

Citation:

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Factors influencing primary care access for common mental health conditions among adults in West Africa: A scoping review

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Objectives:

Many factors affect access to primary care for common mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and substance abuse disorders. Our scoping review explored the factors influencing access to primary care for common mental health conditions among adults in West Africa.

Methods:

Our methodology was based on the approach for conducting scoping reviews described by Arksey and O'Malley. Five electronic databases were searched for relevant articles. Papers were screened by two independent reviewers and selected based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data was extracted into a data extraction form and analyzed thematically.

Results:

After full-text review, 28 articles met our inclusion criteria. Our review revealed that the factors influencing primary care access for common mental health conditions in West Africa act at either the patient, primary healthcare facility, or contextual level. These contextual factors include social norms, cultural beliefs, traditions, and socio-economic status. They influence primary care access for mental health by affecting the patient-level and healthcare facility-level factors. Furthermore, the domains of influence at the patient level and facility level are interrelated.

Conclusion:

The various domains of access to primary care for common mental health conditions in

West Africa are interrelated, act at different points along the care-seeking pathway, and are significantly shaped by social norms, cultural beliefs, traditions, and the socioeconomic status of individuals. For interventions to improve access to primary care for common mental health conditions in West Africa to be effective, they should target multiple levels of influence and be sensitive to the sociocultural context.

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