PROJECT TITLE
NIHR Global Health Research Group on Psychosis Outcomes: the Warwick-India-Canada (WIC) Network, The University of Warwick

PROJECT NAME
INSTITUTION
16/137/107 Professor Swaran Singh University of Warwick

SUMMARY OF WORK
Warwick India CaNaDa PSychOsis Research Group (WINDSOR) brings together knowledge and expertise of four internationally recognised institutions with a single aim - to reduce the burden of psychotic disorders in India. WINDSOR partners include University of Warwick (Coventry, UK); All India Institute for Medical Sciences (New Delhi, India); Schizophrenia Research Foundation, SCARF (Chennai, India) and McGill University (Montreal, Canada). The partners share research interests and expertise in effective interventions in psychotic disorders and a strategic vision to reduce the burden of psychotic disorders in resource-poor settings.

Psychotic disorders are found in every part of the world but majority of individuals with these conditions live in low and middle income countries, where resources are scarce and access to health care extremely limited. India has a young population - 70% of the 1.2 billion people are under the age of 35 – and evidence shows that some 50 million people in India (5%) have a mental illness, with significant morbidity, mortality, individual and societal costs. Psychoses disproportionately affect young people and cause immense suffering, while placing an enormous burden on families and society. This huge population is served by only 5,000 psychiatrists so India has a large pool of patients with undetected and untreated psychosis. Even when patients access care, treatment is intermittent, fragmented and primarily focused on crisis management and symptom control rather than recovery.

Recent mental health reforms in developed countries confirm that the most significant change since deinstitutionalisation has been early intervention in psychosis services. Such services not only improve outcomes, allowing young people to return to education or work but are excellent value for money. However, the complexity of the Indian healthcare system and differences in cultural context mean that simple ‘transplantation’ of ‘Western’ interventions is well-nigh impossible. Using evidence-based interventions developed in UK and Canada, WINDSOR will develop culturally-sensitive interventions that will expand mental health services to communities that currently have no access. In addition WINDSOR will create sustainable and much-needed research capacity in Chennai and New Delhi to underpin the ongoing development of better services and provide evidence for policy makers.

The objectives of WINDSOR are to:

a) develop and evaluate evidence-informed psychosis interventions to make sustained health improvements for poorly-served vulnerable individuals

b) understand pathways of care to develop early detection strategies in India

c) create a dataset of well-characterised inception cohorts of FEP with ‘research readiness’ systems and processes

d) investigate clinical and cost-effectiveness of innovative community care models including digital and mobile applications

e) build capacity by providing a strong multidisciplinary research and training programme.

By exploiting the potential of digital/mobile technologies, WINDSOR will increase access to services, provide interventions appropriate to the culture that will deliver better patient outcomes and provide high quality research evidence to policy makers. Our proposal has the potential to radically transform the life chances of a large numbers of hitherto neglected individuals, while advancing research collaborations between India, UK and Canada.