and powerlessness. There has been increasing mentalisation of climate anxiety globally. Moreover, environmental degradation also has a significant impact on mental health <sup>issues</sup>, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, along with dominance of eco despair.

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Last but not least, comes the biological and psychological reasons to global mental health crisis. Biologically, children of parents with a mental illness are more prone to develop that disease. In the current era, where number of individuals with mental illness have increased to a paramount amount, the dilemma of genetic predisposition and family history based propagation of mental illness creates a vicious cycle of mental health crisis. Furthermore, the individual factors like substance abuse have also been linked to the development of mental health conditions. Long term use of substances lead to alter brain chemistry and worsen the susceptibility to depression and anxiety. Similarly, according to National Institute of Mental Health, substance abuse also increases the suicide risk by 10 times. Thus, to summarize, both biological and

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Individual factors set the stage for mental health crisis.

Where on one side, the socio-economic, environmental factors along with biological and individual ones, set the stage for mental health crisis all across the globe; there also exist multiple challenges to address this crisis. The challenges to mental health crisis include low level of awareness of mental disorders among the public, the social stigma attached to mental health issues, inadequate funding towards mental health, lack of trained professionals and limited access to mental health services due to economic issues.

Firstly, lack of awareness poses to be the dominant challenge to global mental health crisis. In many areas around the globe, people don't <sup>even</sup> consider mental health issues like dissociative disorder, or schizophrenia as disorders, but an individual's possessed

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by or under the influence of supernatural forces. This lack of awareness and ignorant attitude towards mental disorders is a significant challenge in the way of countering mental health crisis.

Secondly, the social stigma towards mental health issues also act as a significant challenge to global mental health crisis. In some cultures, mental health conditions are labelled as a sign of weakness or moral failure, while in others the individuals with mental illness are considered dangerous, ultimately leading to their social ostracization and labelling. This stigmatization of individuals also reduce the likelihood of seeking treatment and worsening the impacts of mental illness. Likewise, according to a research, stigmatization and labelling enhances the risks of anxiety, depression

depression and suicidal ideation by 25 percent. Labelling also act as a challenge to mental health crisis by promoting self fulfilling prophecies in the individual with mental illness, eventually worsening the condition. To sum up, social stigma and labelling are the significant hurdles in reducing mental health crisis.

Therapy, <sup>the</sup> systemic factors like reduced and limited funds allocation for mental healthcare alongwith lack of <sup>trained</sup> professionals in the field of mental healthcare, have a prominent role in the continuous advancement of mental health crisis globally. Mental healthcare is not proffered as primary healthcare in many regions around the world. The bare minimum of budget is ~~not even~~ allocated for mental healthcare. According to WHO, on average only 2 percent of budget spending is allocated to mental health - by developed

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countries, ~~and~~ while low income countries struggle with even that much of spending. Moreover, the lack of trained professionals for mental health also serves to be the challenge for global mental health. WHO estimates around more than 4 million shortage of mental health workers globally.

Furthermore, in many countries no proper training is given to the mental health workers, further exacerbating the situation. Resultantly, these systemic factors are contributory challenges to counter the effective ~~to~~ mitigation of mental health crisis.

Lastly, economic challenges, alongwith being the cause, also serve to act as a dominant challenge to mental healthcare. Economic challenges, render individuals with mental disorders a limited choice and access to the treatment. According to research statistics, more

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than 75% of people with mental disorders in low income countries receive no treatment due to economic strains. Many individuals cannot afford treatments while governments also don't allocate sufficient funds, further deepening the crisis.

Despite of diversity of causes and challenges promoting and impacting global mental health crisis, it still can be controlled. Following solutions should be implement to control the toll of mental health crisis globally.

Firstly, by increasing awareness about mental health conditions and their long run impacts on families and societies can play a pivotal role in changing attitude of towards mental health crisis and its treatment. Both traditional and modern methods, by leveraging or technology and power of social media, can be used to counter mental health crisis. Secondly, policy reforms aimed



at increasing access to mental healthcare should be materialised. mental healthcare should be among primary healthcare services and subsidized also, in order to control the global exacerbation of mental health crisis. Furthermore, global cooperation and efforts by international bodies such as UN and WHO can also serve as a booster against mental health crisis. Likewise, streamlining psychological and psychiatric services and awareness using social media and other online platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn can also promote deterrence against increasing phenomenon of mental health crisis. Hence, a comprehensive and inclusive efforts are needed to combat this global crisis.

In a nutshell, the phenomenon of mental health crisis is multifaceted with various causes and challenges operating, essentially increasing its existence of mental health issues across the globe. Socioeconomic

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causes like social isolation,

poverty and unemployment

the crisis of mental health  
is rooted in multiple fronts.

Hence, in order to mitigate  
this global crisis of mental  
health, a multifaceted approach,  
addressing all the significant  
socioeconomic and other reasons,  
is required.