

#HealthJournalism #MediaFellowships



**Media Fellowships
for reporting on
NCDs 2019-20**

**Open to journalists
in India to report on
Mental Health**

- 15 local language fellowship opportunities for journalists reporting in languages other than English
- One National Media fellowship opportunity for senior journalists reporting in English

Application Deadline: June 10, 2019

<http://bit.do/mentalhealthfellowship>

BACKGROUND NOTE

REACH is delighted to invite applications for the second edition of the REACH Media Fellowships for Reporting on Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs, namely Chronic Respiratory Diseases, diabetes, cardiac diseases, cancer and mental health). NCDs caused 80% of disability globally in 2017⁽¹⁾ and fall within the top ten causes of death. In India, NCDs account for 60% of deaths, exceeding mortality from infectious diseases.⁽²⁾ NCDs are set to increase greatly the country's disease burden over the next two decades. India has set a target to lower deaths due to NCDs by 25% by the year 2025, otherwise known as the 25 × 25 target.⁽³⁾

The REACH Media Fellowships are intended to support journalists to explore locally-relevant issues and REACH National Media Fellowship is intended to support journalists to explore nationally-relevant and policy/programme-level issues related to Non Communicable Diseases. The Fellowship programme is in keeping with our mandate to engage the

media for consistent, high-quality reporting on NCDs. In year one, the Media Fellowships focused on Chronic Respiratory Diseases. The theme of the second edition of the NCD Fellowship programme is **mental health**. Mental illness compromises the quality of life to the extent that it among the highest contributor to disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)- one DALY represents the loss of the equivalent of one year of full **health**.⁽⁴⁾ It is estimated that one out of every four people in the world will experience mental or neurological disorders in their lifetime. Mental illness comprises a range of distinct disorders, including anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, substance dependence and others. Current approaches to managing mental illness such as medication, psychotherapy and family/social support have a positive impact on the lives of people with mental disorders, yet only one out of three of those who need care for mental illness receives it. Mental illnesses place a high economic burden on countries like India which, together with other low to middle-income countries, bears a higher burden of mental illness.

(1) http://www.healthdata.org/sites/default/files/files/policy_report/2019/GBD_2017_Booklet.pdf

(2) Global Status Report on NCDs 2014 – WHO <http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/ncd-status-report-2014/en/>

(3) <https://www.who.int/features/2015/ncd-india/en/>

(4) https://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/daly_rates/text/en/

The burden of disability associated with a disease or disorder can be measured in units called disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). DALYs represent the total number of years lost to illness, disability, or premature death within a given population. DALYs are calculated by adding the number of years of life lost to the number of years lived with disability (YLDs) for a certain disease or disorder

Mental Health in India

In 2016 the first National Mental Health Survey in India was carried out by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore in 12 States of the country.⁽⁵⁾

The survey found that the prevalence of mental disorders in adults over the age of 18 years is about 10.6%. The mental disorders include common mental disorders, severe mental disorders, and alcohol and substance use disorders - excluding tobacco use disorder.

The prevalence of mental morbidity is high in urban metropolitan areas.

Mental disorders are closely linked to both causation and consequences of several NCDs. Nearly 1 in 40 and 1 in 20 persons suffer from past and current depression, respectively.

Stress-related disorders affect 3.5% of the population and was reported to be nearly twice as high among women than among men. Just under 1% of the survey population were at a high risk of suicide. Nearly 50% of people with major depressive disorders reported difficulties in carrying out their daily activities. India passed a Mental Health Act in 2017 that fore-fronted the human rights of people with mental illness. The Act envisages a network of facilities and institutions down to the district level to educate communities, detect and manage mental disorders. The high prevalence of mental illness in India requires a commensurate allocation of finances, facilities and human resources.

What timely and quality media reporting can achieve

Stories of high quality and impact in the mainstream media can lead to changes in the way NCDs are understood and addressed. The media has a critical role to play in:

- Explaining the basic facts about mental health disorders
- Presenting people with mental illness as people first, with rights and agency, who need to be respected
- Clarifying the myths and misperceptions about mental illness, thereby helping to combat stigma and discrimination against those with mental disorders

(5) <https://bit.ly/2qxFZfQ>

- Informing readers about how common mental health disorders are at the global, national and local levels
- Explaining how mental health disorders are diagnosed and managed
- Discussing the policy and programmatic needs of mental health programmes
- Explaining the environmental, behavioral and genetic risk factors of mental health disorders
- Explaining the socio-political and economic determinants of health care to diagnose, treat and manage mental disorders among communities, including among those most marginalized
- Raising public awareness and advocating for policy changes in the ways mental health disorders are addressed in India
- Focusing on mental health among women and young people
- Highlighting the needs of individual states and districts to develop strong mental health programmes

News media content can influence individuals to make evidence-based healthy lifestyle choices⁽⁶⁾ and generate action around creating healthier environments and foods, cleaner air and water and safer transportation and this is a critical need for NCD prevention and control to progress in India. The REACH Media Fellowships are designed to address these needs and contribute to an effective public discourse on NCDs in the Indian media.

For more information on how to apply, go to <http://bit.do/mentalhealthfellowship>

Local Language Fellowship:

- [Click here](#) to download the application form in English
- [Click here](#) to download the application form in Hindi

National Fellowship:

- [Click here](#) to download the application form