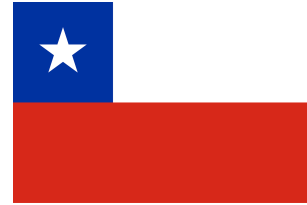


POSITION PAPER

Country: Chile

Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

Topic: International Response and Strategies for Adolescent and Youth Mental Health, with Special Emphasis on Suicide Prevention, Mitigation, and Awareness



Adolescent and youth mental health has become a pressing global issue, with suicide rates increasing among those aged 15-24 worldwide. In Chile, mental health challenges among adolescents, such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders, are prevalent. Suicide is among the leading causes of death for adolescents, demanding immediate attention and intervention. Chile recognizes the importance of preventive mental health strategies, especially through community-based care and youth-inclusive health policies. Tackling adolescent mental health effectively will not only save lives but also strengthen the future social fabric of Chile and the international community.

Chile's national approach to adolescent mental health emphasizes community support and accessible healthcare. The Chilean Ministry of Health's **Comprehensive Adolescent and Youth Health National Program** includes "Friendly Spaces in Primary Health Care" (ESPAS), which offers adolescents access to mental health services, counseling, and resources on a confidential basis. These friendly spaces have shown promising results in engaging youth who might otherwise lack support or avoid seeking help due to stigma.

Between 2021 and 2023, Chile invested approximately \$20 million USD in mental health programs targeted at youth, aiming to reduce the adolescent suicide rate, which was at 9.7 per 100,000 adolescents in 2022, compared to the global average of 11.2. To address this, Chilean schools are also implementing mental health programs focused on resilience, emotional regulation, and crisis intervention, ensuring that students receive adequate support during formative years.

Chile has been an active member of the WHO's Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 and has participated in multiple UN conferences on youth health to align its mental health policies with international standards. Chile is a signatory of the PAHO Adolescent and Youth Health Regional Strategy, which prioritizes adolescent mental health and establishes cooperative frameworks among countries in the Americas. Additionally, Chile is involved in the UNICEF-led "Mental Health Friends" initiative, which advocates for youth-friendly mental health services globally, allowing Chile to adopt new frameworks for care that include psycho-social support and education on coping skills.

In alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being), Chile has also taken part in WHO and PAHO workshops on reducing adolescent suicide rates, where it has shared its experiences and strategies. These collaborations underscore Chile's commitment to strengthening international efforts to tackle adolescent mental health and suicide prevention.

Recommendations:-

Chile urges the international community to take the following actions to enhance adolescent mental health care and suicide prevention:

1. Funding for Research and Programs: Increased financial support for research on adolescent mental health challenges and for creating programs that engage adolescents effectively in preventive care.
2. Cultural Awareness Training: Expanding training for healthcare providers on culturally sensitive practices to ensure that diverse adolescent populations feel supported and understood in healthcare settings.
3. Global Digital Mental Health Platforms: Development of global digital platforms that provide accessible, confidential mental health resources to adolescents, especially in rural areas.
4. International Youth Mental Health Summit: Organizing an annual summit focusing on youth mental health where countries can share strategies, research outcomes, and develop coordinated policies.

Chile remains committed to collaborating with WHO member states to build a safer and healthier future for all adolescents, ensuring that mental health services are not only accessible but also free from stigma and discrimination. By prioritizing adolescent mental health, Chile believes we can collectively reduce suicide rates and foster a more supportive global community for youth.