



Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) unit at Kanti Children's Hospital (KCH)

INTRODUCTION

In July 2015, soon after the devastating Earthquake of 2015, CWIN-Nepal initiated to establish the first child & adolescent psychiatry out-patient unit at Kanti Children Hospital, Kathmandu. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) unit at Kanti Children's Hospital (KCH) has been providing CAMH services since then. This is the only full-time child and adolescent psychiatry outpatient clinic (CAP OPD) in Nepal. Over the course of the last four years, we have been able to steadily progress in terms of service provided at the Kanti Child and Adolescent Psychiatry OPD, as well as increase community outreach through various outreach programmes. This year, the construction has started for a separate building for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit within KCH, with the aim of completion within a few years. This will be the first complete CAP unit in Nepal that will provide inpatient as well as OPD services. We have the aim to develop this unit as a Centre of Excellence for Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Nepal that will not only provide the clinic services but will also provide training and pioneering research in the field of CAMH.

Forty-two percent of the Nepali population is under 18 years of age and most of the children with mental health problems are suffering without any help. CAMH unit at KCH is taking lead in increasing promotion, prevention, early detection and management of CAMH issues. We also advocate, work for awareness and lobby the government of Nepal for policy changes that will help to promote CAMH.

The child mental health initiative in Nepal including the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry OPD and the construction of the new building dedicated to the child mental health is a collaborative project between CWIN Nepal, FORUT Norway and Kanti Children's Hospital.

AIMS:

- Clinical service provision for CAMH issues to the children and adolescents of Nepal through the Child and Adolescent OPD service at Kanti Children's Hospital.
- Teaching and learning activities for trainees such as psychiatrists and nurses.
- Community based outreach programs.
- Staff development and training.
- Research in the field of CAMH in Nepal.
- Advocacy and Liaison with Government of Nepal and NGOs/ INGOs on CAMH issues.

OUR TEAM:

Currently, we have a total of 9 members affiliated to our team, headed by Dr. Arun Raj Kunwar, consisting of 5 psychiatrists, and 4 psychologists.

CLINICAL WORK:

In 2018, the team at Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) in Kanti Children's Hospital provided service to 2477 children and adolescents who attended the CAP OPD. This included 1788 new cases and 689 follow-up cases.

The services provided in the CAP OPD include consultation for CAMH issues, detailed clinical evaluation, baseline investigations, psychological assessments, psychoeducation, psychotherapeutic

and pharmacotherapeutic interventions, school intervention, liaison with the child helpline for children and adolescents requiring immediate protection and care. Besides these, the team also provides consultations for inpatients at Kanti Children's Hospital when they are referred for any CAMH related issues.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Our team has been constantly involved in various fieldwork related to CAMH issues. These include the following:

- Supportive supervision visits at CWIN Child Helpline
- School Mental Health Program
- Mental Health Awareness Program
- Tele-psychiatry outreach- phone follow-ups of patients who come from remote areas
- Focus Group Discussions and Interventions at 2 schools for Mass Conversion Disorders
- Multiple trainings given to community-based rehabilitation volunteers/ workers, teachers, police personals.
- Orientations on Culture Shock, Health and Hygiene to foreign students visiting Nepal.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AND CONTINUED MEDICAL EDUCATION:

- Clinical, academic teachings, training and supervision in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry to Psychology interns from Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital.
- Clinical, academic teachings, training and supervision in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry for Residents in Psychiatry from TUTH, and other residency programs.
- Regular participation and presentations in the Continued Medical Education (CME) and seminars at Kanti Children's Hospital.
- Organization of the "International Conference on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Nepal 2018", the first of its kind in Nepal, with collaboration with the Government of Nepal and NGOs/ INGOs.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS:

Our team is active on clinical as well as epidemiological research in the area of CAMH in Nepal. Below are some research and publications:

- Epidemiological study on emotional and behavioural problems of school-going children of different ethnic groups by Dr. Jasmine Ma as part of her PhD course.
- Development and Validation of ADHD diagnostic scale for Children in Nepal by Miss Narmada Devkota as part of her PhD.
- Resource mapping and needs assessment for child and adolescent mental health services in Nepal by Dr. Gunjan Dhonju as part of his Post-Doctoral Fellowship dissertation.

LIAISON WITH GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL AND NGOs/ INGOs:

In 2018, our team in collaboration with the Government of Nepal along with various NGOs, and support from INGOs organized a "First International Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference" in 2018, which had delegates from all around the world, and had huge participation. Closing of International

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference 2018 by Hon. State Minister of Health and Population Dr. Surendra Kumar Yadhav.

- Our team is in constant collaboration and consultations with the Government of Nepal and NGOs/ INGOs for advocacy of child and adolescent mental health, development of Mental Health and CAMH related plans and policies.
- Our team has collaborated with the Government of Nepal and NGOs/ INGOs in programmes related to Suicide Prevention awareness.
- Our team is in constant collaboration with the Child Helpline in Nepal.

ONGOING PROJECT:

In 2018-19, we have collaborated with the National Health Training Center (Training development department of the Ministry of Health and Population, Gov. of Nepal), UNICEF, and have developed a CAMH Care Package (CAMH- CP). The CAMH-CP envisions the following:

- Capacity building of non- specialist healthcare professionals of primary, secondary and tertiary level of healthcare service providers on CAMH issues. These will include Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), Health Assistants (HA), Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), Doctors including paediatricians, general practitioners, psychiatrists, medical officers.
- At present, we have completed a pilot testing of the above manual in Mithila Municipality, Province 1. We are in the process of developing a trainers' manual and expanding it to further six municipalities all over Nepal.

In our journey over the last few years, we have received tremendous support from our partners, who have contributed to our cause with financial aids, expertise and moral support. Funding support has been provided by Norwegian Psychiatric Association, FORUT Norway, TOUCH Ireland and Unicef Nepal. The Kanti Children's Hospital (The Government of Nepal) has provided us with land to construct the building dedicated to the child mental health. Australia Nepal Mental Health Network has provided educational grants to pursue Child Psychiatry training to India.

We feel proud to have been able to reach where we are now. The progress made in the previous years have been continued and strengthened, and further new ventures have been attempted and achieved. With the dream of further promotion of CAMH services to the children and adolescents in Nepal, we relentlessly walk this path, with the heartfelt gratitude to all our supporting partners.

