

SUCCEED Project: Advancing Community Based Approaches for Mental Health and Psychosis Rehabilitation in Africa

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Abstract

Background: In Malawi, individuals with psychosis face severe challenges, including stigma, inadequate healthcare access, and social isolation. The SUCCEED project introduced Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) to address these issues by integrating mental health services within local communities and promoting social inclusion.

Aim: This study evaluated the impact of Community Based Rehabilitation on reducing stigma, discrimination and improving access to rights of individuals with psychosis in Malawi.

Methodology: A pilot intervention was conducted by the SUCCEED project in Mulanje district, utilizing Focus Group Discussions to collect qualitative data from participants who experienced CBR intervention. These discussions aimed at assessing the intervention's effectiveness in alleviating stigma and improving participants' overall quality of life.

Results: Evaluations following the FGD's, showed that the interventions positively influenced participant's adherence to medication, reduced stigma and discrimination, improved self-esteem and social status within their homes. They reported increased social support from family and friends, better access to community services, enhanced relationships with healthcare providers, social inclusion, as well as peer support through interactions with others with similar experiences. Additionally, participants benefited from closer healthcare supervision and support for small-scale business ventures, which improved their livelihoods.

Conclusion: The program demonstrated that integrating CBR strategies into mental health programs within communities can lead to significant positive outcomes.

Implications: These findings showed that CBR has great potential in addressing mental health inequities in low income countries like Malawi and suggests that policy makers and healthcare providers should consider adopting these CBR strategies.