



## ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: MODERN APPROACHES AND EXPERIENCE IN UZBEKISTAN

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### Abstract

This article examines the provision of mental health services to patients in primary health care (PHC) facilities. In recent years, access to mental health services in Tashkent and across Uzbekistan has declined. The study highlights that patients attending regional polyclinics demonstrate a substantial need for psychotherapeutic and psychiatric care. Strategies to expand and improve the efficiency of these services are proposed.

**Keywords:** mental health services in primary care, psychotherapeutic support, limited coverage, rising demand, development strategies

### Introduction

Recent studies indicate that at least 30% of patients attending primary health care facilities experience mental health disorders, highlighting an epidemic-level prevalence.

Mental disorders often co-occur with somatic illnesses, complicating differential diagnosis, reducing treatment adherence, and decreasing patients' quality of life. Furthermore, mental disorders and adverse psychosocial conditions act as strong pathogenic factors in the onset and progression of somatic diseases.

Leveraging primary health care—due to its community proximity, accessibility, preventive and rehabilitative potential, and ability to reduce stigma—can significantly improve early detection and treatment of mental disorders. Therefore, psychiatric services cannot be limited to traditional specialized care alone.

### Materials and Methods

Data Sources:

- Statistical reports from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2021)
- ORC Macro, "Study of the Health of the Population of Uzbekistan 2025"

Methodology:

- Statistical analysis: mental health dispensary records, primary care coverage, patient needs, and availability of psychotherapeutic services.
- Analysis of qualifications and working conditions: competence of psychotherapists and general practitioners.

Results

- As of the end of 2019, 276,197 patients were registered with mental disorders.
- 40.4% of these patients were disabled.
- The number of patients under dispensary and psycho-neurological supervision increased until 2010, then decreased to 331,198 by 2019.
- Prevalence of registered mental disorders decreased from 1,333.1 per 100,000 in 2008 to 994.5 per 100,000 in 2019.

Major Challenges:

1 Low coverage and decreasing number of psychotherapeutic services.

2 Insufficient training of psychiatrists and psychotherapists in somatic medicine and medical psychology.

3 General practitioners lack sufficient mental health knowledge.

4 Limited funding and outdated organizational methodologies.

Positive Developments:

- Modernization of psychiatric services through Presidential decrees (2018–2019).

- Implementation of monitoring and dynamic follow-up systems for patients with mental disorders.

- Expansion of specialized psychiatric and psychotherapeutic services.

- Introduction of new professional roles such as social workers and forensic psychologists.

- Development of the Mental Health Service Development Concept for 2019–2025: increasing accessibility, efficiency, and quality.

### **Discussion.**

Integration of mental health services into primary health care is essential. Bringing psychotherapeutic services to PHC allows:

- Early detection of mental disorders.

- Prevention of severe disease progression.

- Improvement of patients' quality of life.

Combination of psychopharmacotherapy and psychotherapy plays a crucial role in patient rehabilitation. Increasing the competence of healthcare staff enhances detection and treatment quality.

Recent global research (WHO, 2022–2023) indicates that expanding mental health services in PHC:

- Increases opportunities for early diagnosis.

- Improves the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic and pharmacological treatments.

### **Conclusion.**

- Coverage of mental health services in primary health care remains limited, despite high patient demand.

- Addressing this issue requires:

- 1 Integration of psychiatric and psychotherapeutic services into primary health care.

- 2 Improved training and qualifications for doctors and psychotherapists.

- 3 Increased funding and modernization of organizational methodologies.

Early detection and treatment of mental disorders benefit patients, families, and society, contributing to social and economic efficiency.

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