



2020

YEAR IN REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

2020 was a momentous year for the IAMHRF. In spite of the chaos of the global coronavirus pandemic, our alliance achieved significant progress in advancing the mental health research funding agenda through vital projects and initiatives. In looking back at the past year, we are proud of the resilience and commitment shown by our member organizations, and grateful for their enthusiastic engagement in our virtual sessions, publications, working groups, consultations and governance boards. We are determined to carry this momentum forward in 2021, and to continue pursuing our common goal of improving the lives of people with mental ill-health.

MAPPING GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH FUNDING

In November 2020, we published the first global baseline for mental health research investments in our landmark report *'The Inequities of Mental Health Research Funding.'* The analysis of more than 75,000 grants from over 350 funders in ~35 countries reveals for the first time how much is being spent on mental health research, in which areas and by whom. The report was accompanied by a *health policy paper* in *The Lancet Psychiatry*.



This achievement was made possible by the collaborative efforts of IAMHRF members, who provided invaluable feedback on their priorities for the study and answered our call for participation in sharing their data in January 2020. By providing clarity on the current state of mental health research funding, it acts as a vital tool for funders to identify areas of unmet need, and opportunities to have a greater impact on the lives of people living with mental ill-health. We are grateful to the organizations who funded the report, including: the *European Commission*, *Healthy Brains Global Initiative*, *Graham Boeckh Foundation*, *MQ Foundation*, *Mental Health Research Canada*, *Society for Mental Health Research* and *Wellcome Trust*.

DRIVING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED MEASURES



In October 2020, the IAMHRF established the Common Measures in Mental Health Science Governance Board (CMB) to help advance the adoption of shared measures in mental health research. The CMB is currently co-chaired by the *Wellcome Trust* and *NIMH*, and its first members include *Grand Challenges Canada*, *UKRI - Medical Research Council*, *MQ Mental health research*, *The Lancet Psychiatry*, *JAMA Psychiatry*, *One Mind* and *Movember*. By agreeing on an initial set of measures, funders aim to make mental health data easier to combine, compare and communicate.

The CMB will frequently consult an Advisory Group (CMA) of experts to ensure inclusivity, diversity and cultural appropriateness of measures. This development marks a significant milestone in our efforts to create a level playing field by making mental health data more equitable and globally accessible. It builds on our successful consultation on Demographic Measures, which opened in June 2020 and received over 100 detailed responses from data measurement experts in countries all over the world. The results are currently being analyzed by our Data Harmonization Working Group and are expected to be published later in 2021.

INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

In October 2020, we hosted a virtual event on Youth Engagement in Mental Health Science, which led to the creation of our new Lived Experience Working Group. The group consists of research funders with extensive practical knowledge in this area. It aims to promote effective lived experience engagement that spans the research pipeline, from priority setting to conducting research itself. Together, we are committed to helping funders increase the impact of their decisions by elevating real-world perspectives.



STRENGTHENING OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The IAMHRF has continued to welcome new member organizations over the last 12 months, as well as two new staff members: Adeyinka Onikan (Projects and Partnerships Manager) and Rory White (Science Communication Officer). A key emphasis of our work in 2021 will be establishing strategic partnerships throughout the world to align research agendas and to increase their relevance. By increasing the global connectedness of mental health research funders, we aim to create new opportunities for international collaboration and impact.

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