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words

## Psychiatry without psychiatrists

Vikram Patel

People with minimal professional training can deliver babies safely and treat life-threatening childhood pneumonia. Are psychiatric treatments more complex for them to deliver? It appears not. A slew of trials and clinical experience, in some of the poorest communities of the world, show that various types of non-specialists can deliver a range of psychiatric treatments with good outcomes at a fraction of the cost. The psychiatrist plans mental health programs, trains and supervises non-specialists, audits the clinical process and provides a referral pathway. Psychiatry without psychiatrists is the reality for the vast majority of persons living with mental disorders today.

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