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The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Thus, in order to attain health, improvement of the mental health of individuals is essential. This is all the more important because mental disorders are responsible for a high degree of burden due to illness. Owing to this growing burden of mental disorders, it is essential that effective preventive and promotional measures be taken in mental health to reduce the impact of mental disorders on the individual and society. Prevention and promotion in mental health are essential steps in reducing the increasing burden due to mental disorders.

A considerable amount of research in the field of prevention and promotion in mental health has been reported during recent years, but most of this research has come from the developed countries with very little from the developing countries. Moreover, since most of the preventive and promotional programmes cater to the local culture of the western world, it is not clear whether the strategies currently in place would be effective across different countries and cultures. Information and knowledge is required to identify and assess those programmes that seem to hold the greatest promise and are supported by adequate evidence-based research. There is also a felt need to set up an information-generating system to share information among researchers so that they do not go about “re-inventing the wheel”. Once the knowledge base for standardized evidence-based programmes has been identified, governments will need to be urged to

formulate and integrate policies and programmes related to prevention and promotion in mental health, according to their specific needs.

The articles in the journal highlight some of the basic issues in the field of prevention and promotion in mental health with special reference to the evidence base. It is hoped that the research presented here with various mental health problems that community faces will assist in wider utilization of appropriate and effective interventions on prevention and promotion towards reducing the burden of mental disorders and in enhancing the mental health of populations.