fashion are two of the major challenges facing mental health services this century. Telepsychiatry has been shown to have the potential to improve both. Larger-scale economic evaluations are required and professional concerns need to be addressed through studies of the effects of the medium on clinical outcomes and therapeutic relation-ships. Within two decades videoconferencing could be the preferred medium for contact between professionals and mental health service users in Europe.

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COUNTRY PROFILES

Introduction

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Country profiles provide summary information on mental health policy, services, training and research in the country, along with key references for more details. The aim is to give a bird's eye view of the situation within about 1500 words. It is hoped that this will not only increase the reader's awareness of distant and often forgotten countries, but also provide an opportunity for learning from others' experiences. The profiles can also open possi-bilities for further dialogue and even collaboration.

This issue of *International Psychiatry* presents country profiles from Sri Lanka, Turkey and Azerbaijan. As well as giving rich descriptions of the situation within the countries, all three profiles clearly bring out the need for compre-hensive mental health policies, supported by enhanced training of professionals for improving psychiatric care.

If you wish to make a contribution to the country profile section, please contact Shekhar Saxena (email saxenas@who.int).

COUNTRY PROFILE

Mental health services in Sri Lanka

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Relative to its economic indicators, Sri Lanka has a high health status. The life expectancy in the year 2001 was 70.7 years for males and 75.4 years for females. Maternal and infant mortality rates have shown a downward trend over the past half century and now are around 2.3 per 10 000 live births and 16 per 1000 live births, respectively.

These trends are mainly due to the high literacy rate and comparatively large investments made in health and social welfare.

The situation regarding mental health care services is very different. As in many developing countries, negative attitudes to mental illness, social stigma and a lack of appreciation of the suffering and disability caused by mental