THE DISEASE BURDEN AFFECTING MENTAL HEALTH
Mental, neurological, substance use disorders and suicide (MNSS) cause 15% of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) and 30% of all years lived with disability (YLDs).

Fig. 1. Distribution of YLDs with a focus on mental, neurological, substance use disorders and self harm (MNSS)

Fig. 2. Distribution of DALYs with a focus on mental, neurological, substance use disorders and self harm (MNSS)

THE BURDEN AFFECTING MENTAL HEALTH ACROSS THE LIFETIME
Fig. 3 shows the changes in disease burden across age-groups. NCDs (in shades of blue) surpass 50% of the burden at 5 years old, and will remain the largest burden throughout the lifetime. MNSS account for between 25 and 30% of the total burden between 10 and 40 years of age, the largest burden of all disease groups during this period. Fig. 4 focuses exclusively on the burden resulting from MNSS. Until 5 years old, the MNSS burden is mostly due to autism (47%) and epilepsy (46%). Between 5 and 15 years old, the burden of conduct disorders, anxiety disorders, and headaches — including migraine and tension-type — gain prominence, with around 18% of the MNSS burden each. Around 20 years of age, a pattern emerges that will remain stable throughout youth and adulthood: common disorders (anxiety, depression, self-harm and somatic symptom disorder) account for 42%, headaches for 22%, substance use disorders 14% (10% due to alcohol), and severe mental disorders (schizophrenia and bipolar disorders) 10%. The elderly suffer mostly from neurocognitive disorder due to Alzheimer’s disease, which surpasses 50% of the burden around 80 years old and remains above 70% after 85 years old.
Conclusions:
Considering these estimates, primary care providers should receive training and tools to prioritize detection and treatment or referral for the common disorders highlighted above for each age-group and sex. For the severe disorders—such as autism, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and Alzheimer’s—as well as for severe, comorbid, or complex presentations of other disorders—e.g. depression during pregnancy, substance use in public service professions, etc.—primary care providers and families need access to adequate supports, such as:

- Referral and/or supervision platforms that allow for continued treatment in the community, including the use of digital technology to increase access to distant geographically concentrated resources.
- Emergency, inpatient, and residential services for the management of high-risk acute situations and high-need patients. These services should be community-based as much as possible, including for crisis management, inpatient treatment in general hospitals, supported housing, and residential services.

THE BURDEN AFFECTING MENTAL HEALTH IN MEN AND WOMEN

The top three disorders in terms of disability-adjusted life-years—accounting for 35 to 50% of total MNSS burden—are not the same for men and women:

While men are mostly affected by headaches, alcohol use and depressive disorders, women are mostly affected by headaches, depressive and anxiety disorders.