



**Urgent Need for
Humanitarian Action:
Mental Health Status in
Somalia**

Somali Mental Health Foundation

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URGENT NEED: MENTAL HEALTH STATUS IN SOMALIA

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Urgent Need for Humanitarian Action: Mental Health Status in Somalia is a comprehensive report on the services provided by Somali Mental Health Foundation. Somalia has been struggling with civil war for the past 24 years with significant number of the population being inordinately impacted by the trauma of war and poverty. According to World Health Organizations, Somalia has higher prevalence of mental health disorders than in other low income and war-torn countries. Thus the urgency for the need of integrated mental health system and properly trained service providers cannot be overlooked. Somali Mental Health Foundation (SMHF) is responding to this urgent need and this report draws on the most recent visits of (SMHF) team to Puntland Region, Kismayo, and Mogadishu.

The number of patients that have been seen and treated by SMHF during their visits in 2012 and 2014 are in excess of 7,000 patients (table 1). In April 2012, SMHF opened the first outpatient clinic in Qardho, Puntland Region of Somalia . In July,2013, the SMHF team visited Mogadishu in order to strength, an already established partnership with Habeeb Mental Health Center. The team provided capacity building for Habeeb Mental Health Center staff and treated over 350 patients with various mental health conditions including but not limited to Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Acute Psychosis, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Depression (table 5). In the months of January and February, 2014, the SMHF team visited Kismayo, Southwest Region of Somalia, to support the only mental health clinic, Kismayo Mental Health Centre, . The team treated over 1000 patients (table 1)

Somali Mental Health Foundation, is a 501(c) US based nonprofit organization that provides mental health services and guidance for people with mental health conditions in Somalia. The Somali Mental Health Foundation's objective is.

- *To promote awareness and an understanding of mental health issues in Somalia .*
- *To work for the development of adequate facilities with highly qualified mental health professionals for the treatment of mental, neurological and psycho-social disorders.*
- *To serve as an advisory board for the Somalia government and other international organizations in the field of mental health in Somalia.*

Given, the current initiatives and calls for action by the Global Mental Health Movement, this reports aims to raise awareness of the current situation in Somalia. The data in the report highlight the urgent need of those suffering mental illness in

harsh environments strife with stigma, discrimination, and rampant human rights abuses and the lack of investment in mental health treatment in Somalia. Cultural misconceptions of mental illness, lack of treatment options, and shattered public health infrastructure create the perfect storm for severe stigma and inhumane treatment of people with mental health disorders in Somalia. The United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities reinforces the need for the development efforts to target people with mental health disorders. As a result, this report makes compelling recommendations that will support local non government organizations (NGOs), Public Health Ministry, Education Ministry, and other stakeholders in the Diaspora and international community as they engage in policy making and building infrastructure for integrated health care system/s in Somalia.

Key Messages:

- **The time for humanitarian action for those with mental illness is NOW.**
- **Establish a centralized public health institution mandated in managing the Mental Health program and services in the country.**
- **Assist in capacity building on the community-level**
- **Support service providers and users alike to understand and promote human rights, recovery and rehabilitation of mental illness, and to recognize mental health as a crucial component of personal health**

Table 1: Total number of patients (April 2013-May 2014)

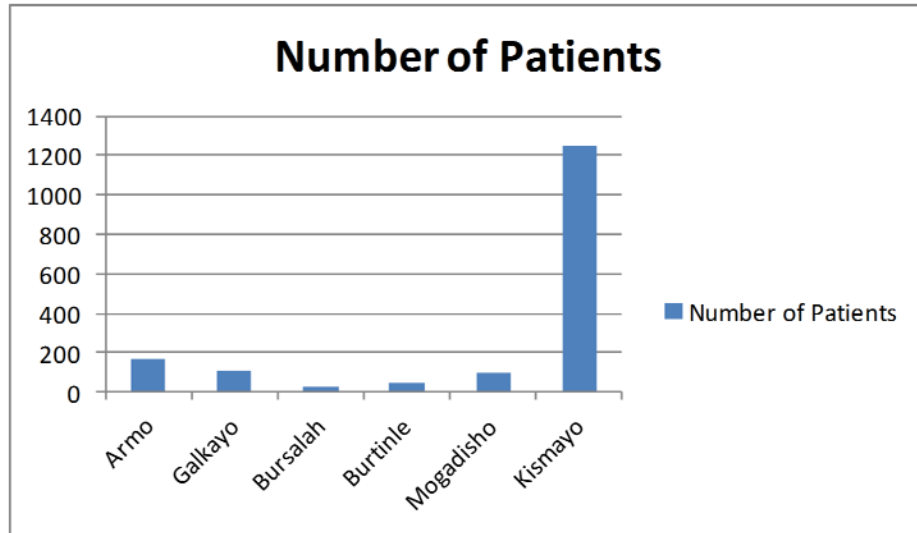
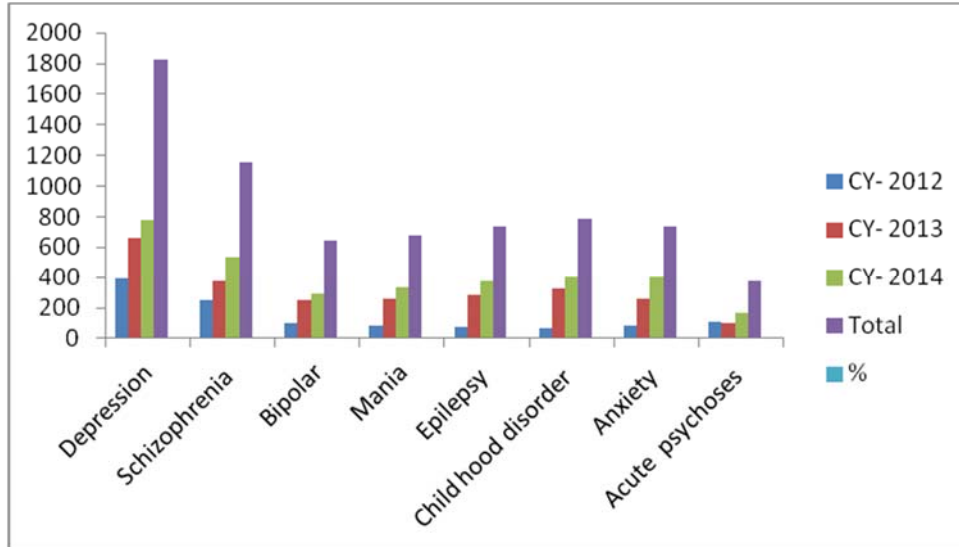


Table 2: 3 year Diagnostic Data Summary



Services provided by Somali Mental Health Foundation

Table 4: Somali Mental Health Foundation services in Pultland, Carmo region (April 2013)

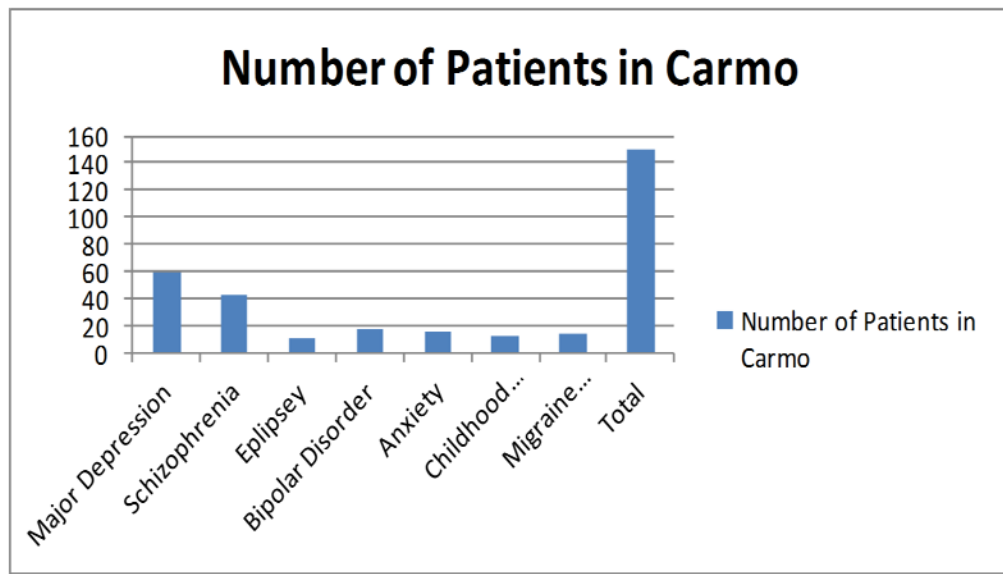


Table 5: The Somali Mental Health Foundation services in Mogadishu (July 2013)

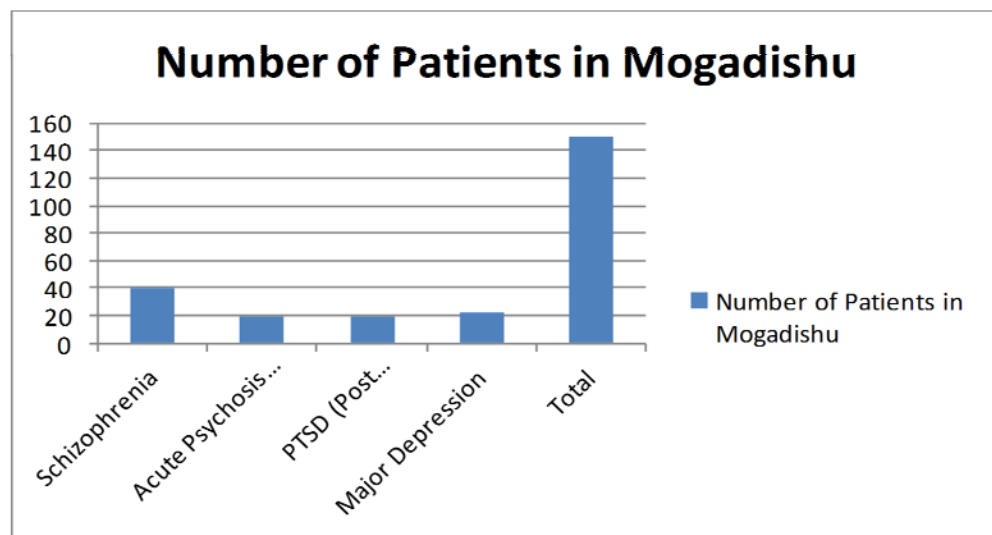


Table 6: The Somali Mental Health Foundation services in Qardho, Puntland Region of Somalia (Breakdown of data by Gender)

