Health Policy Committee

Debate Topic: Should governments prioritize resources to mental health intitatives or physical health services?

In the realm of healthcare, there is an ongoing debate regarding the allocation of resources between mental health services and support and physical health services. This debate centers on whether governments should prioritize mental health initiatives over physical health services and how such a shift could be effectively implemented in healthcare systems.

Currently, mental health is a growing concern globally, with many individuals facing mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders. Investing in mental health services and support can lead to better mental health outcomes, reduce the societal burden of mental illness, and improve overall well-being.

On the other hand, physical health services focus on treating physical illnesses and injuries. These services are essential for addressing the immediate health needs of individuals and improving their quality of life.

The implementation of a shift towards prioritizing mental health services often faces challenges such as resource allocation, stigma surrounding mental health, access to mental health services, and integration of mental health into primary care. Finding the right balance between mental health and physical health services is crucial in ensuring a comprehensive and effective healthcare system.

Foreword

Dear Stakeholders,

Welcome to CurisCaseStudies' first conference! We are thrilled that you have chosen to partake in our Public Health Committee. In every healthcare system, strategies need to be implemented specifically focusing on mental health services and support versus physical health services. By focusing on whether governments should prioritize mental health initiatives over physical health services and how such a shift could be effectively implemented in healthcare systems.

The basis of this committee is imaginatively built on the perspectives of healthcare providers, patients, and the general population. For information regarding the specific issues addressed by this committee along with any relevant character descriptions, please refer to the background guide provided on pages 3-4.

The committee's task is to determine if healthcare systems going forward should focus more on mental health services and support or physical health services. Stakeholders need to collaborate and work together, weighing the pros and cons of each way of focusing on health.

Good luck,

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Stakeholder Descriptions

When considering which path to focus the future of health on, various stakeholders play important roles and have a vested interest in their appropriate and responsible use. Additionally, different stakeholders may have overlapping roles and interests, and collaboration among them is often crucial to addressing the challenges related to mental health services and support effectively.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

1. Psychiatrist in a Mental Health Clinic

   Mental illness can have a profound impact on individuals and society, as a psychiatrist in a mental health clinic, I see firsthand the importance of prioritizing mental health services and support. There have been a record breaking of patients I am seeing on a daily basis and the daunting looks their loved ones have.

2. Family Physician in a Primary Care Setting

   In my role as a family physician in a primary care setting, I see on a daily basis various health condtions both mental and physical. I am often the go to person for any health related issue, through seeing someone currently fighting a cold, to one who opens up for the first time about their struggles with mental health, to even having to break a heartbreaking conversation to a long time driver there that their license has been revoked due to their illness.

3. *Emergency Room Doctor in a Hospital*

   As an emergency room doctor in Canada, it has been an increasing trend in where I see patients coming in whom are currently having a mental health crisis. Upon hearing more about what led up to their mental health crisis, often times there were times where they tried to seek treatment but weere turned down.

PATIENTS

4. <u>Patient 1- Diagnosed with Depression</u>

As someone living with depression, I understand the importance of access to mental health services and support. When my grandmother died my mental health dietrated while fixating on her death, if I had access toto quality care it could have made a significant difference in managing my condition.

5. <u>Patient 2 - Recovering from a Physical Injury</u>

Having recently recovered from a physical injury, I can appreciate the importance of physical health services. Without access to timely and effective care, my recovery would have been much more challenging.

6. <u>Patient 3 - Coping with Chronic Pain</u>

Dealing with chronic pain in my back has been a significant challenge for me. While I have received excellent care for the pain itself, I do feel sadness and lonly at days since because of my condition my ability to sociallize with others has been reduced. In order to combat this, i have not been made aware of many methods yet. The methods I have been given such as "talking to people" seem raudent and not physically possible since of my pain nor do I feel comfortable going to people and just talking to them.

GENERAL POPULATION

7. <u>Student</u>

As a student I see the toll school takes on ones health. The higher you go in education, the more challenging it gets both physically and mentally. Through undergoing high stress on a daily basis, feeling you are falling behind among your other peers, to having to scarfise exercise and sleep for work assigned. I currently do not have a method in which I use to let go of this pressure but I do wish there was more support given.

8. <u>Parent</u>

I understand the stress my son goes through on a daily basis. As my child in their second year of university I see the pressure he faces on a daily basis and I do feel the school should provide more informative initiatives on how to cope witht the stress yet what also concerns me is the treatment I will be given for any physical conditions which I may develop as I get older.

9. <u>Worker</u>

Personally I do feel stressed. Though as one who is out of the school and does not have any children, the cost of living going up is what's keeping me up at night. The stress it has on whether I am able to pay rent, eat a well-balanced diet are just some of the things keeping me up at night. Also as one whose at risk for a herat conditions due to my family genes, I hope for more research on various herat conditions and unique ways to treat it.

<u>Guiding Questions:</u>

WITHIN-SECTOR DEBATE QUESTION (BY SECTOR)

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- How do limited resources impact the ability to provide both mental health services and support and physical health services in your healthcare setting?
- What are the main barriers to accessing mental health services in your community or country?
- What role do cultural beliefs and practices play in the prioritization of mental health services versus physical health services in your healthcare setting?

PATIENTS

- What are some ways healthcare systems could better educate and inform individuals about mental health services and support?
- Are current mental health services and support systems effective in meeting the needs of patients?

- What roles do research and innovation play in improving mental health services and support versus physical health services?

GENERAL POPULATION

- Is there a stigma surrounding mental health in your community or country? If so, how does this impact access to mental health services and support?
- How can governments and healthcare providers work together to prioritize mental health services and support?
- What are some effective ways to promote mental health awareness and education in the general population?

Guiding Questions:

CROSS-SECTOR DEBATE QUESTION

Should governments prioritize mental health services and support over physical health services, and if so, how can this shift be implemented effectively in healthcare systems?

- **If yes:** propose various mental health initiatives over the next few years to support individuals with mental health challenges
- **If no:** determine the possible drawbacks of prioritizing mental health services and support and propose how to address them