

79th World Health Assembly

Item 12.1 Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Item 12.2: Mental health

National Statement – Italy

Honourable Chair,

On non communicable diseases, Italy remains committed to working with the WHO in the crucial fight against noncommunicable diseases. In particular, we are very pleased to announce our co-sponsorship of the resolution “Steatotic liver disease: a missing piece in the global noncommunicable disease response”.

On mental health, Italy highly appreciates WHO’s work of mental health promotion over the life course. The rising burden of mental health conditions among young people calls for a progressive transition from systems focused on treatment, to models prioritizing prevention and promotion of mental well-being. This entails the integration of evidence-informed strategies that address the social and environmental determinants of mental health, strengthen protective factors, and reduce the risk of onset of mental disorders.

Enhancing young people’s social connection and implementing structured interventions in school settings are key tools for promoting their mental health; moreover, strengthening community-based mental health services and integrating mental health into primary healthcare are crucial to ensure prevention, early intervention and equitable access, in line with WHO Global Action Plan. We look forward to enhanced technical dialogue with WHO on how to systematically embed these interventions across everyday settings.

Chair,

Depression is a common complication for women during the perinatal period, with a prevalence of 15-20% in Italy. A timely diagnosis allows for effective treatment, reducing women's suffering but also limiting its consequences for their health, the unborn child and family relationships. The stepped care model, providing graduated interventions based on the severity of the psychological distress, is recommended by the WHO’s guidance on perinatal mental health, and has been incorporated in Italy’s newly approved National Mental Health Plan: we look forward to continuing dialogue with WHO during its implementation.

Thank you, Chair.