In low and middle-income countries (LMIC) the treatment gap for people with mental health problems, defined as the difference between the number of people needing care and those receiving such care, is especially pronounced.

Global initiatives to scale up mental health services are under way. These efforts require an adequate information system, which includes mental health metrics to estimate changes in treatment coverage and to monitor quality of care.

The present research tries to identify indicators that can be used within routine health information systems to measure effective coverage, including financial protection, for treatment of people with mental illness.

The researchers conducted a two-round Delphi study with 93 experts from primarily LMIC countries (Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda), in order to generate and prioritize a set of indicators.

This study has resulted in a stable list of most frequently endorsed indicators that cover different domains of measuring mental health care coverage, including treatment needs, treatment utilization, treatment quality and financial protection for service users.

The fifteen most highly ranked indicators by the experts were:
CONCLUSIONS

In order to evaluate the scaling up of mental health care in LMIC, there is an urgent need to have an adequate information system. Good quality data on a number of key indicators can support the process of making decisions and improvements related to mental health care.

The strong consensus reached in this study for the identified key indicators provides a platform for their consideration and inclusion within national health information systems, which in turn can improve monitoring and reporting of mental health system performance at the global level.

REFERENCES