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**A STUDY OF CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTHCARE
FOR RURAL WOMEN**

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ABSTRACT

Although mental health budgets are small overall, they are not distributed fairly on a national, regional, or local scale. Services are often unavailable to those who need them the most. As a result of the prejudice and stigma they endure, people with mental illnesses are often hesitant to seek help or even recognize that it is possible that their issues are attributable to their condition. Because of the scarcity of resources, mental health problems in rural areas are often underreported. Lack of money, cultural stigmas, and limited access to medical treatment are all disadvantages for those living with mental illness. This results in lower incomes, less opportunities to get health insurance, higher rates of chronic disease and infant mortality, and fewer opportunities to receive preventive treatment. The mental and physical health of rural residents may be negatively impacted by several features of rural culture and lifestyle. Lack of time, money, and reliable transportation are just some of the challenges that might prevent people from seeing a medical or mental health expert. Therefore, it is proposed that a public health approach that addresses women's mental and physical health (including gynaecological care) under one roof would be more beneficial to rural women than a specialist psychiatric programme.