

NIHR Research Unit on Health in Fragility



Queen Margaret University
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT

In collaboration with



The RUHF Newsletter - Issue 3 / November 2018

Quarterly news on NCDs and MHPSS healthcare in fragile settings

Video Release

Addressing NCDs and mental health care needs in Sierra Leone



Shocks, such as a long civil war and the Ebola outbreak, have contributed to the fragility of the health system in Sierra Leone and in particular, to the provision of healthcare for mental health and non-communicable diseases. As is shown in this

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participatory workshops to define research priorities. The two-day engagement meeting held in Freetown (30-31 August 2018), gave us the opportunity to capture the views of a range of stakeholders, from policy-makers and non-governmental organizations to academics, on how to improve healthcare delivery in fragile settings.

Authors: RUHF / Michael Duff

[Find out more about the RUHF Stakeholder Meeting in Freetown here](#)

Research Briefs

Guidelines for NCD & MHPSS policy-makers and researchers

The [NIHR Research Unit on Health in Fragility \(RUHF\)](#), at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, have elaborated four Research Briefs with key messages and useful recommendations for policy-makers, NGOs, practitioners and researchers who are involved in the provision and study of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services in Sierra Leone and Lebanon. The contents of these Research Briefs are based on the scoping reviews and preliminary field work activities conducted during the first year of the RUHF programme and provide insights into barriers and facilitators for NCD and MHPSS service provision and a guide for future action and research. The briefs were presented at the Stakeholder Engagement meetings in Beirut and Freetown, and at the [Health Systems Research Symposium](#) held in October in Liverpool.

[Download the RUHF Research Briefs on NCD and MHPSS here](#)

Presentation

Showcase of RUHF work in the Global Mental Health Summit

The Director of the NIHR Research Unit on Health in Fragility (RUHF), [Prof Alastair Ager](#), presented the study approaches on mental health that RUHF

Department of Health and Social Care on October 9th and 10th 2018. Prof Ager discussed the RUHF's pioneering work into mental healthcare provision. He was joined at the meeting by the RUHF PhD student, [Abdulai Jawo Bah](#), currently studying at QMU. As shown in the picture, Prof Ager also met Minister of State Harriet Baldwin for a roundtable discussion addressing the mental health and psychosocial needs of children and youth in humanitarian crisis. Photo credit: The Independent.



[Read more about the presentation here](#)

RUHF Researchers

New researchers join the Unit at QMU, AUB and COMAHS

RUHF welcomes four new researchers who joined the Unit in the past three months. **Dr Rebecca Horn** (top right), QMU Senior Researcher, is leading a mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) study aiming at understanding local idioms of distress in Sierra Leone, and she will provide expert research advice on the evaluation of the MhGap programme in both Sierra Leon and Lebanon. **Nadine Zablith** (bottom left) is the new RUHF Research Fellow at AUB, our partner in Beirut, Lebanon. She is currently

to access MHPSS services, and in the evaluation of the MhGap.



In Sierra Leone, Dr Reynold Senesi and Elizabeth (Bettie) Kathleen Lemor joined the RUHF at COMAHS in September. **Dr Reynold Senesi** has a MSc in Cancer Biology from Kingston University, London, and currently he combines his research position at RUHF with his work at the Ministry of Health (MoHS) in Sierra Leone. He is a key member at the MoHS and is involved in the formulation of policies and the development of strategic plans and activities for the control of NCDs. His role at RUHF is to assist the COMAHS-QMU team in the assessment of the health system and community barriers and facilitators for prevention and management of NCD. **Elizabeth (Bettie) Kathleen Lemor** is

(COMAHS) and a Master's in Public Health with Njala University. She was employed by the Ministry of Health (MoHS) in Sierra Leone and she is trained in a wide range of disciplines such as Midwifery, Community Health and Medicine and Human Resources Management with Cambridge University.

[Read more about QMU Senior Researcher Dr Rebecca Horn here](#)

Expert Advisers

WHO expert on NCDs joins the Strategic Advisory Group

Dr Ruitai Shao, a WHO expert on the management and control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) joined our NIHR Unit's Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) in November. He will provide strategic advice to our research management team on the prevention and control of NCDs. The RUHF SAG is made up of other experts from global technical networks including the Global Clinical Practice Network of the Global Mental Health Programme (through Dr Kathy Pike, Columbia University), the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Network (through Dr Margriet Blaauw) and the UK-Africa Academic Partnership on Chronic Conditions in Africa (through Prof Ama de-Graft Aikins, University of Ghana). Dr Shao holds a PhD in Public Health Management from Fudan Medical University in Shanghai and he has worked for WHO since 2001 supporting the development of national policies, plans and strategies for the prevention and control of NCDs.



[Find out more about Dr Shao's background here](#)

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