

Nature, Biodiversity and Health:

AN OVERVIEW OF INTERCONNECTIONS



Nature, Biodiversity and Health: The interconnections

- Nature provides the basic conditions for human life and human health
- Environments and ecosystems protect human wellbeing
- Pressure on natural environments threatens human health



Nature-based
solutions



Green recovery /
transformation

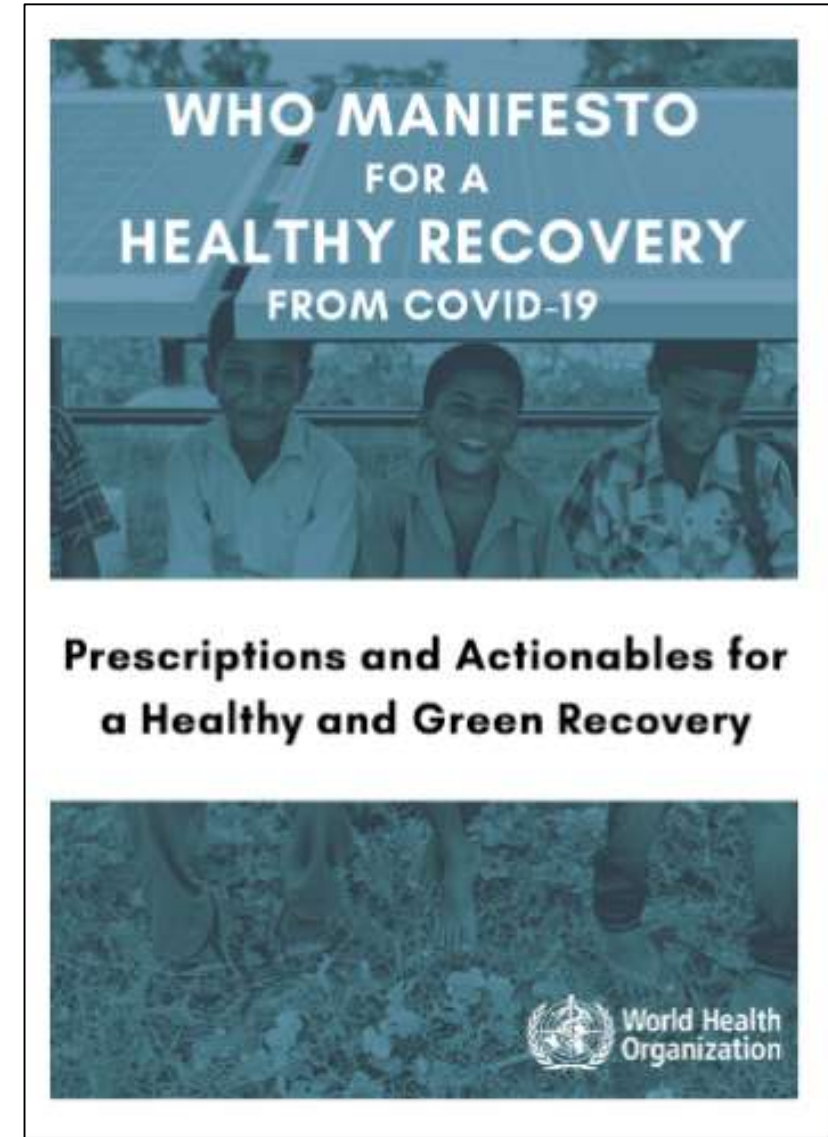


Sustainable lifestyles, systems and policies
Intersectoral commitment

COVID-19, nature, environment and health

Nature-based solutions have a role to play to

- 1) Protect & preserve the source of human health: Nature.
- 2) Invest in essential services in healthcare facilities.
- 3) Ensure a quick healthy energy transition.
- 4) Promote healthy, sustainable food systems.
- 5) Build healthy, liveable cities.
- 6) Stop using taxpayers money to fund pollution.





Institute for
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Joining Forces for Health and Nature recovery

May 31, 2021

Event organised by NetworkNature within the EU Green Week

Celine Charveriat, Executive Director, IEEP

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Nature provides immense benefits
to people's **MENTAL HEALTH**.

(IEEP 2021)





Protected areas have been estimated
to provide mental health benefits worth
EUR 5.55 TRILLION.

(Buckley et al 2019)

Mental health: an increasing share of the disease burden in Europe

- Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety today affect more than **1 in 6 EU citizens** representing a massive personal and societal burden.
- Poor mental health is estimated to cost Europe over **€600 bn/year** or over **4% of GDP** of which a third is in direct health care spending.



Sources: Mental health: Fact sheet WHO (2019); ; Health at a Glance: Europe 2018; State of Health in the EU Cycle; World Economic Forum 2020.

Top five NCDs due to environment pollution

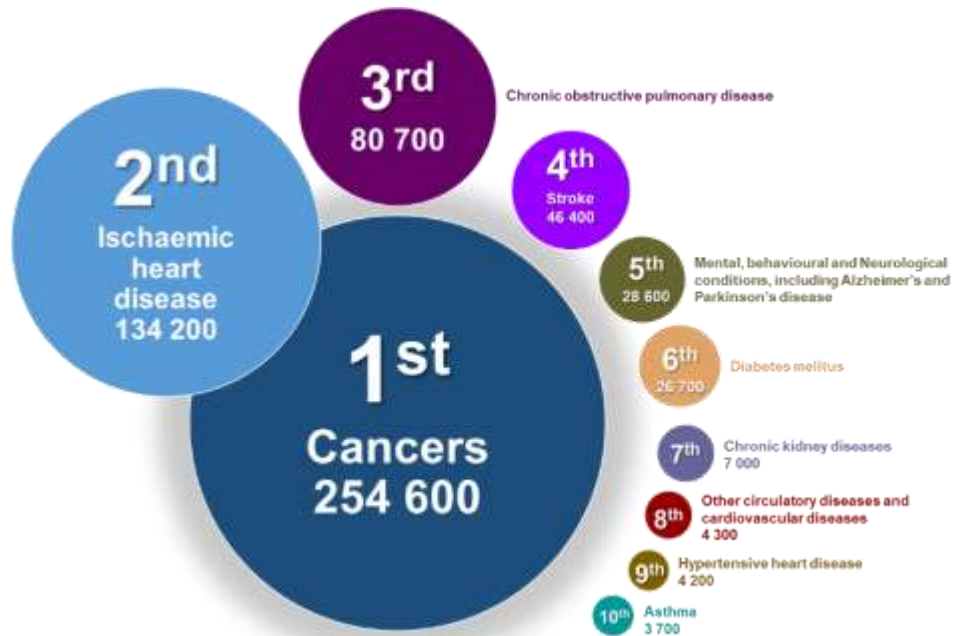
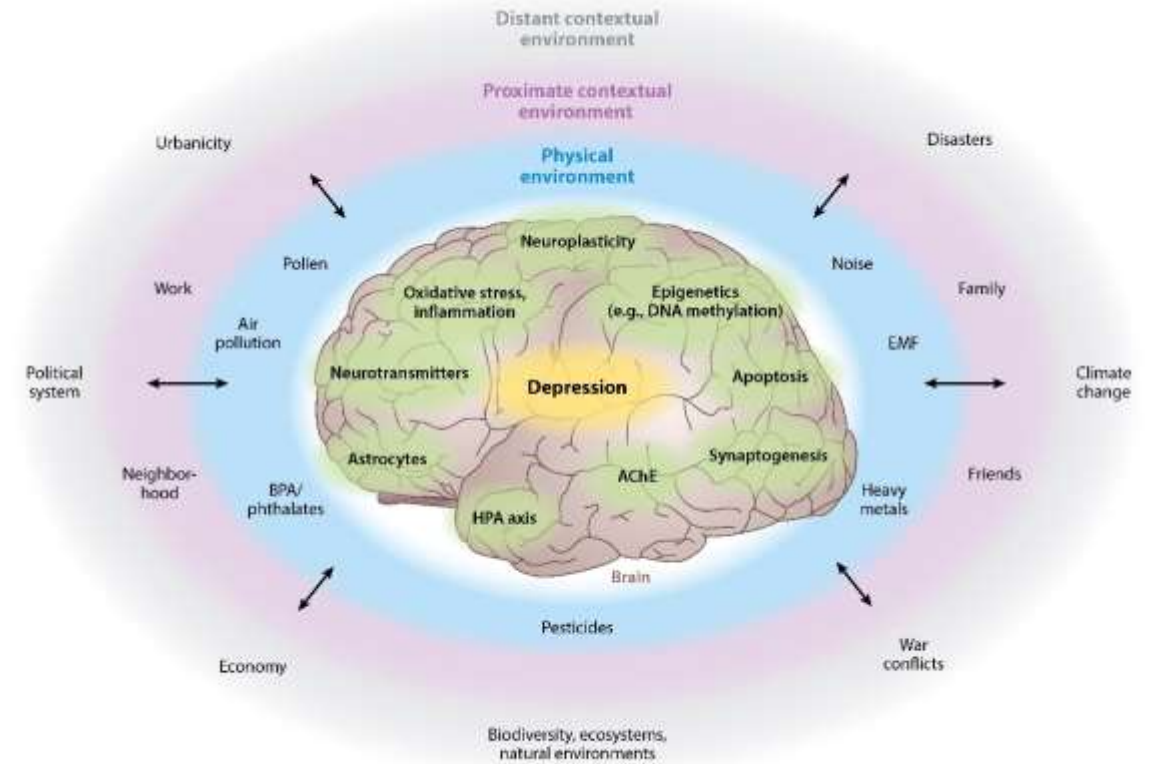


Figure- Top 10 non-communicable diseases causing deaths attributable to the environment in the EU (Source: EEA – Healthy environment, healthy lives, 2018 based on WHO (2016))- **Zero Pollution EU-Action Plan, 2021**

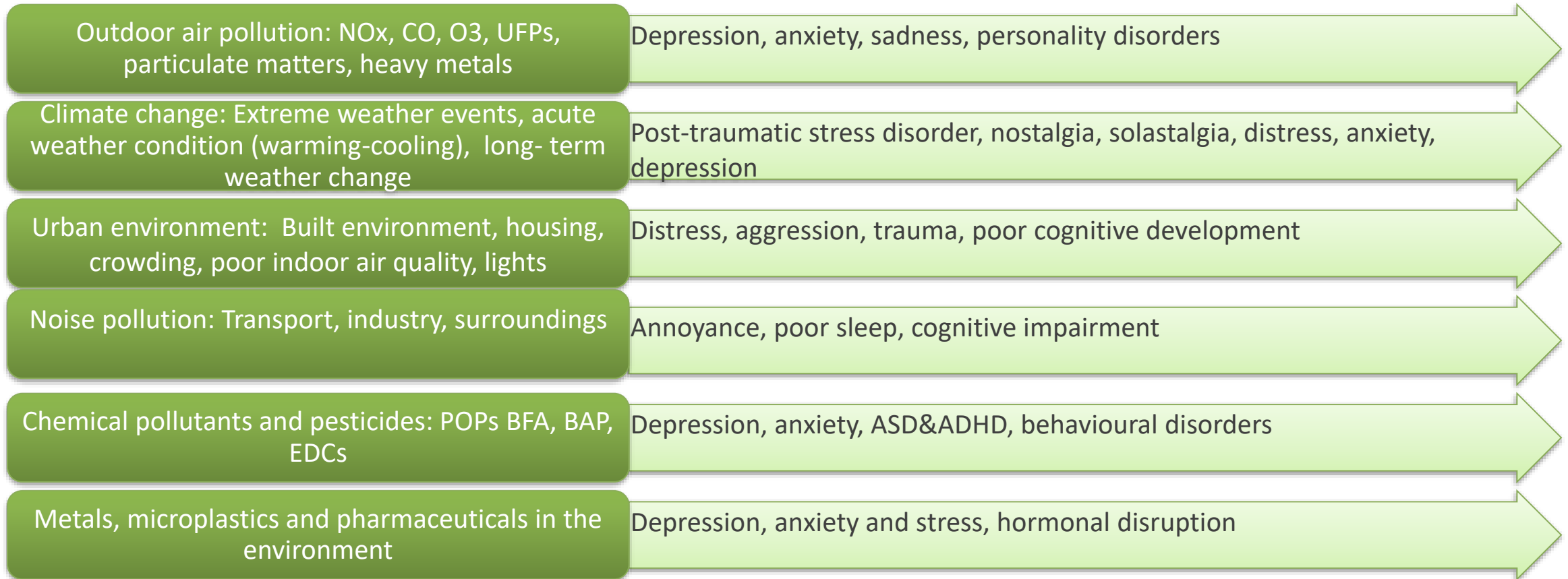
Determinants/exposure → mental health outcomes



van den Bosch M, Meyer-Lindenberg A. 2019. Annu. Rev. Public Health 40:239–59

Source: Van den Bosch, M. et al. Annu. Rev. Public Health 2019. 40:18.1–18.21

Determinants/exposure mental health outcomes



Belgium has seen
a **6%** increase
in the rates of **DEPRESSION**

(Sciensano, cited in UNRIC 2020)

Around **60%**
surveyed in Poland
have experienced increased
GENERAL ANXIETY

(Dragan 2020)

In France, **18%** showed
symptoms of severe
ANXIETY, DEPRESSION
and other **MENTAL DISORDERS**

(UNRIC 2020)

In Italy and Spain, children have
DIFFICULTIES CONCENTRATING
and show **IRRITABILITY**
RESTLESSNESS
NERVOUSNESS

(WHO 2020)



COVID-19 & MENTAL HEALTH in Europe

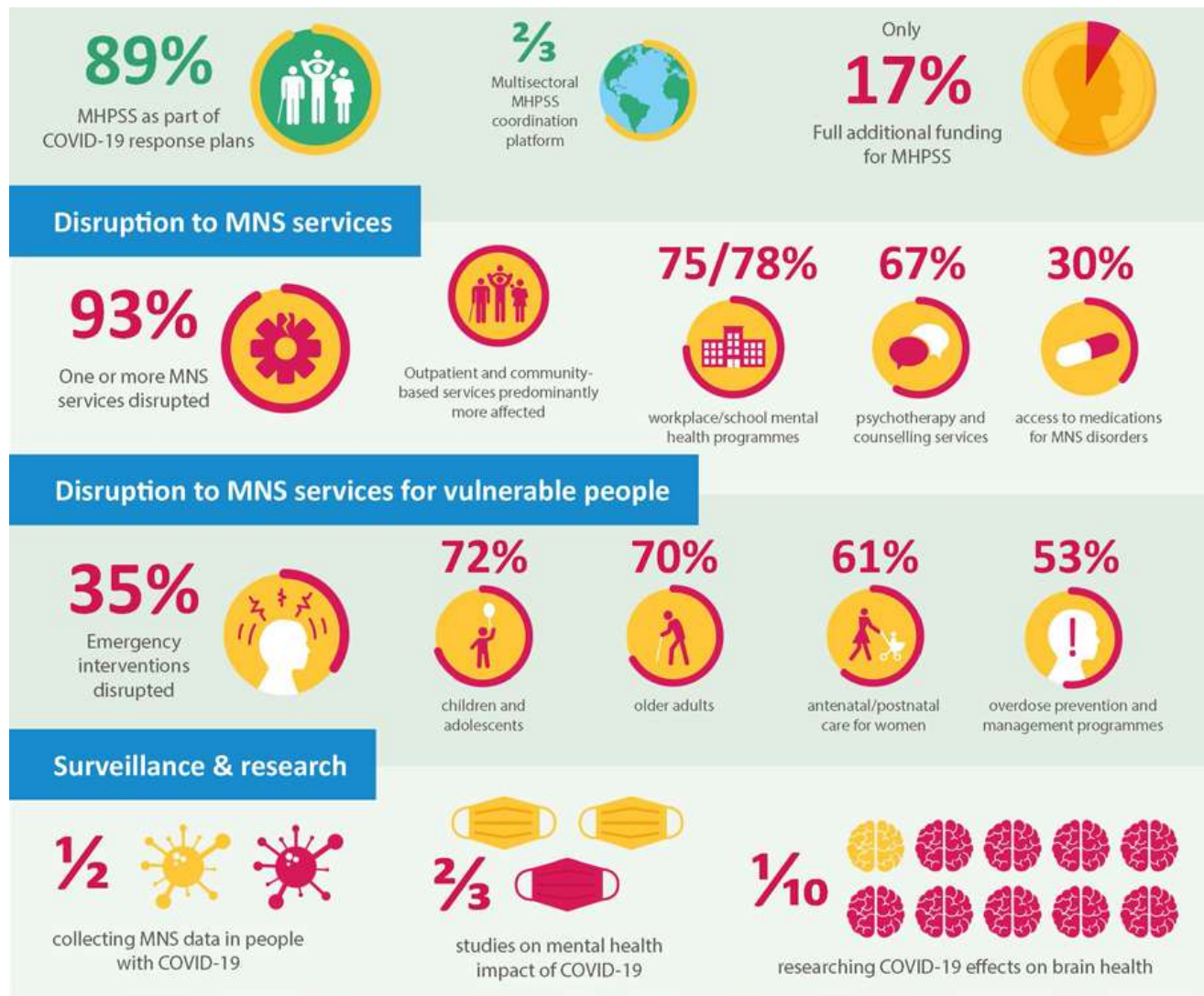
The impact of COVID-19 on mental, neurological and substance use services:

results of a rapid assessment

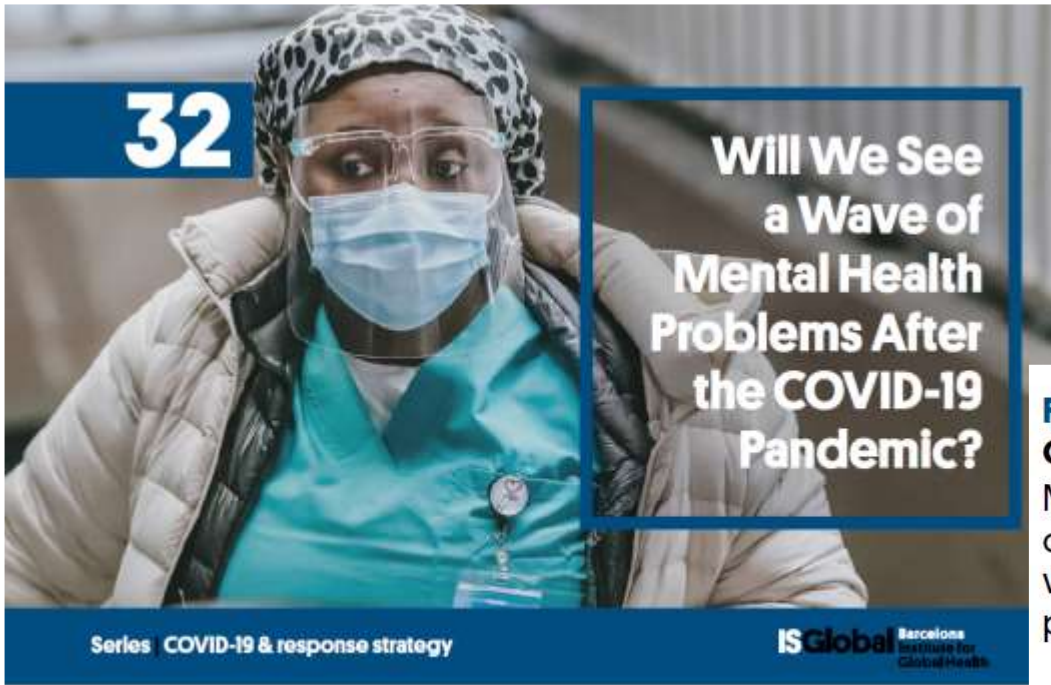


Fear, worry and stress after are more frequent and more severe after an emergency.

Released Oct. 2020



Countries are responding to the disruption of MNS services in multiple innovative ways, including telemedicine, teletherapy interventions, hotlines and training for health care providers.



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Will We See a Wave of Mental Health Problems After the COVID-19 Pandemic?

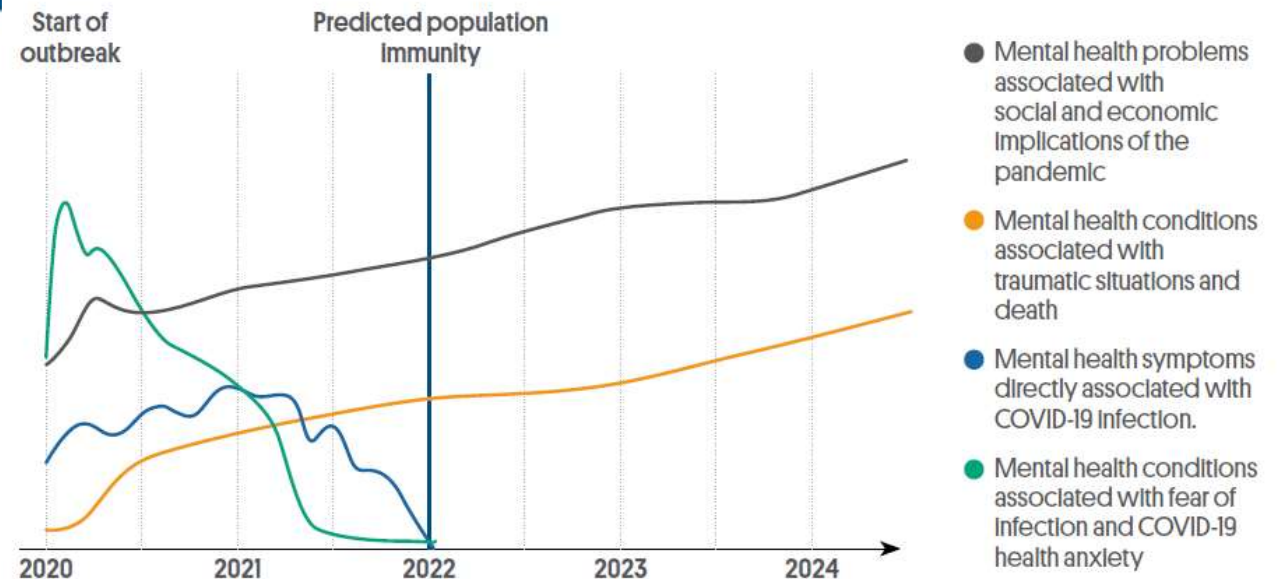
Series COVID-19 & response strategy

IS Global Barcelona Institute for Global Health

Authors: Ximena Goldberg, Oriana Ramirez, Matilda van den Bosch, Ljudmila Llutsko and Berta Briones (ISGlobal)*

Figure 2. The Burden and Course of Mental Health Conditions after the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic Will Vary with Different Risk Factors.

Mental health problems directly related to the infection will decrease as the control of the spread advances. However, mental health conditions that are associated with trauma and socioeconomic impact of the pandemic will increase even after population immunity is achieved.



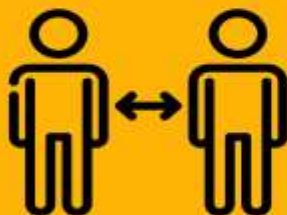
GREEN SPACES AND COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic,

good quality green spaces are **more needed than ever** in cities because they offer:



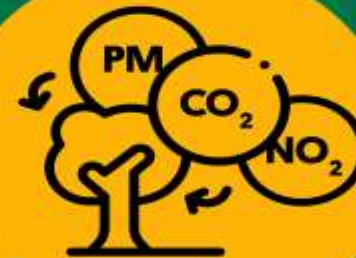
LOWER RISK OF
COVID-19 TRANSMISSION
OUTDOORS



SPACE FOR
SOCIAL
DISTANCING



BENEFITS FOR
PHYSICAL AND
MENTAL HEALTH



REDUCTION OF
AIR POLLUTION AND
NOISE LEVELS

Develop a dedicated EU
**MENTAL HEALTH &
WELL-BEING** strategy.



Integrate
RESILIENCE INDICATORS
which consider inter-linkages
between mental health and
the environment.



HOW TO REFLECT
THE LINKS BETWEEN
MENTAL HEALTH
AND NATURE?

Ensure mainstreaming of
health and well-being
considerations in the
implementation of the
**EUROPEAN
GREEN DEAL.**



As part of Europe's
forthcoming zero-pollution
action plan, ensure that
those furthest behind
BENEFIT MOST.



Address the **FUNDING GAP** for implementing the EU
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Nature Based Solutions for Europe's recovery

- So far a **missed opportunity?** Around 1% of funding dedicated to recovery amongst major economies (Vivid Economics)
- A source of **rapid job creation** (Natura 2000=4.4 million jobs)
- Towards a **green care economy** (DDR and climate adaptation, water management, food security)
- **Multiple public health benefits** (reduction of pollution, promotion of healthier lifestyles, improved mental health , AMR resistance; zoonose prevention)
- **Social justice dimensions** (low-income populations most at risk post COVID; low-skilled jobs, job deprived areas or as part of a just transition e.g. Zeche Zollverein)

Policy recommendations

1- **Boost public and private investments in NBS:** taxonomy, biodiversity spending targets within RRF plans; integration of biodiversity as part of the fit for 55% package; increase the prioritisation of ESIF towards biodiversity (e.g. CAP strategic plans)

2- Make **mental health is prioritised** within RRF plans

2- Role of EC and DG reform in **guiding and assessing RRF plans from MS** and supporting structural reform

3- **Fix the fundamentals** to bounce forward

- Greener trade for a green recovery policies **addressing negative spill over effects of European demand** (land-use change, agricultural expansion and wildlife trade)
- Accelerate implementation of **key EU legal biodiversity commitments**
- Adopt ambitious EU legislation for **mandatory ecosystem restoration**
- **Tackle drivers of pollution:** Opportunity of the **zero pollution action plan** and other key initiatives within the green deal



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References

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