



ADDICTIONS RESEARCH GROUP

SANGATH, GOA





Dear friends and colleagues,

It has been a fantastic year for us at the Addictions Research Group, and we are incredibly grateful for your support which has been instrumental in this.



We cannot let 2019 go by without recognition of how things have panned out and through this report would like to share our reflections with you. 2019 was a year of many successes: we expanded the impact of our work in new and underserved communities, we had many opportunities to disseminate our research, and we managed to secure funding to work on new ideas. In 2019 we also achieved a special milestone: we completed 5 years as a research group! This growth would have been impossible without the hard work and passion of our team, support from our peers and mentors at Sangath and our partnering organisations, and the faith of the communities that we work in.



We feel more positive than ever about our progress, but we still have a long way to go to improve the lives of people who are affected by substance use. Our experiences have shaped a strong belief in the power of innovation and evidence-based work and also continually reminds us of our responsibility to work harder and push the agenda forward. Our vision for the years to come is to ensure that our research contributes to the advancement of care for addictions and that we foster a resourceful team and community to meet this objective.

We look forward to 2020 with renewed energy and enthusiasm, and we are particularly excited to plan to push the envelope in addictions research even further forwards, with your support.

Thank you and wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful year ahead.

All the best wishes
Abhijit and Richard



1 OUR PROJECTS



2 OUR COLLABORATORS



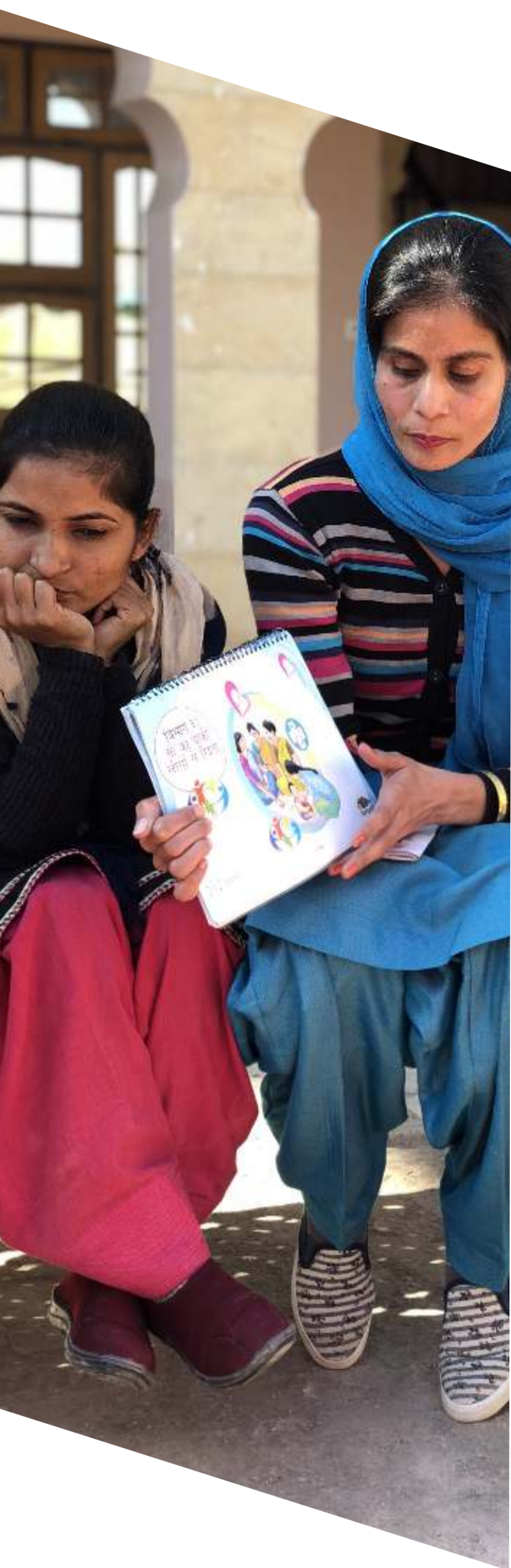
3 OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- TEAM MEMBERS



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IMPACT 2017 - 2020 IMPROVING ACCESS THROUGH TELE-PSYCHIATRY



PROJECT SUMMARY

The mental health treatment gap in India is particularly critical as 70% of the population lives in rural areas that house less than 30% of the mental health work force. This has created a situation where a large proportion of those who require mental health care are unable to access good quality and affordable services for their needs.

The objective of IMPACT is to test the acceptability and feasibility of mental health care delivered via tele-psychiatry in primary health care settings in Goa. We provide clinic-based psychiatric and psychological services in Primary Health Centres in different parts of Goa, as well as home-based services for those patients who are unable to travel to facilities for mental health care.



WHAT MAKES IMPACT UNIQUE?

This project is using an innovative approach of using video calling to deliver psychiatric and counselling treatment in primary healthcare facilities to reduce the gap in mental healthcare treatment. This treatment is providing a holistic package of care including psychiatric consultations, supportive counselling and medicine prescription. Additionally, it is also providing home-based services to reduce the travel time and costs for the patients.



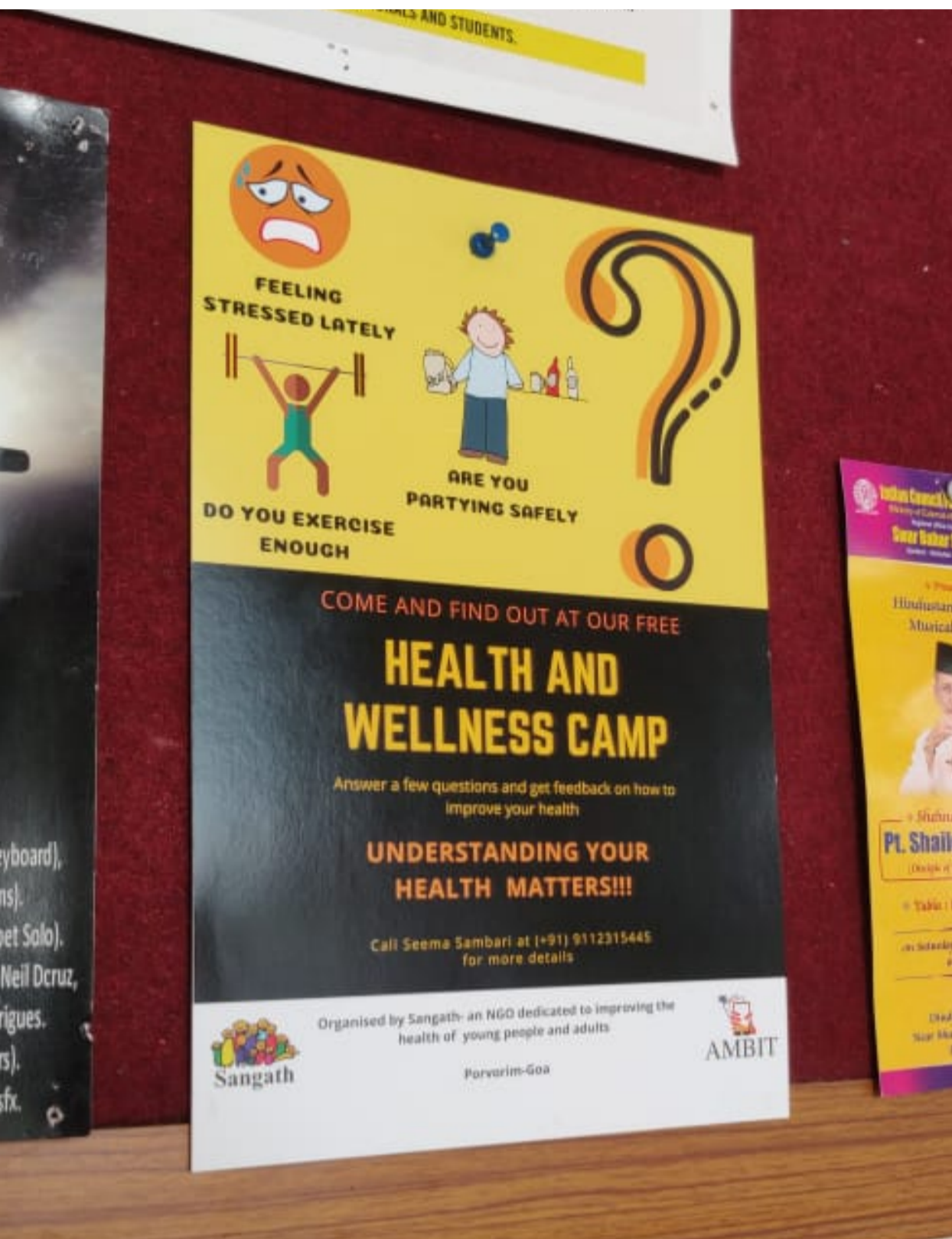
AMBIT 2017 - 2020

ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS- MOBILE BASED BRIEF INTERVENTION TREATMENT

PROJECT SUMMARY

This study aims to develop a contextually appropriate technology-delivered intervention for a growing and important public health problem i.e. hazardous drinking in adults.

The aims of the programme will be achieved through a range of processes including identification of the existing evidence; development of the intervention in partnership with our technology partner and utilising feedback from a range of individuals and groups including hazardous drinkers; refinement of the intervention; and testing of its preliminary impact. If the intervention is subsequently demonstrated to be acceptable and feasible, it will lead to future efforts to evaluate and scale technology-based interventions. As a result, it has the potential to change the landscape of interventions for hazardous drinking in resource-constrained settings.



WHAT MAKES AMBIT UNIQUE?

This project is the first evidence-based approach using technology to overcome the treatment gap for alcohol use in the Indian context. The intervention development and delivery process uses participatory methods.

EMA/EMI 2019-2020

PILOTING A CONTEXTUALLY ADAPTED, DIGITAL ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION PLATFORM FOR REDUCING ALCOHOL ABUSE BY HIGH-RISK YOUTH IN INDIA



PROJECT SUMMARY

Our project focusses on using an innovative methodology to support assessment, monitoring and prevention of alcohol abuse in high-risk youth (aged 18-24 years) in Goa. Collecting reliable data on stigmatised behaviours poses a major challenge for researchers and service providers, especially in developing countries. The problem is further magnified by the reliance on retrospective reports.

Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA), a methodology aimed at collecting data in real time in natural settings, can in part address this issue and provide more reliable data. Building on the successful results obtained using EMA, Ecological Momentary Interventions (EMIs) have been developed to provide preventive and therapeutic behaviour change interventions to clients during their everyday life (i.e. in real time) and in natural settings, using software applications ('apps') delivered through electronic devices. There is evidence that this approach can significantly lower hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption, alcohol - related problems, or both, even though most apps have been developed without rigorous academic evaluation or grounding in existing research.

WHAT MAKES EMA/EMI UNIQUE?

To the best of our knowledge, no substantive study has employed digital apps to measure alcohol use and provide interventions to hazardous drinkers in India. Our study will be unique in applying a structured methodology to adapt and evaluate such apps in India.

TO QUIT 2018 - 2020

DEVELOPMENT AND PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF A TECHNOLOGY-DELIVERED TOBACCO CESSATION PROGRAM IN INDIA



PROJECT SUMMARY

India is the second largest consumer of tobacco in the world; and has one of the highest mortality rates related to tobacco. The objective of ToQuit is to develop an evidence-based tobacco cessation treatment for our local context and that can be delivered to people on their mobile phones. We will do this by involving tobacco users, doctors and other medical practitioners at different levels to understand their perspectives and tailor the treatment to their needs. If found to be cost-effective, our treatment can reach millions of people in India and could be a game-changer in the field of public health.



WHAT MAKES TO QUIT UNIQUE?

This project is the first RCT to develop a mobile phone-delivered tobacco cessation treatment for LMICs. Since it will be a simple SMS-based intervention using messages in local languages, it can be accessible to a majority of India's population.



QAAD 2018 - 2019 A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ADOLESCENT DRUG USE IN INDIA



PROJECT SUMMARY

Evidence indicates that illicit drug use is a rising and highly stigmatised, thus “hidden” problem, yet there is a dearth of systematic research done on illicit drug use. With its emphasis on illicit drug use, this project investigates the understudied landscape of these behaviours, with the purpose of analysing the characteristics of illicit drug use in adolescents across India and to identify facilitators and barriers to care.

This study would identify such contextual factors in drug use within a low-resource setting, filling the evidence gap in a lower middle-income country, by using an explanatory framework. This explanatory model of disease, introduced by Kleinman et al. in 1978 acknowledges the specific societal and cultural aspects of disease to provide perspective beyond the scope of traditional biomedical model. Providing valuable insight into patient’s conception of disease, the explanatory model is beneficial in understanding their wider belief systems, allowing patients’ world views to emerge and be incorporated into culturally appropriate treatment. With this particular population and health issue, using an explanatory framework will be crucial to holistically understand the complex structural and social determinants that comprise the phenomenon.

WHAT MAKES QAAD UNIQUE?

This study captures patterns and pressures associated with illicit drug use in a help-seeking population of young people . Findings from this study can be used to build stronger interventions for care.

NIHR GHRG 2018 - 2021

NIHR GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH GROUP: A PACKAGE OF CARE FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE IN SOUTH ASIA



PROJECT SUMMARY

Our multidisciplinary group of established and early career researchers will develop a comprehensive, adaptable package of care to improve the mental health of survivors of violence against women, modern slavery, and civil conflict in resource-constrained settings in India, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan.

These forms of violence are gendered, culturally and generationally recapitulated, and strongly associated with mental illness, particularly depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thinking. Reductions in prevalence and severity of these conditions will be our target outcomes in groups whose gender and age reflect local burden of violence. Alongside psychological therapies, the range of necessary non-clinical responses includes crisis counselling, shelter, legal and financial negotiation, social work, and community support networks. In developing a package of care adaptable to different forms of violence in resource-limited settings, we will identify and review promising models, refine them contextually through user engagement, pilot and collate them.

WHAT MAKES THIS STUDY UNIQUE?

By using a trauma-informed and rights-based approach, we are hoping to build an intervention that can be integrated into not just the public health care system but also the social justice system, to improve the overall mental health and well-being of survivors of domestic violence.

MAV
2019 - 2020

MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE



PROJECT SUMMARY

Gender-based violence is a major violation of women's human rights and a significant global public health problem. As a result of this violence, women experience a range of immediate and long-term physical and mental health consequences, often exacerbated during the perinatal period.

This project takes advantage of an existing perinatal mental health care delivery platform to adapt, implement, and test a male-led intervention for gender-based violence in rural Rajasthan, India. Our hypothesis is that a violence primary prevention program led by self-identified reformed perpetrators that targets young husbands of expectant mothers will be both acceptable and feasible within the local context, and that the program will reduce the actual experience of violence among women and change community perceptions regarding violence. We intend to use the results of this pilot implementation study to inform a future trial in the study area.

WHAT MAKES MAV UNIQUE?

By involving men in the process of preventing gender based violence and discrimination, this study is our first foray into working with perpetrators of violence



DATING VIOLENCE 2019 - 2020

EXPLORING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN DATING VIOLENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIA



PROJECT SUMMARY

Intimate partner violence experienced by young people in romantic relationships is increasingly becoming a priority in the health sector. Young people who experience violence in intimate relationships are particularly vulnerable as they are not able to openly speak about their experiences due to social norms around dating, and are unable to access good quality and affordable support for the same.

The objective of this study is to understand the challenges young people who experience violence in dating relationships face, their support needs and the sources of care available to them. We will use the findings from this exploratory study to develop a larger intervention development project that can improve the mental health of young people.

WHAT MAKES THIS STUDY UNIQUE?

This study is using innovative techniques such as emoji flash cards and co-production sessions with young people to build data collection tools that are acceptable and interesting.



PREVENTING SUBSTANCE USE 2019 - 2021

CO-PRODUCING A PREVENTION INTERVENTION FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE IN YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIA



PROJECT SUMMARY

Mental disorders, including alcohol and substance use disorders, account for a third of the burden of disease in adolescents globally, and more than half the burden of adult mental disorders has its onset in adolescence.

Most evaluated approaches to the prevention of substance use and misuse in young people have on the individual child through only education, mentoring, social skills or life skills training. These child-focussed approaches have had very small positive impacts on reducing overall substance use. Effective integrated interventions that identify and target key early risk and protective factors shift children and young people onto a more positive developmental trajectory; and are relevant to the Indian context are essential.

Our study will adopt a model that seeks to address universal prevention across a population irrespective of risk, by focusing on structural determinants and encouraging all young people to adopt skills that will increase resilience against targeted health problems.

WHAT MAKES THIS STUDY UNIQUE?

This study will use a coproduction approach to generate knowledge on which components, package and platform are most suited for a prevention intervention for substance use in India.



Partnerships with government agencies

- Directorate of Health Services
- Public Health Centres in Valpoi, Sanquelim, Bicholim, Pernem

- Gudi Paroda Panchayat
- Mormugao Port Trust Hospital

- Central Tibetan Administration

Educational institutions

- Government College Quepem
- Dhempe College
- Government College Khandola
- Goa College of Home Science

- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- University College London
- Oxford Brookes University
- University of Sussex



Other Organisations

- Mata Jai Kaur
- Forca Goa Foundation





WORKSHOPS, TRAINING SESSIONS & EVENTS CONDUCTED

1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS on autism, addictions, domestic violence, general mental health, managing exam stress, suicide prevention.

2 TRAINING SESSIONS on barefoot counselling, counselling for survivors of violence and people at risk of suicide, supporting affected family members, addressing mental health challenges, and the mental health gap action plan (mhGAP), the mental health care act 2018, community-level survey techniques.

3 WORKSHOPS on responses to challenges to mental health and well-being, self-care in helping professions, enhancing mental health across the lifespan, workplace wellness, vision-building for organisations, Theory of Change creation.

4 SPECIAL SESSIONS ON WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2019 on self-care, stress management, suicide prevention.

5 DISSEMINATION of work in global mental health to students, key findings of projects.

(Representative listing)



CONFERENCES, COURSES & WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

- 1 16th Annual International Network on Brief Interventions for Alcohol & Other Drugs (INEBRIA) Conference.
- 2 MEETINGS ATTENDED at Emerging Minds Network Launch Meeting, Transforming children's mental health in schools, Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network.
- 3 COURSES on grounded theory methods, qualitative interviewing, realist reviews, public health practice in rural India, sexuality and mental health, leadership in mental health, enhancing clinical decision making in counselling, reducing the impact of inter-parental conflict on children in addiction-affected families.

(Representative listing)

PUBLICATIONS

1

Feasibility, acceptability, and cost-effectiveness of a brief, lay counsellor delivered psychological treatment for men with alcohol dependence in primary care: an exploratory randomised controlled trial.

Abhijit Nadkarni, Helen A. Weiss, Richard Velleman, Jim McCambridge, David McDaid, A-La Park, Pratima Murthy, Benedict Weobong, Bhargav Bhat, Vikram Patel
Addiction. 2019; 114(7): 1192-1203

2

The prevalence, patterns, and correlates of gambling behaviours in men: An exploratory study from Goa, India.

Urvita Bhatia, Bhargav Bhat, Sanju George, Abhijit Nadkarni
Asian Journal of Psychiatry. 2019; 43: 143-149

3

Supporting addictions affected families effectively (SAFE): a mixed methods exploratory study of the 5-step method delivered in Goa, India, by lay counsellors

Abhijit Nadkarni, Urvita Bhatia, Richard Velleman, Jim Orford, Gill Velleman, Sydney Church, Supriya Sawal & Subhash Pednekar
Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy. 2019; 26(2): 195-204

4

Temporal pathways of change in two randomized controlled trials for depression and harmful drinking in Goa, India.

Daisy R. Singla, Steven D. Hollon, Richard Velleman, Benedict Weobong, Abhijit Nadkarni, Christopher G. Fairburn, Bhargav Bhat, Mahesh Gurav, Arpita Anand, Jim McCambridge, *et al.*
Psychological Med. 2019; 8: 1-9.

5

Auditing the AUDIT: A systematic review of cut-off scores for the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) in low- and middle-income countries.

Abhijit Nadkarni, Alison Garber, Sheina Costa, Sheena Wood, Sonali Kumar, Nathalie MacKinnon, Mariam Ibrahim, Richard Velleman, Urvita Bhatia, Godwin Fernandes, Benedict Weobong, and Anil Rane.
Drug and Alcohol Dependence. 2019; 202: 123-133.

6

Palliative care and symptom relief for people affected by multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.

Eric Krakauer, Keertan Dheda, Barbara Kalsdorf, Liga Kuksa, Abhijit Nadkarni, Nguyen Viet Nhung, Peter Selwyn, Sonya Shin, Alena Skrahina, Ernesto Jaramillo.
The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. 2019; 23(8):881-890

7

Measuring Coping Among Family Members with Substance-Misusing Relatives: Testing Competing Factor Structures of the Coping Questionnaire (CQ) in England and Italy

Zsolt Horváth, Jim Orford, Richard Velleman, and Róbert Urbán,
Substance Use and Misuse. 2019; 1082-6084

PUBLICATIONS

8

Stigma and Discrimination in India: Addiction and Mental Health.

Urvita Bhatia and Richard Velleman

To appear in: Jazmin Mora and Guillermina Natera (Eds) Stigma and Discrimination in Health. Mexico; Ramon de la Fuente Muniz National Institute of Psychiatry and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). In Press.

9

Innovating Care of Addictions in Low-Resource Settings.

Abhijit Nadkarni and Urvita Bhatia

In: Okpaku S, ed. Innovations in Global Mental Health. Cham: Springer International Publishing; In press.

10

Home-detoxification and relapse prevention for alcohol dependence in low resource settings: an exploratory study from Goa, India.

Abhijit Nadkarni, Richard Velleman, Urvita Bhatia, Godwin Fernandes, Ethel D'souza, and Pratima Murthy

Alcohol, 2019; 82:103-112

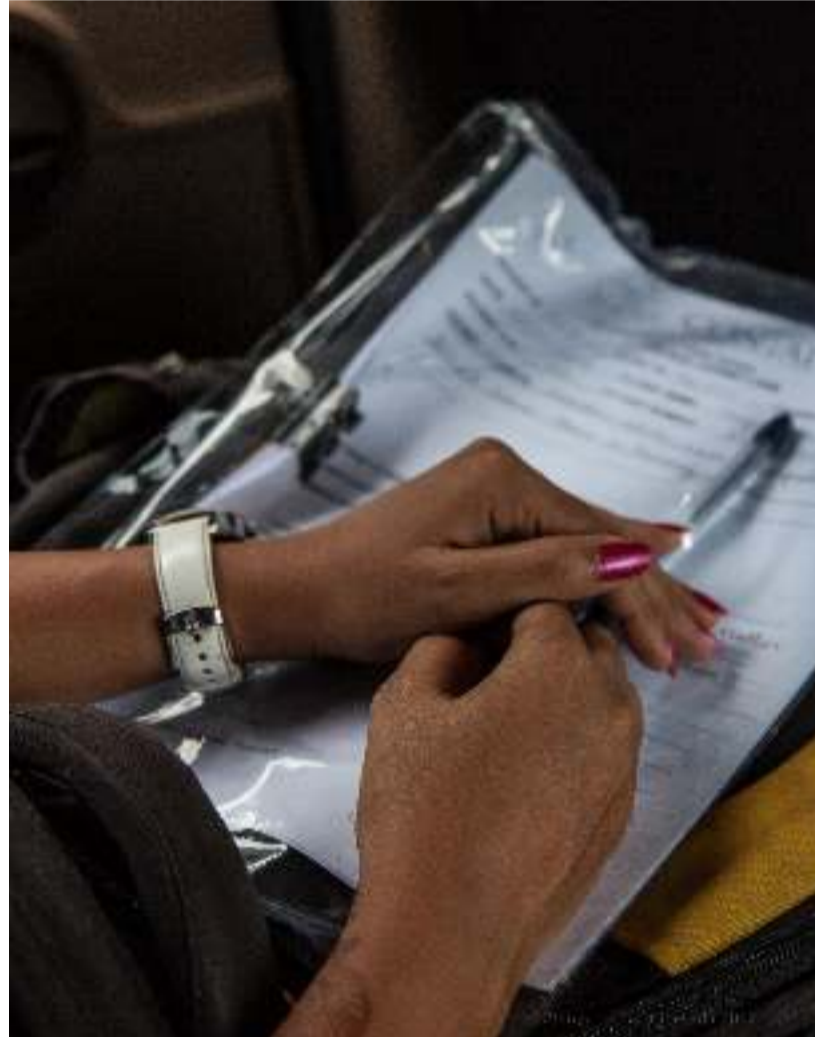


AWARDS

- 1** Scholarship awarded to Danielle Fernandes to attend INEBRIA Conference on "Preliminary evaluation of a mobile-based Brief Intervention for hazardous drinkers in Goa-India" in Lubeck, Germany
- 2** Grant awarded to Devika Gupta by International Centre Goa for a study 'Exploring the association between dating violence and mental health among young people in India'
- 3** Danielle Fernandes was awarded the South Asia Implementation Research Fellowship in Mental Health, an initiative funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, which aims to increase the knowledge and skills in implementation science



Workshops for capacity building



- Grant Writing
- Qualitative data collection- Interviewing
- Mental Health Care Act and Women's Health

- Self-appraisal writing
- Basics of Data analysis
- Data analysis using R
- mhGAP Brief Intervention

Team building



- ARG Annual Retreat
- ARG Away Day



Celebrations

- 5 year anniversary celebrations
- Festival celebrations





OUR TEAM

Abhijit Nadkarni, Aneel Brar, Ankita Volvoikar, Ankur Garg, Danielle Fernandes, Deevija Varadkar, Devika Gupta, Diksha Kalangutkar, Ethel Dsouza, Godwin Fernandes, Joseline D'souza, Krutika Mandrekar, Lalan Karapurkar, Marimilha Grace Pacheco, Miriam Sequeira, Monica D'souza, Nazir Allikatti, Pranali Kundaikar, Prerana Pandia, Rajanish Haldankar, Reshma Naik, Richard Velleman, Seema Sambari, Shravani Rangapuri, Shreya Nagvekar, Soumya Singh, Subhash Pednekar, Suneina Halarnekar, Supriya Kashalkar, Urvita Bhatia

OUR INTERNS

Anastasia Onyango, Jaclyn Schess, Jasper Synowski, Karen Wen, Kathryn Chen, Lydia Bennett-Li, Priyanka Manghani, Rachit Shah, Rishita Mukherjee, Renuka Simoes, Shivani Naik, Sindhu Vatikuti

CELEBRATION OF 5 YEARS OF ARG



1

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON INNOVATING CARE FOR ADDICTIONS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & 'STORIES OF CHANGE' EXHIBITION

31 JANUARY 2020

2

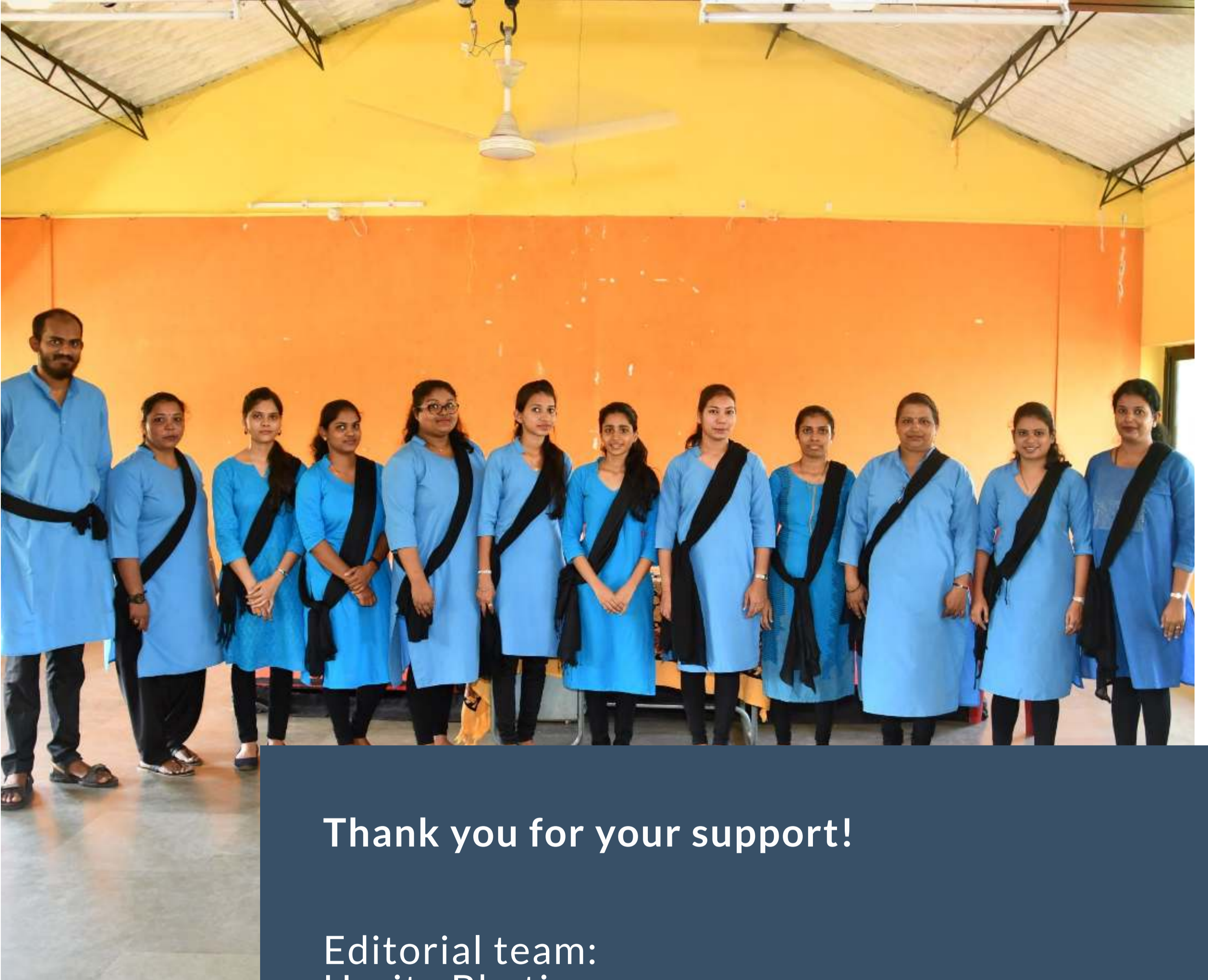
COMMUNITY DISSEMINATION EVENTS

SANGATH AYLA TUMCHEA DARANT

3

17th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL INEBRIA CONFERENCE

23 - 25 SEPTEMBER 2020



Thank you for your support!

Editorial team:
Urvita Bhatia
Devika Gupta
Marimilha Grace Pacheco
Joseline D'souza

arg@sangath.in