

ESSENCE PARTNERS



ESSENCE is led by Sangath in collaboration with Harvard Medical School and is led by Vikram Patel. The project is coordinated by John Naslund (Harvard Medical School, USA) and Deepak Tugnawat (Sangath, India). The Scale Up component will be implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Government of Madhya Pradesh. The National Health Systems Resource Centre of the Government of India is a key policy partner. Other academic partners include Anant Bhan (Sangath, India), Rohit Ramaswamy (University of North Carolina, USA), Pallab Maulik (George Institute, India), Chunling Lu (Brigham and Women's Hospital, USA), Chris Fairburn (Oxford University, UK), Sona Dimidjian (University of Colorado, USA), Donna Spiegelman (Yale University, USA) and Steve Hollon (Vanderbilt University, USA). Partners for the Capacity Building component include: the Independent University, Bangladesh; Healthnet TPO Afghanistan; TPO Nepal; The Schizophrenia Research Foundation, India; and The Schizophrenia Awareness Association, India.

CONTACT US

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ABOUT ESSENCE

ESSENCE is a five-year research project which aims to bridge the gap between science and mental healthcare services.

The project seeks to generate evidence on cost-effective implementation approaches for scaling up of evidence based interventions for mental disorders, in particular for treating depression.

ESSENCE is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (USA) through grant number 1U19MH113211.



PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

- Depression is the leading mental health related cause of the burden of disease globally. In South Asia, about 2 to 5% of the adult population is affected at any time.



- While there is strong evidence that culturally appropriate psychosocial interventions for depression can be effectively delivered by non-specialist health workers in community or primary care settings, over 90% of people with depression do not receive such interventions.

- A major challenge to translating the science of evidence based psychosocial interventions is the lack of knowledge on how to train non-specialist health workers to deliver these interventions competently and to ensure high quality of their delivery in real-world health care settings.



PROJECT GOALS

ESSENCE will seek to reduce the treatment gap for mental disorders, and particularly for depression by:

- **Generating knowledge** by designing and evaluating digital programs for training and implementation of psychosocial interventions.
- **Enhancing the uptake of knowledge** by engaging with and building the capacity of researchers, media professionals, policy makers, program managers and service user representatives.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

ESSENCE will be implemented over five years from 2017-2022 and has two major components:

1) SCALE UP COMPONENT

This will be conducted in partnership with the Government of Madhya Pradesh and will involve the development and evaluation of the comparative effectiveness of technology enabled interventions to train and support non-specialist health workers (such as ASHA workers) to deliver the Healthy Activity Program, a brief psychosocial therapy for depression, in primary care settings.



2) CAPACITY BUILDING COMPONENT

This component aims to develop and offer fellowships and online courses tailored for South Asia, to build capacity of researchers, media professionals, policy makers, program managers and service user representatives to disseminate mental health research and to enhance the uptake of research findings.

