**Implementation of a Mental Health Act in Ghana: A study of potential barriers and enablers using a mixed-method approach**

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**Background:** The World Health Organisation estimate that more than 450 million people worldwide are suffering from mental health disorders. Low and middle-income countries are badly affected partly because they are ill-equipped to address mental health needs due to lack of mental health policies and more importantly enforcement and implementation. The prevalence of mental disorders in Ghana is estimated at 13% with very limited mental health services available. In 2012, Ghana passed a Mental Health Act 846 to promote mental health care delivery. There is no evidence of implementation post-enactment. Previous mental health laws have never been implemented in Ghana, resulting in wider human rights abuse and many seeking alternative treatment from traditional and faith-based practitioners.

**Aim**: This research seeks to assess organisational barriers and enablers for implementation of the 2012 Mental Health Act across Ghana.

**Methods:** Mixed-method research using both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques would be used. Qualitatively, face–to–face interviews and Focus Group Discussions will be conducted with a representative key stakeholders across all ten regions of Ghana to assess the barriers to implementation. Quantitatively, there will be a survey of people with severe mental disorders in the Kintampo North Municipality to measure disability. The 12-item World Health Organisation Disability Assessment Schedule will be used to assess the disability functionality of people with severe mental disorders, and their expectation of mental health service delivery. In addition, a brief survey will be conducted to assess the progress of implementation of the Mental Health Act from the perspectives of mental health service users and community members.

**Anticipated Findings:** There will be a broader perspective of evaluating and documenting the barriers and enablers for a full-scale implementation of the Mental Health Act in Ghana. The study will explore how best to address the complex practice-interface between traditional practitioners, faith-based practitioners and main stream mental health services within a regulated and statutory environment and recommend their integration into the formal mental health delivery system. Baseline data is expected to be established for future measurement of implementation progress of the Act. Above all, this study will create stakeholder awareness and reinforcement of human rights surveillance and protection.

**Conclusion:** The Mental Health Act 846 of 2012 made important steps in recognising the need for dignified, all-inclusive treatment of mental disorders. Nonetheless, no plans, regulations, incentives and financing mechanisms have so far been created to ensure the Act is implemented properly.