

UTILIZING COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH TO TEST AND REFINE INTERVENTIONS IN GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH: A PILOT EVALUATION OF AN EMOTION-FOCUSED INTERVENTION FOR SCHOOL-GOING YOUTH IN POST-EARTHQUAKE NEPAL

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Background: Youth mental health problems are major contributors to the global burden of disease, with the majority of the mental health burden concentrated in low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings. Post-disaster settings are especially vulnerable to development of mental health problems, but limited intervention research exists in these contexts. **Issues/Focus:** To advance the evidence base for adolescent mental health interventions in LMICs, we piloted and evaluated a culturally adapted emotion regulation intervention for earthquake-exposed adolescents in rural Nepal. **Methods:** Collaborations between a local school and an academic institution were used to design and implement a quasi-experimental design targeting Nepali secondary school students in one heavily affected post-earthquake district. A total of 102 adolescents (age 13 to 18) were enrolled in the group-based intervention, which was hypothesized to lead to improvements in emotion regulation (primary outcome) as well as anxiety, trauma, resilience, and suicidal ideation (secondary outcomes). Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with students, teachers, and school administrators were used to refine and reflect on intervention impact. **Results:** Preliminary analyses indicate that the intervention did not, as expected, lead to significant improvements across either primary or secondary outcomes. Qualitative findings show encouraging but mixed support for the school-based intervention. **Implications:** Incorporating schools into the research design process can be essential for both testing and implementing global mental health interventions, as well as identifying avenues forward when interventions do not lead to their intended impact.

Author List

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Explore the unique role of schools in designing and improving global mental health interventions.
2. Outline strategies in line with community-based research to resolve the problem of null findings in global mental health intervention research.

References

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