



A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Integrating Mental Health Screening into Chronic Disease Clinics in Maputo, Mozambique

Ana Macuácu^{1,2}, Carlos Matusse¹, Paulo Mungói³, Isabel Nhantumbo⁴

¹ Lúrio University

² Catholic University of Mozambique

³ Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária (INIA)

⁴ Department of Internal Medicine, Pedagogical University of Mozambique (UP)

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Correspondence: amacucua@aol.com

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Author notes

Ana Macuácu is affiliated with Lúrio University and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Carlos Matusse is affiliated with Lúrio University and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Paulo Mungói is affiliated with Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária (INIA) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Isabel Nhantumbo is affiliated with Department of Internal Medicine, Pedagogical University of Mozambique (UP) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

In Mozambique, a high prevalence of chronic diseases coexists with a significant, often unaddressed, burden of common mental disorders. The public health system lacks integrated services, resulting in fragmented care. This short report aimed to conduct a preliminary cost-benefit analysis to determine the financial viability of integrating a brief mental health screening tool into routine care at chronic disease clinics in Maputo's public hospitals. A desk-based analysis was conducted using existing programme data and published literature. Modelled costs included staff training, screening tools, and establishing referral pathways. Benefits were estimated from projected reductions in hospital readmissions and improved medication adherence for chronic conditions, based on evidence from comparable interventions. The modelled analysis indicated a favourable cost-benefit ratio. For every US dollar invested, an estimated return of US\$1.30 was projected, primarily from averted inpatient costs due to better-managed chronic conditions. A key driver was a projected reduction in diabetes-related hospital admissions. Integrating mental health screening into chronic disease clinics in this setting appears economically viable based on modelled data. This integration could support more holistic patient care and reduce long-term health system costs. A pilot implementation study is recommended to gather empirical cost and outcome data. Policymakers should consider allocating resources for training primary care nurses in mental health first-line assessment. Mental health, integrated care, cost-benefit analysis, chronic disease, Mozambique, screening. This report provides a preliminary modelled economic argument for integrating mental and physical healthcare in Mozambique's public hospitals, informing future service design and investment.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan Africa, integrated care, cost-benefit analysis, mental health screening, chronic disease management, common mental disorders, public health systems*

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