HAITI

PAHO/WHO Technical Cooperation

in the aftermath of the earthquake 2010-2011





Mental Health

11

The frequency of acute mental health problems is very high as a consequence of the earthquake. Mental health services are concentrated in two main facilities: the Centre de Psychiatrie Mars & Kline (CPMK, a university psychiatric clinic) and a psychiatric hospital (Défilé de Beudet), located outside of Port-au-Prince, in addition to five private clinics.

Within the Health Cluster for Health, there is a sub cluster for Mental Health, in which PAHO/WHO actively participates.

Activities carried out:

UNICEF, IOM, International Medical Corps, Partners in Health, Medecins du Monde (MDM) and Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) are proving mental health services. PAHO/WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Population (MSPP) in the development of its first National Integrated and Inter organizational Plan on Psychological Emergencies, Mental Health and Psychological Support. This plan focuses on the decentralization of mental health and the integration of mental health services at the primary health care level and in main public hospitals.

A Dominican Republic mental health team was deployed to the General Hospital of Jimani (a psychiatrist, 4 psychologists and 3 specialized nurses). An action plan was developed to provide psychosocial and mental health support to patients in 5 institutions in the border region. PAHO/WHO is providing technical support for hospitalized infants and children. The next phase will focus on training of primary health care professionals to support families of patients.

PAHO/WHO is also working closely with 34 organizations which are providing Mental Health and Psychological Support Services in 18 communes in the West, South East and South departments. Activities are being carried out also with religious leaders.

Next steps:

The Sub Cluster for Mental Health is working on psychological support and in Mid May the MSPP and the sub cluster will present the harmonization of protocols for psychosocial support.

PAHO/WHO will strengthen its technical cooperation in this domain by adding a consultant on mental health to the Country Office in Haiti.

PAHO/WHO will continue to support the MSPP in the evaluation of the mental health care system using the WHO instrument (WHO Assessment Instrument for Mental Health Systems/WHO-AIMS). This will serve as a base for the elaboration of the National Plan for mental health.

PAHO/WHO insists this plan should focus on the decentralization of mental health services based on Primary Health Care and on the integration of mental health services. In this sense, there should be a minimum mental health team in each Department comprised of 1 doctor or psychiatrist, 1 psychologist and 1 nurse teacher.

The Plan of Action should also focus on the training of primary health care workers on 8 priorities defined in the Mental Health Global Action Programme (mhGAP). PAHO/WHO staff have already received training on this mhGAP to be able to adapt it to Haiti and work with MSPP authorities on it and on the selection of the most urgent priorities (out of the 8 defined by the Programme: depression, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, suicide, epilepsy, dementia, disorders due to use of alcohol, disorders due to illicit drug use and mental disorders in children).