

Centro de Investigación Biomédica en Red de Salud Mental (CIBERSAM)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Presentation of the roadmap for mental health and well-being research in Europe

Sant Boi de Llobregat (Barcelona), Spain - April 6, 2015

- ◆ The ROAMER project's Roadmap for Mental health and Well-being Research in Europe (funded by the European Commission's FP7) was recently presented at BMA House in London on March 12th
- ◆ Renowned scientists, representatives of stakeholder associations, EC officers, European national representatives from policy-making and research funding agencies have participated in the event
- ◆ Dr. Bruce Cuthbert, director of translational research in the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH, USA), was also present
- ◆ The ROAMER project previously presented six priorities for mental health research at the European Parliament. These priorities were defined by consensus between over 1000 renowned researchers and stakeholder organisations



Presentation of the Roadmap for mental health and well-being research in Europe of ROAMER in London.

The **ROAMER project's Roadmap for Mental health and Well-being Research in Europe** was presented at the BMA House of London last 12th of March in a fruitful meeting hosted by Professor Til Wykes from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience of King's College London and Professor Josep Maria Haro from CIBERSAM. Over 50 people participated in the event, among them renowned scientists, associations of stakeholders, European national policy makers, research funders, and European Commission's officers. Dr. Bruce Cuthbert, director of translational research in the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH, USA), also joined the meeting. Representatives from NIMH had already participated in previous ROAMER meetings and expressed their willingness to **cooperate with the EU and ROAMER** to initiate a promising transatlantic collaboration trying to **coordinate national and international mental health research programmes**.



Presentation of the ROAMER project at the European Parliament on the 20th of January.

ROAMER's roadmap is focused on improving the mental health of the population and increasing European competitiveness. It includes **six prioritised research questions** that are targeted, feasible, built on excellent European science and resolvable in the next 5 to 10 years. The answers to these questions will **improve the mental health of European citizens and tackle societal challenges**.

To develop the roadmap, ROAMER analysed existing complementary resources among European regions, and **involved input from over 1000 individuals and stakeholder organisations**. Evidence-based recommendations were prioritised through iterative feedback - including consensus meetings, international advisory boards and surveys of researchers, experts and wider stakeholders in Europe.

The ROAMER project and research priorities were **recently presented at the European Parliament**, in a fruitful meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders that took place in Brussels last 20th of January.

Mental disorders place immense burdens on individuals, their families and society. More than 1 in 3 Europeans experience mental health problems in any given year, and even more will be affected indirectly (e.g. carers, family members, healthcare, education and social workers, employers etc.). This constitutes a huge burden on European society. The most recent estimate of cost is €461 billion in 2010 in Europe – excluding any costs of dementia and other organic brain disorders. This cost is due to effects of mental health problems on health services, social welfare, employment, well-being and economic output.

Given sufficient investment, mental health research could address these burdens. Europe has some of the best mental health centres in the world, staffed with highly trained professionals and producing the highest quality research. In addition, Europe's diverse health systems with their almost universal health coverage provide a test bed for mental health research which is unique in the world. However, **funding for mental health research in Europe is much lower than the population impact of these disorders.** Mental health spending comprised about 6% of health research funding in the European Commission's FP7 programme, but mental disorders account for between 11 and 27% of total disability. This is despite mental health research providing a similar investment return to other health areas. Reports suggest that for every one euro spent on mental health research there is a 0.37 euro return year-on-year, which is similar to the return for cardiovascular disorder research.

In addition, taking advantage of the full potential for mental health and well-being research requires pan-European coordination and integration, capitalising on relationships across disciplines, professions, and public and private sectors. Coordination of such efforts needs infrastructure, including the training of mental health professionals in research.

In this context, **the ROAMER project**, coordinated by Prof. Josep Maria Haro (CIBERSAM, Spain) and funded by the European Commission under the FP7 programme (FP7-HEALTH-2011/No. 282586), was launched in October 2011 to **develop an effective and widely accepted roadmap for the promotion and integration of mental health and well-being research across Europe.** To this end, ROAMER has been running for the past three and a half years with a budget of €2 million. It has combined a consortium of European mental health research scientists with a methodologically sound, pragmatic, and comprehensive approach, and extensive stakeholder involvement from individuals with mental health problems, family members, carers, clinicians, and policy-makers. The roadmap has reviewed existing state-of-the-art research and covers the major areas of mental health and wellbeing research (i.e. biological, psychological, epidemiological, clinical, public health, social and economic aspects), along with research infrastructure, capacity building initiatives and funding programmes. The roadmap that was presented in London will ultimately be translated into improvements and innovations in mental health care delivery and in strategies to increase the mental health and wellbeing of the European population in a time frame of 10 years.

CIBERSAM, the partner coordinating the ROAMER project, is a research consortium funded on 2008 by the Spanish Ministry of Science whose mission is to carry out and promote research on mental health, in order to improve clinical care and mental health in the society through the knowledge generated by translational research in psychiatry and neuroscience. It includes 26 clinical and basic research groups that cover all areas of mental health and who have been selected on the basis of their excellent research and practices.

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