

Vietnam

Psychiatry



Vietnam Psychiatry

MedCOI

September 2024



Manuscript completed in September 2024

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024

PDF ISBN 978-92-9410-352-9 doi: 10.2847/4337373 BZ-01-24-000-EN-N

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Acknowledgements

The EUAA acknowledges International SOS as the drafters of this report.

The report has been reviewed by International SOS and EUAA.





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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023). The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person, or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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The drafting of this report was finalised on 31 May 2024. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the Introduction.





Glossary and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
CoRE	Center for Counselling, Research and Community Development
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DALY	Disability-Adjusted Life Year
EMDR	Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing
EUR	Euro
GSHS	Global Survey of School-Based Student Health
Heroic Mothers of Vietnam	An honorary title which was granted to women “who had lost more than two children, their only child, their husband and two children or their own life and the ones of two children” in the battle for the reunification of the country. ¹
MCNV	Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam
MOH	Ministry of Health
NHI	National Health Insurance
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
US	United States
V-NAMHS	Vietnam National Adolescent Mental Health Survey
VND	Vietnamese Dong
WHO	World Health Organization

¹ Bảo tàng Phụ nữ Việt Nam, Heroic Mothers of Vietnam, n.d, [url](#)





Introduction

Methodology

The purpose of the report is to provide information on access to psychiatry treatment in Vietnam. This information is relevant to the application of international protection status determination (refugee status and subsidiary protection) and migration legislation in EU+ countries.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for this Medical Country of Origin Information Report were developed by EUAA.

The terms of reference for this Medical Country of Origin Information Report can be found in Annex 2: Terms of Reference (ToR). The initial drafting period finished on 10 October 2023, peer review occurred between 11 – 26 October 2023, and additional information was added to the report as a result of the quality review process during the review implementation up until 31 May 2024. The report was internally reviewed subsequently.

Collecting information

EUAA contracted International SOS (Intl.SOS) to manage the report delivery including data collection. Intl.SOS recruited and managed a local consultant to write the report and a public health expert to edit the report. These were selected from Intl.SOS' existing pool of consultants. The consultant was selected based on their experience in leading comparable projects and their experience of working on public health issues in Vietnam.

Quality control

This report was written by Intl.SOS in line with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) COI Report Methodology (2023),² the EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports Writing and Referencing Guide (2023)³ and the EUAA Writing Guide (2022).⁴ Quality control of the report was carried out both on content and form. Form and content were reviewed by Intl.SOS and EUAA.

The accuracy of information included in the report was reviewed, to the extent possible, based on the quality of the sources and citations provided by the consultants. All the comments from reviewers were reviewed and were implemented to the extent possible, under time constraints.

² EUAA, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

³ EUAA, Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports Writing and Referencing Guide, February 2023, [url](#)

⁴ EUAA, The EUAA Writing Guide, April 2022, [url](#)





Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include governmental and academic publications, reports by non-governmental and international organisations, as well as Vietnamese media. All sources that are used in this report are outlined in Annex 1. Bibliography.

In addition to publicly available sources of information, one oral source was contacted for this report. The oral source is a NHI staff in a public hospital of Ho Chi Minh City, known by the contractor and selected for reliability. All oral sources are described in the Annex 1. Bibliography. Key informant interviews were carried out in November 2023.





1. Psychiatry

The following chapter contains information on the prevalence and incidence of psychiatric conditions in Vietnam, including for different population groups, followed by information on stigmas affecting psychiatric patients.

1.1. Prevalence and incidence

Vietnam is facing an increase in poor mental health.⁵ In 2022, the Deputy Health Minister noted that around 15 % of the Vietnamese population, corresponding to 15 million people, suffered from mental illnesses and that depression and anxiety affect between 5 % and 6 % of the population.⁶

Bach Mai Hospital's Mental Health Department reported that in 2022, 30 % of Vietnamese have experienced at least one mental disorder during their lifetimes, with half of them needing treatment. Suicide caused by depression accounts for 40 000 deaths a year, which is around half the number of cancer deaths in Vietnam.⁷ On average, the Bach Mai Bach Mai Institute of Mental Health receives more than 300 to 400 visits every day and over 200 inpatient beds are always full.⁸

A global study on the Burden of Disease from mental disorders examined data from 2000 to 2019. It calculated disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) related to mental health by summing years lived with disability (YLDs), and years of life lost (YLLs) to premature mortality. Vietnam was placed in the group with the lowest rates of DALYs related to mental health. The authors of the study observe that the Global Burden of Disease finding may be attributable to the low degree of importance that has been given to mental health services in Vietnam rather than a low burden of disease and acknowledge a sparsity of data on mental health.⁹

1.1.1. Mental health in young people

In 2022, the Deputy Health Minister noted that 12 % of the child population suffer from mental disorders. This equates to more than 3 million children in need of mental health support services.¹⁰

The Vietnam National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (V-NAMHS), part of the National Adolescent Mental Health Survey Project, shows that in the 12 months prior to the survey conducted in the latter part of 2021, 21.7 % of Vietnamese adolescents had mental health

⁵ Communist Party of Vietnam Online Newspaper, Việt Nam đang đối mặt với xu hướng rối loạn tâm thần ngày càng gia tăng [Vietnam is facing an increasing trend of mental disorders], 4 August 2023, [url](#)

⁶ VnExpress International, 15 mln Vietnamese afflicted with mental illnesses: health ministry, 11 October 2022, [url](#)

⁷ VnExpress International, We are not paying enough mind to mental illnesses, 17 February 2022, [url](#)

⁸ VnExpress, Chữa bệnh cho người 'điên' [Treating 'crazy' people], 10 June 2023, [url](#)

⁹ GBD 2019 Mental Disorders Collaborators, Global, regional, and national burden of 12 mental disorders in 204 countries and territories, 1990-2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019, 2022, [url](#), pp. 137, 144, 147

¹⁰ VnExpress International, 15 mln Vietnamese afflicted with mental illnesses: health ministry, 11 October 2022, [url](#)



problems, but only 8.4 % accessed support services or counselling for emotional and behavioural problems.¹¹ At the end of 2022, depression and anxiety were among the mental disorders that accounted for a high percentage, with rates ranging from 5 % to 6 %. The number of young people suffering from these disorders increased by about 25 %, leading to an increase in the number of suicides.¹² The Global Survey of School-Based Student Health (GSHS), conducted in 2019 in Vietnam, found that 15.6 % of adolescents aged 13 to 17 had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months, with 3.1 % reporting suicide attempts during that period.¹³ VnExpress reports that, each day, 20 to 25 young people visit the Clinical Psychology Department of the Bach Mai Institute of Mental Health, 50 % of whom are adolescent.¹⁴ The WHO defines adolescence as “the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19.”¹⁵

One of the most common reasons for visiting this mental health treatment facility is the psychological pressure the young people experience due to the expectation of parents and schools for the final exams up to university or transfer exam in Vietnam.¹⁶

Identifying mental disorders in children or adolescent is challenging. Of the 21.7 % of adolescents who suffered from poor mental health, only 5.1 % of their parents identified that their child needed help.¹⁷

1.1.2. Postpartum depression

A review of academic articles published between 2010 and 2020 found that the rate of postpartum depression reported in Vietnam ranged from 8.2 % to 48.1 %. This was over postnatal time points from 1 to 12 months. Risk factors were categorised into three groups: individual, familial, and environmental.¹⁸

In these cases, psychiatric treatment and care were rarely advised by healthcare professionals. Instead, mothers tended to seek assistance from traditional medicine practitioners and fortune tellers. Among women diagnosed with common mental disorders at the baseline, over two-thirds had recovered by the follow-up assessment, despite not having received formal mental healthcare. Postpartum depression treatment primarily focused on long-term management for patients with psychosis or epilepsy. The authors found only limited information on the consequences of postpartum depression among Vietnamese mothers and the management of postpartum depression in the country.¹⁹

¹¹ Institute of Sociology, et al, Vietnam Adolescent Mental Health Survey (V-NAMHS), November 2022, [url](#), p. 5

¹² VnExpress, Chữa bệnh cho người 'điên' [Treating 'crazy' people], 10 June 2023, [url](#)

¹³ Institute of Sociology, et al., Vietnam Adolescent Mental Health Survey (V-NAMHS), November 2022, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁴ VnExpress, Rối loạn tâm thần do áp lực 'con ngoan, học sinh giỏi' [Mental disorder due to pressure of 'good children and good students'], 13 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵ WHO, Adolescent health, 2023, [url](#)

¹⁶ VnExpress, Rối loạn tâm thần do áp lực 'con ngoan, học sinh giỏi' [Mental disorder due to pressure of 'good children and good students'], 13 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷ Institute of Sociology, et al., Vietnam Adolescent Mental Health Survey (V-NAMHS), November 2022, [url](#), p. 7,

¹⁸ Nguyen, H.T.T., et al., The Rate and Risk Factors of Postpartum Depression in Vietnam From 2010 to 2020: A Literature Review, 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁹ Nguyen, H.T.H., et al, Postpartum depression in Vietnam: a scoping review of symptoms, consequences, and management, 2023, [url](#), pp. 16-17



The Mental Health Research Institute in Bach Mai Hospital reports that the number of women with postpartum depression attending the hospital accounts for between 20 % and 30 % of the total number of cases each day. The statistics from Mai Huong Day Psychiatric Hospital indicate that the number of postpartum depression patients visiting and calling for counselling in 2021 increased by about 20 % compared to previous years. Notably, postpartum depression has a high recurrence rate ranging from 25 % to 68 %. Over 20 % of these cases need professional intervention.²⁰

1.1.3. Mental health in older people

Common mental health problems in older people are depression, dementia, and other mental disorders, such as substance abuse problems.²¹ An expert from Ho Chi Minh City Mental Hospital stated that between 7.8 % and 9.7 % of elderly people in Ho Chi Minh City have been diagnosed with dementia. The corresponding rate across Vietnam is 0.78 %. Data from this hospital also indicate that depression is experienced by 9.5 % of older people in Ho Chi Minh City, with a nationwide rate of 2.47 %.²²

Changes in capabilities and in social activities increase the likelihood that older people may develop mental health issues. For example, older people experience changes in their physical capabilities, such as decline in physical strength, and they are increasingly likely to experience chronic diseases. This may come at the same time as changes in social activities, such as post-retirement life, reduced financial ability, the loss of a spouse and other factors.²³

Identifying mental health problems in a timely manner is a notable issue for this group. Treatment includes taking anti-depressants, psychological therapy, and relaxation exercises.²⁴ Older people may not be aware of poor mental health and may deny that they have mental health issues. Family members may also not know or assume that symptoms such as memory loss, are normal phenomena in older people.²⁵

1.1.4. Post COVID-19 pandemic

An expert at the Mai Huong Day Psychiatric Hospital said that many people experienced mental health problems after recovering from COVID-19. Individuals across the population needed psychological support also to recover from social distancing and other behavioural

²⁰ Vietnam, MOH, Báo động tình trạng mẹ trầm cảm sau sinh do con quấy khóc đêm có xu hướng gia tăng [The alarm of mothers postpartum depression due to night fussiness tends to increase], 3 October 2022, [url](#)

²¹ Ben Tre Mental Hospital, Hospital News, Chứng rối loạn tâm thần ở người cao tuổi [Mental disorders in the elderly], 24 November 2022, [url](#)

²² Tuổi Trẻ Online, 14,1% dân số cả nước mắc chứng rối loạn tâm thần, khoảng cách điều trị lớn [14.1% of the country's population has mental disorders, large treatment gaps], 28 June 2023, [url](#)

²³ Ben Tre Mental Hospital, Hospital News, Chứng rối loạn tâm thần ở người cao tuổi [Mental disorders in the elderly], 24 November 2022, [url](#)

²⁴ Mai Huong Day Psychiatric Hospital, Trầm Cảm: Một Bệnh Phổ Biến Ở Người Cao Tuổi [Depression: A Common Disease in the Elderly], 2014, [url](#)

²⁵ Mai Huong Day Psychiatric Hospital, Khi Người Ta Già [When People Get Old], 2014, [url](#)



restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of infection. The symptoms for which people needed support included insomnia, game addiction and depression.²⁶

1.2. Stigma surrounding mental health

Cultural attitudes towards mental health is a critical factor in the underdevelopment of psychiatric health services in Vietnam. Many people believe that mental disorders are due to misfortune, and mental illnesses are known as “Benh tam than”, which means madness or severe psychiatric disorders. Moreover, a psychiatrist in Vietnam is called “Bac si tam than”, which means “a doctor who treats madness”. These words indicate that mental health in Vietnam is stigmatised. Individuals suffering from mental illnesses are considered as wild, unpredictable, and dangerous. This prejudice has led to a reluctance to seek help for mental health issues.²⁷ A study found that inadequate licensing for non-medical mental health professionals (such as psychologists and social workers) along with a lack of interest in mental health from higher-level leadership also contributed to the poor development of mental healthcare in Vietnam.²⁸ A private sector adviser notes that low- and middle-income earners who are in full-time employment are not likely to be willing to take time off work to seek psychological assistance and that social stigma can deter people who could afford additional costs from seeking mental health services.²⁹

2. Access to treatment

The following chapter contains information on psychiatric facilities in Vietnam and the human resources available in the field of psychiatry, as well as information on economic coverage and support for patients.

2.1. Facilities

The level of mental health literacy among the Vietnamese is described as being low or very low and this leads to late presentation at health facilities with mental health issues. Diagnosis and treatment for mental issues follow the “Guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of some common mental disorders 2020” of the Ministry of Health (MOH).³⁰

²⁶ Báo điện tử Kinh tế & Đô thị, Bệnh lý tâm thần do đại dịch Covid-19 : Quan tâm, điều trị kịp thời [Mental illness due to the Covid-19 pandemic: Timely attention and treatment], 7 February 2022, [url](#)

²⁷ The Borgen Project, Improving Mental Health in Vietnam, 5 June 2022, [url](#)

²⁸ Dang, H.M., et al., Mental health literacy at the public health level in low and middle income countries: An exploratory mixed methods study in Vietnam, 31 December 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²⁹ Dezan Shira & Associates, Vietnam Briefing, The Mental Healthcare Industry in Vietnam, 18 October 2018, [url](#)

³⁰ Vietnam, MOH, Về việc ban hành Tài liệu chuyên môn “Hướng dẫn chẩn đoán và điều trị một số rối loạn tâm thần thường gặp”, Số: 2058/QĐ-BYT [On the Issuance of the Professional Document "Guidelines for Diagnosis and Treatment of Some Common Mental Disorders", No.: 2058/QĐ-BYT], 14 May 2020, [url](#)



The mental health system services are provided through a network of state-owned hospitals. There are two national psychiatric hospitals, one in the North and the other in the South.³¹ Mental health services are available at central or at provincial specialised facilities. There are 39 mental hospitals in provinces and cities, and the remaining provinces have psychiatric departments in general hospitals. In the Army, there are two psychiatric departments at the first-level hospital (Military Medical Hospital 103 and Military Medical Hospital 175) and one psychiatric department in the Military Medical Hospital 120 - Military Region 9.³² In the South, besides the Bien Hoa National Psychiatric Hospital II, there is Ho Chi Minh City Mental Hospital, which is also a major mental health facility. Hospitalisation is provided for severe patients in inpatient care, with a total of 6 000 beds nationwide. Currently, Vietnam has 600 outpatient mental healthcare facilities for people in need of short-term care.³³ Notably, in Ho Chi Minh City, there are more than 3 000 psychiatric patients who are orphaned, wandering, without family and lacking identity papers, currently receiving treatment in sanatoriums under the Department of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs.³⁴

One survey in Vietnam indicates that a scarcity of effective mental health services and difficulty in finding the few available quality services results in the underdevelopment of mental health services.³⁵ Although in 2022 the MOH promulgated Circular No.17 with regulations on the duties of commune health stations in mental healthcare,³⁶ there are still not many commune health stations or healthcare centres at the district level that have psychiatric treatment rooms, due to a lack of specialised personnel and facilities, as well as related policies and planning issues. Therefore, people with mental health problems usually need to go to psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric specialities in Level I or Level II healthcare facilities.³⁷

2.2. Human resources

The percentage of doctors and nurses in the field of psychiatry is still low. Moreover, there are only 143 clinical psychologists and psychotherapists in public hospitals; this rate per 100 000 people is nearly 10 times lower than the global average.³⁸ The number of psychiatrists in 2020 was 1 000, and they were mainly located in Level I or Level II healthcare facilities. The low percentage of health care staff in the field of psychiatry and the concentration of psychiatrists working in specific health care facilities create a substantial burden. The WHO representative in Vietnam highlighted several limitations in the country's mental healthcare system. These

³¹ Dezan Shira & Associates, Vietnam Briefing, The Mental Healthcare Industry in Vietnam, 18 October 2018, [url](#)

³² Vietnam Internal Medical Magazine, Clinical Research, Sức khỏe tâm thần : Thực trạng, thách thức và những tiến bộ mới trong chẩn đoán và điều trị [Mental health : Current status, challenges and new advances in diagnosis and treatment], 2020, [url](#), pp. 16,17

³³ Dezan Shira & Associates, Vietnam Briefing, The Mental Healthcare Industry in Vietnam, 18 October 2018, [url](#)

³⁴ Tuổi Trẻ Online, 14,1% dân số cả nước rối loạn tâm thần, khoảng trống điều trị lớn [14.1% of the country's population has mental disorders, a large treatment gap], 28 June 2023, [url](#)

³⁵ Dang, H. M., et al., Mental health literacy at the public health level in low and middle income countries : An exploratory mixed methods study in Vietnam, 31 December 2020, [url](#), p. 6

³⁶ Vietnam, MOH, Quy định về nhiệm vụ khám bệnh, chữa bệnh tâm thần của cơ sở khám bệnh, chữa bệnh, Số: 17/2022/TT-BYT [Regulations on Duties for Medical Examination and Treatment of Mental Disease of Medical Examination and Treatment Facilities, No.: 17/2022/TT-BYT], 30 December 2022, [url](#)

³⁷ Nguyen, T., et al., , Challenges in Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care in Vietnam, 4 October 2019, [url](#), p. 2

³⁸ VnExpress, Gần 15% người Việt bị rối loạn tâm thần [Nearly 15% of Vietnamese people have mental disorders], 11 August 2023, [url](#)



include the lack of integration into the general healthcare system, the scarcity of mental health services at the district level, limited availability of psychotherapy, and the absence of a sustainable financial source for community mental health services.³⁹ Currently, WHO Vietnam is supporting the government in establishing a model for integrating mental health into primary healthcare.⁴⁰ As noted above, at present, only central and provincial levels have psychiatric departments providing care and treatment.⁴¹

The number of mental health professionals in public facilities is low,⁴² and people are reluctant to visit public psychiatric facilities out of fear of being recognised. This drives people to attend private mental health centres or clinics in big cities or provincial centres. Therefore, people with mental health problems must pay out-of-pocket for services that are hard to find.⁴³ People with low and middle income, working full time, are likely to be dissuaded from seeking psychological assistance due to the lack of opportunity and financial cost.⁴⁴

2.2.1. Services for younger people

The requirement for psychological care in schools is being considered in the Vietnamese society. At present, there is a shortage of psychologists in schools and care is provided by homeroom teachers or medical staff who do not have sufficient expertise. An educational psychologist noted an increase in the rate of students experiencing anxiety and depression. Additionally, there has been a substantial rise in the number of students from middle school to high school reporting suicidal thoughts. However, the focus in schools continues to be on knowledge acquisition and little attention is given to the mental health of students. The educational psychologist also argues that there is no comprehensive plan to create spaces for mental healthcare in schools.⁴⁵

The Ministry of Education and Training promulgated Circular No.31/2017 with regulations on the establishment and operation of school psychology advisory groups.⁴⁶ Currently, the NHC Vietnam Psychotherapy Center, a unit under the Institute of Psychology and Human Development which has four operating branches in two main cities, Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh

³⁹ TuoiTre Online, 14,1% dân số cả nước mắc chứng rối loạn tâm thần, khoảng cách điều trị lớn [14.1% of the country's population has mental disorders, large treatment gaps], 28 June 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁰ WHO, Mental Health, Mental health in Viet Nam, 2023, [url](#)

⁴¹ VnExpress, Gần 15% người Việt mắc rối loạn tâm thần [Nearly 15% of Vietnamese people have mental disorders], 11 August 2023, [url](#)

⁴² VnExpress, Gần 15% người Việt mắc rối loạn tâm thần [Nearly 15% of Vietnamese people have mental disorders], 11 August 2023, [url](#)

⁴³ Dai Doan Ket Online Newspaper, Health, Trầm cảm - Căn bệnh thời hiện đại: Bài 2: Các dịch vụ còn thiếu hụt [Depression - A modern disease: Lesson 2: Services are lacking], 15 March 2022, [url](#); Công Ty TNHH Docosan Vietnam [Docosan Vietnam Company Limited], Chi phí khám tâm lý là bao nhiêu tiền? Ở đâu khám uy tín? [How much does a psychological examination cost? Where to get a reputable examination?], 24 May 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Dezan Shira & Associates, Vietnam Briefing, The Mental Healthcare Industry in Vietnam, 18 October 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Báo Quân đội Nhân dân [People's Army Newspaper], Tư vấn tâm lý học đường: Rất cần, nhưng cũng rất khó [School psychology consulting: Very necessary, but also very difficult], 1 February 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Thư Viện Pháp Luật [The Library of Law], Cơ cấu của Tổ tư vấn tâm lý học đường bao gồm những ai? Cha mẹ học sinh có được tham gia vào Tổ tư vấn này hay không? [Who is included in the structure of the School Psychology Consulting Team? Can students' parents participate in this Advisory Group?], 8 November 2022, [url](#)



City, is a reputable centre specialising in the treatment of psychological problems for all ages, especially teenagers.⁴⁷

The Vietnamese government has made efforts to increase access to mental health services for young people. It issued the Decision No.1929/QĐ-TT in 2020 approving the Social Assistance and Rehabilitation Programme for the mentally ill, autistic children, and community-based social assistance for the period 2021 to 2030.⁴⁸

2.2.2. Services for older people

To address the current healthcare needs of the elderly, Decree No.103, issued in 2017, includes regulations under Clause 1, Article 5 pertaining to social welfare care establishments. These institutions, whether public or non-public, are designated to provide comprehensive care for the elderly, addressing both physical and mental health.⁴⁹

2.3. Insurance and national programmes

This topical report describes the coverage provided by National Health Insurance (NHI). The EUAA MedCOI report Provision of healthcare in Vietnam (2023 report uses the more generic term 'social health insurance' when describing the development of health insurance in Vietnam.⁵⁰

2.3.1. Insurance

NHI covers the examination and treatment of all mental health illnesses except psychiatric forensic examination. Depending on the scope and different level of benefits, people are reimbursed by NHI at different rates as prescribed when they visit public health facilities. The rate paid is based on the provisions of Circular No.22 of 2023 of the MOH.⁵¹

2.3.2. National programmes

Currently, Vietnam has no mental health policy that satisfies the standards in the definition of WHO, which includes “broad vision, values, principle, goals and models of action”. Vietnam

⁴⁷ Tạp chí tâm lý học [Psychology magazine], Tư vấn tâm lý học đường cho học sinh quan trọng như thế nào? [How important is school psychology counselling for students?], 14 June 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁸ Institute of Sociology, et al., Vietnam Adolescent Mental Health Survey (V-NAMHS), November 2022, [url](#), p. 25

⁴⁹ Medlatec General Hospital, Medical News, The Necessity of Elderly Care Centers in Today's Society, 10 May 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁰ EUAA, Provision of healthcare in Vietnam, 2023, [url](#)

⁵¹ Vietnam, MOH, Số: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Quy Định Thống Nhất Giá Dịch Vụ Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Bảo Hiểm Y Tế Giữa Các Bệnh Viện Cùng Hạng Trên Toàn Quốc Và Hướng Dẫn Áp Dụng Giá, Thanh Toán Chi Phí Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Trong Một Số Trường Hợp [No.: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Regulations on Uniform Prices for Health Insurance Medical Examination and Treatment Services Among Hospitals of the Same Class Nationwide and Guidance on Applying Prices and Payment of Medical Examination and Treatment Costs in Some Cases, 17 November 2023, [url](#)



also does not have school counsellors or social workers to provide psychosocial support and counselling to students who have mental health problems or behavioural disorders.⁵²

To meet the current demand for mental health, the Vietnamese government, especially the MOH, has been implementing programmes to enhance both quality and quantity of mental healthcare services.⁵³ Moreover, Article 105 of the Law on Medical Examination and Treatment contains points stipulating scholarship programmes and support policies for people majoring in psychiatry.⁵⁴

According to the Deputy Director of Medical Examination and Treatment Administration of the MOH, the MOH is strengthening institutions, policies, laws, and infrastructures, as well as increasing equipment and training human resources for psychiatry. It is also developing two projects, including strengthening the capacity of the mental healthcare system for the period of 2023 to 2030, and reinforcing the capacity of forensic psychiatry assessment. The Vietnamese government has set the target that the proportion of people receiving periodic screening and early detection of mental disorders will reach at least 40 % by 2025 and 60 % by 2030.⁵⁵

In 2022, the Vietnamese government promulgated the Decision No.155/QĐ-TT approving the National Plan for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health Disorders for the period 2022 to 2025. This will be implemented by local facilities.⁵⁶

(a) Targets for mental health services for younger people

The Vietnamese government has set a target that half of children and adolescents at risk or having mental health problems will receive early intervention by 2030.⁵⁷ The WHO Office in Vietnam is supporting the MOH to develop a model for integrating mental health into general health focusing on primary care.⁵⁸ For children, in 2022, the Ministry of Education and Training issued the Decision No.2138 called “Mental health education plan for children and students period 2022 to 2025”, which offers specific tasks for units under the Ministry of Education and

⁵² VnExpress, Gần 15% người Việt mắc rối loạn tâm thần [Nearly 15% of Vietnamese people have mental disorders], 11 August 2023, [url](#)

⁵³ Vietnam, MOH, Phê duyệt kế hoạch quốc gia phòng, chống bệnh không lây nhiễm và rối loạn sức khỏe tâm thần [Approve the National Plan to Prevent and Control Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health Disorders], 8 February 2022, [url](#); Vietnam, MOH, Mít tinh hưởng ứng ngày Sức khỏe tâm thần thế giới ngày 10/10 [Rally in response to World Mental Health Day on 10 October], 11 October 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁴ Vietnam, Government of Vietnam, Luật khám bệnh, chữa bệnh, Luật Số: 15/2023/QH15 [Law on medical examination and treatment Law No.15/2023/QH15], 9 January 2023, [url](#), Article 105

⁵⁵ Vietnam Internal Medical Magazine, Clinical Research, Sức khỏe tâm thần : Thực trạng, thách thức và những tiến bộ mới trong chẩn đoán và điều trị [Mental health : Current status, challenges and new advances in diagnosis and treatment], 2020, p. 16, [url](#)

⁵⁶ Vietnam, MOH, Phê duyệt kế hoạch quốc gia phòng, chống bệnh không lây nhiễm và rối loạn sức khỏe tâm thần [Approve the National Plan to Prevent and Control Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health Disorders], 8 February 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁷ VnExpress, Gần 15% người Việt mắc rối loạn tâm thần [Nearly 15% of Vietnamese people have mental disorders], 11 August 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Vietnam Internal Medical Magazine, Clinical Research, Sức khỏe tâm thần : Thực trạng, thách thức và những tiến bộ mới trong chẩn đoán và điều trị [Mental health : Current status, challenges and new advances in diagnosis and treatment], 2020, p. 16, [url](#)



Training and the Department of Education and Training across the country to carry out this plan.⁵⁹

(b) COVID-19

In 2022, a programme called “Post COVID-19 Mental Healthcare for People in Ho Chi Minh City” was launched. The Government Electronic Portal Ho Chi Minh City explains that the aim of this programme is to improve the detection and the prevention of mental health issues. It also aims to assist and advise people in, and raise awareness of the importance of, taking care of themselves and their family's mental health. Ho Chi Minh City budgeted approximately 5.9 billion VND [236 160 EUR] for this programme.⁶⁰

2.4. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Many people with depression have financial difficulties that prevent them from attending as well as affording the cost of treatment. Faced with this situation, the “Tomorrow Fund” is built to support depressed people who need counselling psychotherapy.⁶¹

We Bloom is a US NGO with the “desire to empower communities through training, networks, resources and fundraising in the areas of public health and education”. In Vietnam, they focus on mental health, drowning prevention and recovery initiatives.⁶² We Bloom is implementing a “community-based mental health project” to train professionals in diagnosing mental conditions and providing counselling to patients and they run a “school-based counselling strategy” to enhance mental health in children.⁶³

Beautiful Mind Vietnam was founded in 2015 with a goal to promote mental health well-being in Vietnam. The NGO provides educational articles about mental health and mental health disorders. Moreover, they offer cost-free “peer-consultation” to people having mental health problems through a safe space for them to express their mood. Beautiful Mind Vietnam have also held health workshop and seminars within communities to raise awareness about mental health and guide practice to promote positive mental health.⁶⁴

BasicNeeds Vietnam was founded in 2010 with a mission to nurture people’s mental health wellbeing and educate people on mental health. They develop training workshops for the public, provide mental services to people in need and collaborate with other organisations to better facilitate the dialogue surrounding mental health.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Vietnam, Ministry of Education and Training, Ban hành Kế hoạch giáo dục sức khỏe tâm thần cho trẻ em, học sinh giai đoạn 2022-2025, Số: 2138/QĐ-BGDĐT [Promulgating the Mental Health Education Plan for children and students for the period 2022-2025, No.: 2138/QĐ-BGDĐT], 3 August 2022, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Vietnam, Government Electronic Information Portal – Ho Chi Minh City Page, [Spending nearly 5.9 billion VND to care for people's mental health after COVID-19], 18 June 2022, [url](#)

⁶¹ TuoiTre Online, Mở quỹ hỗ trợ miễn phí cho người trầm cảm đang gặp khó khăn [Open a free support fund for depressed people who are having difficulty], 13 October 2023, [url](#)

⁶² We Bloom, Our Mission, 2017, [url](#)

⁶³ The Borgen Project, Improving Mental Health in Vietnam, 5 June 2022, [url](#)

⁶⁴ The Borgen Project, 3 Organizations Improving Mental Health in Vietnam, 15 November 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁵ The Borgen Project, 3 Organizations Improving Mental Health in Vietnam, 15 November 2021, [url](#)





The Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam (MCNV) was established in the Netherlands in 1968 with the goal of supporting health development in Vietnam. MCNV collaborates with the “INGO Global Initiative for Psychiatry and Provincial Health departments to implement community-based mental healthcare in several districts”. They train health workers about mental health skills. The mental health services from these trained health workers could work for “home-based care and counselling” to ensure more people access mental health services.⁶⁶

In September 2021, the Z Zurich Foundation from Switzerland and UNICEF began a three-year partnership to advance the mental health of children around the world and Vietnam is one of the first countries to get support from this partnership. Their activities focus on providing intervention to build mental health knowledge, enhancing learning and social emotion skills, and improving caregiver and adult support. The materials include information on emotional balance, stress management and problem-solving. There are a variety of teaching methods from storytelling to peer learning and model learning, using a digital platform.⁶⁷

Recently, the project for men’s mental healthcare called “He talks- Men Don’t Cry Unless They Do” started. The project is sponsored by the Centre for Counselling, Research and Community Development (CoRE), which is an NGO with the mission to improve the quality of mental health of young people and young families.⁶⁸

3. Cost of treatment

Costs for the treatment of mental health are influenced by different factors: whether a facility is public or private; whether a patient has health insurance; and the type and severity of the mental disorder.⁶⁹ The price for psychological counselling is usually calculated on the basis of the number of consultations between patient and specialist, and varies depending on the specialist. The average price for private consultation is 700 000 to 800 000 VND per hour. Some specialists charge higher fees, for example from 1 500 000 VND up to 5 000 000 VND per hour.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ The Borgen Project, 3 Organizations Improving Mental Health in Vietnam, 15 November 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁷ UNICEF, Vietnam, Quỹ Z Zurich và UNICEF hợp tác nhằm cải thiện sức khỏe tâm thần của trẻ [The Z Zurich Foundation and UNICEF collaborate to improve children’s mental health], 23 September 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁸ YBOX, [Toàn Quốc] Tổ Chức Phi Chính Phủ, Phi Lợi Nhuận CoRE Tuyển Dụng Cộng Tác Viên Truyền Thông Dự Án Sức Khỏe Tâm Thần Nam Giới "He Talks - Men Don't Cry Unless They Do" Part-time 2023 [[Nationwide] CoRE Non-Governmental, Non-Profit Organization Recruits Communications Collaborators for Men's Mental Health Project "He Talks - Men Don't Cry Unless They Do" Part-time 2023], n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹ Tamly.com.vn, Khám và điều trị trầm cảm bao nhiêu tiền? Ở đâu tốt nhất? [How much does depression examination and treatment cost? Where is the best place?], 21 March 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁰ BookingCare, Chi phí khám, tư vấn, điều trị bệnh trầm cảm [Cost of examination, consultation, and treatment of depression], 11 July 2023, [url](#)





3.1. Health insurance and costs for medical examination and treatment

The MOH states that, under Article 14 of Decree No.146/2018, five groups have costs for medical examination and treatment covered in full by health insurance:

1. People with meritorious services to the revolution, veterans, people receiving monthly social insurance benefits, people from poor households, ethnic minorities residing in difficult or extremely difficult areas, and people aged 80 or older who are receiving monthly death benefits.
2. Revolutionary activists before 1945; Heroic Mothers of Vietnam; people receiving policies, such as War Invalids, Class B War Invalids, sick soldiers when treating recurring wounds or illnesses; resistance activists infected with toxic chemicals having a working capacity loss rate of 81 % or more; and children under six years old. [This group is entitled to full coverage of their medical examination and treatment costs, with no limitations on payments for drugs, chemicals, medical supplies and technical services according to regulations of the MOH].
3. People who receive medical examination and treatment at the commune level.
4. Cases where the cost of one medical examination and treatment is lower than 15 % of the base salary.
5. Individuals who have maintained continuous health insurance coverage for five consecutive years or more, and who have the amount of money to pay for medical examination and treatment costs in the year exceeding six months of base salary.⁷¹

The monthly base salary increased from 1 490 000 VND [58 EUR] to 1 890 000 VND [73 EUR] on 1 July 2023.⁷² This is the common minimum wage, which is used to calculate salaries for employees in state-owned organisations and enterprises, as well as to calculate the social contribution for all enterprises.⁷³

Table 1 shows how NHI and private insurance can each provide cover for public and private healthcare and the implications for any fees that the patient must pay. Some private health providers have agreements with NHI. This enables people who hold the NHI to access care with these providers.⁷⁴ People with NHI who attend a private facility which has not agreed a contract with NHI are required to pay the medical cost in advance, and they are only able to

⁷¹ Vietnam, MOH, 5 nhóm đối tượng nào được quỹ BHYT chi trả 100 % chi phí khám chữa bệnh? [Which 5 groups of people have 100 % of medical examination and treatment costs covered by the health insurance fund?], 7 July 2023, [url](#)

⁷² Bệnh Viện Bãi Cháy, 5 Nhóm Đối Tượng Được Bhyt Chi Trả 100% Từ Ngày 1/7/2023 - Khi Lương Cơ Sở Tăng [5 Groups of Subjects Covered 100% by Health Insurance From July 1, 2023 - When Base Salary Increases], 26 April 2023, [url](#)

⁷³ Dezan Shira & Associates, Salary and Wages in Vietnam, 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Bac Ha International General Hospital, Khám Bảo hiểm y tế bệnh viện tư hưởng quyền lợi như thế nào? [What are the benefits of private hospital health insurance?], n.d., [url](#); LuậtVietnam, Đi khám ở bệnh viện tư nhân có được hưởng BHYT? [Are you covered by health insurance if you go to a private hospital?], 5 January 2021, [url](#)



submit a claim to the NHI fund for nominal support: i.e. the insurer pays a set sum to the claimant which may not cover the full price for the care, as charged by the provider, as no prior agreement exists, as specified in Circular No.22/2023/TT-BYT.⁷⁵

However, this process is neither clear nor transparent and one respondent for this report has provided conflicting opinions on whether it is possible to submit a claim.⁷⁶ People who hold private insurance are required to pay in advance for care at public or other health facilities that are not included in the contracted list of that particular insurance company. The patient submits the proof of payment provided by the health facility to their insurance company and is reimbursed. People with private insurance are guaranteed their hospital fees when they seek care in those private or public health facilities that have agreed a contract with their insurance provider. The details of the inpatient or outpatient guarantee depends on the insurance package.⁷⁷

Table 1. Health insurance and requirement to pay⁷⁸

Facility	Contract in place	National Health Insurance	Private insurance
Public	Yes	Care is free at point of use for the 5 groups of people mentioned above, with fees guaranteed. Costs for the rest of the population depend on their insurance plan.	Care is free at point of use. Fees guaranteed.
Public	No	Care is free at point of use for the 5 groups of people mentioned above, with fees guaranteed. Costs for the rest of the population depend on their insurance plan.	Patient pays fee in advance. Patient submits a claim.

⁷⁵ VnExpress, Bảo hiểm y tế có chi trả khi tôi điều trị tại bệnh viện tư nhân? [Does health insurance cover my treatment at a private hospital?], 18 January 2021, [url](#); Vietnam, MOH, Số: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Quy Định Thống Nhất Giá Dịch Vụ Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Bảo Hiểm Y Tế Giữa Các Bệnh Viện Cùng Hạng Trên Toàn Quốc Và Hướng Dẫn Áp Dụng Giá, Thanh Toán Chi Phí Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Trong Một Số Trường Hợp [No.: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Regulations on Uniform Prices for Health Insurance Medical Examination and Treatment Services Among Hospitals of the Same Class Nationwide and Guidance on Applying Prices and Payment of Medical Examination and Treatment Costs in Some Cases, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁶ BookingCare, Chi phí khám tâm lý tại các bệnh viện, phòng khám Hà Nội [Cost of psychological examination at hospitals and clinics in Hanoi], 7 September 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Source A, NHI staff in a public hospital, Ho Chi Minh City, Interview, November 2023

⁷⁸ ACC Group, Bảo hiểm y tế tư nhân là gì? [Cập nhật 2023] [What is private health insurance? [Updated 2023]], 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Bac Ha International General Hospital, Khám Bảo hiểm y tế bệnh viện tư hưởng quyền lợi như thế nào?, [What are the benefits of private hospital health insurance?], n.d., [url](#); LuậtVietnam, Đi khám ở bệnh viện tư nhân có được hưởng BHYT? [Are you covered by health insurance if you go to a private hospital?], 5 January 2021, [url](#); VnExpress, Bảo hiểm y tế có chi trả khi tôi điều trị tại bệnh viện tư nhân? [Does health insurance cover my treatment at a private hospital?], 18 January 2021, [url](#); ACC Group, Legal Knowledge, Bảo hiểm y tế tư nhân là gì? [Cập nhật 2023] [What is private health insurance? [Updated 2023]], 2023, [url](#)



Facility	Contract in place	National Health Insurance	Private insurance
Private	Yes	Care is free at point of use. Fees guaranteed.	Care is free at point of use. Fees guaranteed.
Private	No	Patient pays fee in advance. Patient only able to submit a claim for nominal support.	Patient pays fee in advance. Patient submits a claim.

Note: ‘Fees guaranteed’: the price for care is fully reimbursed to the claimant as the price has been set by prior agreement between insurer and provider. ‘Nominal sum’: insurer pays a set sum to the claimant. This may not cover the full price of care as charged by the provider as no prior agreement exists.

3.2. Consultation and treatment costs

In Vietnam, public health facilities have currently financial autonomy. The cost for examination and treatment is determined by each health facility, but must adhere to the regulations outlined in the regulation of Circular No.13/2023/TT-BYT. This circular applies only to “on-demand” examinations and treatments for individuals covered by NHI in public health facilities. While prices may vary from one hospital to another, they are strictly regulated according to the provisions of this circular. In particular, the range for the outpatient treatment price is from 100 000 VND to 500 000 VND for the Special or Grade I Health Facility, and from 30 500 VND to 300 000 VND for other health facilities.⁷⁹

Mental disorders caused by addiction to drugs or alcohol are not covered by NHI. Therefore, people receiving treatment for substance abuse from public facilities must pay the fees themselves.⁸⁰

Table 2 and Table 3 below provide prices for inpatient and outpatient treatments in public and private facilities. Public prices columns in these tables follows Circular No.22/2023, and not Circular No.13/2023, due to standardised costs across public health facilities.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Vietnam, MOH, Quy Định Khung Giá Và Phương Pháp Định Giá Dịch Vụ Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Theo Yêu Cầu Do Cơ Sở Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Của Nhà Nước Cung Cấp, Số: 13/2023/TT-BYT [Regulations on Price Frameworks and Price Methods for On-Demand Medical Examination and Treatment Services Provided by State Medical Examination and Treatment Facilities, No: 13/2023/TT-BYT], 29 June 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁰ [Luatannam.vn](#), Điều trị bệnh tâm thần thì có được chi trả bảo hiểm y tế? [Is mental illness treatment covered by health insurance?], 7 February 2023, [url](#)

⁸¹ Vietnam, MOH, Số: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Quy Định Thống Nhất Giá Dịch Vụ Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Bảo Hiểm Y Tế Giữa Các Bệnh Viện Cùng Hạng Trên Toàn Quốc Và Hướng Dẫn Áp Dụng Giá, Thanh Toán Chi Phí Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Trong Một Số Trường Hợp [No.: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Regulations on Uniform Prices for Health Insurance Medical Examination and Treatment Services Among Hospitals of the Same Class Nationwide and Guidance on Applying Prices and Payment of Medical Examination and Treatment Costs in Some Cases, 17 November 2023, [url](#)



In Table 2, the costs for patients in public facilities follows from Circular No.22/2023;⁸² the costs in private facilities are from BookingCare.⁸³

In Table 3, the public treatment prices are from Ho Chi Minh City Psychiatric Hospital.⁸⁴ This hospital is one of the largest public hospitals treating mental health patients, so these prices could be representative for public psychiatric hospitals in Vietnam. Private prices are from BookingCare.⁸⁵

Table 2. Price for consultations

Specialist	Public outpatient treatment price in VND	Public inpatient treatment price in VND	Private outpatient treatment price in VND	Private inpatient treatment price in VND	Reimbursement/ special programme/ free/comments
Psychiatrist	37 500 – 200 000 depending on the level of the health facility	Information not found	150 000 – 500 000 examination fee	Information not found	NHI covers 100 % of the costs in public facilities only for the five groups of people listed in Section 3.1. Insurance provisions for the remainder of the population are described in Table 1.
Psychologist	300 000 – 1 000 000 depending on the level of the health facility	Information not found	700 000 – 5 000 000 per hour	Information not found	Not covered by NHI.

⁸² Vietnam, MOH, Số: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Quy Định Thống Nhất Giá Dịch Vụ Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Bảo Hiểm Y Tế Giữa Các Bệnh Viện Cùng Hạng Trên Toàn Quốc Và Hướng Dẫn Áp Dụng Giá, Thanh Toán Chi Phí Khám Bệnh, Chữa Bệnh Trong Một Số Trường Hợp [No.: 22/2023/TT-BYT, Regulations on Uniform Prices for Health Insurance Medical Examination and Treatment Services Among Hospitals of the Same Class Nationwide and Guidance on Applying Prices and Payment of Medical Examination and Treatment Costs in Some Cases, 17 November 2023, [url](#)]

⁸³ BookingCare, Chi phí khám, tư vấn, điều trị bệnh trầm cảm [Cost of examination, consultation, and treatment of depression], 11 July 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁴ Ho Chi Minh City Psychiatric Hospital, Price list of medical examination and treatment activities of BVTT, 19 December 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁵ BookingCare, Chi phí khám, tư vấn, điều trị bệnh trầm cảm [Cost of examination, consultation, and treatment of depression], 11 July 2023, [url](#)

**Table 3. Price for treatments**

Treatment	Public treatment price in VND	Private treatment price in VND	Reimbursement/ special programme/ free/comments
Psychotherapy with cognitive behavioural therapy (one session)	100 000	700 000 – 5 000 000	<p>NHI covers 100 % of the costs in public facilities only for the five groups of people listed in Section 3.1. Insurance provisions for the remainder of the population are described in Table 1.</p> <p>The range of prices is due to the absence of fixed rates. The cost of treatment depends on factors such as the clinician's experience and the duration of the consultation.</p>
Psychotherapy with EMDR (one session)	Information not found	700 000 – 5 000 000	
Psychotherapy session with other type of psychotherapy	100 000 – 150 000	700 000 – 5 000 000	
Clinical admittance in psychiatric clinic (daily rates)	100 000 – 150 000	Information not found	
Psychiatric treatment of alcohol drug addiction in specialised clinic (detox.); daily admission rate	100 000 – 500 000	Information not found	
Psychiatric treatment of drug addiction in a specialised clinic (rehab.); daily admission rate	100 000 – 500 000	Information not found	
Psychiatric treatment of drug addiction; outpatient care; consultation rate	100 000 – 500 000	Information not found	



4. Cost of medication

The cost of medication to the patient depends on the type of disorder, the severity level, and whether the patient has insurance or not. For instance, patients with depression who do not have insurance normally have to pay around 800 000 VND to 2 000 000 VND per month out-of-pocket [30 EUR to 77 EUR].⁸⁶

4.1. Pricing of medication

The 1989 Public Health Protection Law made medicines available through private medical and pharmaceutical companies, marking the end of the public sector as the exclusive supplier of medication.⁸⁷ The MOH takes a passive stance towards pricing, relying on market forces to regulate the cost of medication. Prices are set within commercial medical supply contracts which are agreed between individual hospitals and pharmaceutical providers. This has reduced transparency on medication pricing, which poses a challenge for patients and for the clinicians who provide care, leading to confusion and, in some cases, to non-standard pricing practices. This has also led to the unintended consequence of price anomalies, whereby private sector medicines can be cheaper than medicines obtained from the public sector and generic medication can be more expensive than trademarked or proprietary medication.⁸⁸

There are also wide differences between the prices of those medicines available in the market and those approved by the MOH and the authors of this report note that this makes it challenging to identify the prices of any given medication in Vietnam. In addition to being available in the market, i.e. in private pharmacies, medicines can be found in the black market or from people who bring them into the country, a practice which is known as ‘hand-carry’. According to the MedCOI guidelines, however, only legally available medications are considered to be available.

The items in the list of MOH-registered medications are mostly generic. As noted above, there are anomalies in the pricing of medications.

This leads to a confusing state of affairs. In some cases, medication is more expensive in non-hospital pharmacies: sources quote medication prices as being 10 % to 20 % higher than inside health facilities where prices cannot exceed the prices approved by authorised state organisations.⁸⁹ However, there are also examples where medication is cheaper in non-

⁸⁶ BookingCare, Chi phí khám, tư vấn, điều trị bệnh trầm cảm [Cost of examination, consultation, and treatment of depression], 11 July 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁷ Vietnam, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Luật Của Quốc Hội Số 21-LCT/HĐNN8 Ngày 30/06/1989 Về Bảo Vệ Sức Khỏe Nhân Dân [Law of National Assembly No.21-LCT/HDNN8, 30/06/1989 of People’s Health], 30 June 1989, [url](#)

⁸⁸ Nguyen, T. A., et al., Inflated medicine prices in Vietnam: a qualitative study, 2017, [url](#), p. 648

⁸⁹ Báo điện tử Kinh tế & Đô thị, [Loạn giá thuốc, lỗi tại ai?] Bài 2: Ai quản giá thuốc? [[Drug price chaos, whose fault is it?] Lesson 2: Who controls drug prices?], 26 October 2022, [url](#); Webbaohiem, Giá thuốc bệnh viện: Vì sao cao hơn giá trên thị trường? [Hospital drug prices: Why are they higher than market prices?], n.d., [url](#)



hospital pharmacies. This is explained with reference to the bidding process that controls the price of medication in hospitals.⁹⁰

Medication prices in public hospitals can vary widely. Newspaper articles attribute this to violations and to an absence of transparency in the procurement process between hospitals and pharmaceutical companies for the management of medication. Between 2022 and 2023, there have been investigations and prosecutions of those responsible for pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.⁹¹ The director of a hospital in Ho Chi Minh City explained that hospitals are hesitating to enter into the procurement for medication, equipment and other supplies due to a fear of making mistakes in the procurement process. This leads to shortages of medication and equipment in public health facilities.⁹² The hospital leaders and National Assembly delegates have proposed amendments to the ways in which suppliers are appointed as well as presenting proposals for centralising the procurement of medication and supplies.⁹³

From November 2020, a portal to disclose service prices of the health sector was opened by the MOH (<https://congkhaiyte.moh.gov.vn/>).⁹⁴ However, enterprises stated that declaring and publishing drug retail prices is not feasible. They state that manufacturing and importing establishments only have wholesale cost information.⁹⁵

4.2. Medication costs

Concerning the prices provided in Table 4. Prices of medication Table 4 below, in order to provide a more consistent pricing guideline for users of this document, and in view of the confidential nature of commercial medical supply contracts at individual hospital levels, the authors of this report have used pricing from private sector national pharmaceutical chains as a guideline to medication cost in Vietnam. Care must therefore be exercised in using stated medication price to determine treatment cost at an individual level.

Furthermore, the drafter International SOS explains that concerning the coverage and reimbursement of the medication prices in the table below, the following principle applies: reimbursement is paid to the patient according to the terms of the insurance cover. The

⁹⁰ Báo điện tử Kinh tế & Đô thị, [Loạn giá thuốc, lỗi tại ai?] Bài 2: Ai quản giá thuốc? [[Drug price chaos, whose fault is it?] Lesson 2: Who controls drug prices?], 26 October 2022, [url](#)

⁹¹ VnEconomy, Tám đơn vị thuộc Bộ Y tế sai phạm nghiêm trọng trong mua sắm thiết bị, vật tư y tế [Eight units under the Ministry of Health committed serious violations in the procurement of medical equipment and supplies], 18 October 2022, [url](#); Thanh Niên, Sai phạm trong đấu thầu thuốc, 16 bị cáo trong ngành y tế Đắk Lắk hầu tòa [Violations in drug bidding, 16 defendants in the Dak Lak health sector appeared in court], 15 February 2023, [url](#); Saigon Liberation Newspaper, Hàng loạt các sai phạm tại gói thầu trang thiết bị y tế, thuốc chữa bệnh [A series of violations in medical equipment and medicine bidding packages], 30 January 2022, [url](#)

⁹² People's Army Newspaper, Bài 2: Bất cập trong đấu thầu và tâm lý sợ sai [Lesson 2: Inadequacies in bidding and fear of making mistakes], 1 September 2022, [url](#)

⁹³ Electronic Information Portal of the Vietnam National Assembly, Đề Xuất Các Giải Pháp Tháo Gỡ Bất Cập Trong Đấu Thầu Thuốc, Trang Thiết Bị Y Tế [Proposing Solutions to Resolve problems In Processing Medicines and Medical Equipment], 17 April 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁴ Lao Dong Newspaper, Công khai giá thuốc, nhưng vẫn mỗi nơi một giá! [Publicise drug prices, but still each place has the same price!], 23 November 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵ VnEconomy, Doanh nghiệp gặp khó với quy định kê khai, công bố giá bán lẻ thuốc [Businesses encounter difficulties with regulations on declaring and announcing retail prices of drugs], 9 September 2022, [url](#)



medicines are available in those pharmacies and hospitals that secured the contract with the provider to supply it.

Table 4. Cost of medications

Generic name	Brand name	Strength of unit	Form	Number of units in the container	Price per box in VND
Antidepressants					
Amitriptyline	amitriptyline	25 mg	tablet	60	100 000
Clomipramine	Anafranil®	25 mg	tablet	50	350 000
Duloxetine	Cymbalta®	30 mg	tablet	28	600 000
Escitalopram	Sipralaxa	20 mg	tablet	98	500 000
Fluoxetine	Fluotin	20 mg	tablet	20	200 000
Fluvoxamine	Luvox®	100 mg	tablet	30	245 000
Imipramine	imipramine	10 mg	tablet	28	400 000
Paroxetine	Medi-Paroxetin	20 mg	tablet	30	195 000
Sertraline	Zoloft®	50 mg	tablet	30	445 000
Trazodone	Trazodone Teva	100 mg	tablet	1 000	4 200 000
Medication off-label use for PTSD					
Alfuzosin (also with prostate complaints)	Xatral XL®	10 mg	tablet	30	482 000
Lamotrigine (also antiepileptic)	Lamictal®	25 mg	tablet	30	170 000
Topiramate (also antiepileptic)	Topamax®	25 mg	tablet	60	360 000
Antipsychotics; classic					
Amisulpride	Solian®	200 mg	tablet	60	900 000



Generic name	Brand name	Strength of unit	Form	Number of units in the container	Price per box in VND
Antipsychotics; modern atypical					
Clozapine	Clozapyl-100	100 mg	tablet	100	640 000
Risperidone	Risperdal®	2 mg	tablet	60	1 400 000
Depot injections with classic antipsychotics					
Haloperidol decanoate depot injection	Haldol® Decanoas	50 mg/ml	ampoule	5	1 000 000
Anxiolytics					
Bromazepam	Bromazepam Viatrix	6 mg	pill	30	270 000
Buspirone	Buspirone Hydrochloride	10 mg	tablet	500	3 000 000
Lorazepam	Temesta®	2.5 mg or 1 mg	tablet	30	500 000
Oxazepam	Seresta®	10 mg	pill	30	500 000
Medication for sleeping disorder; sedatives					
Melatonin	Natrol® Melatonin	3 mg	tablet	90	270 000
Valerian extract	Valerian Forte Blackmores®	Information not found	tablet	30	379 000
Zolpidem	Zolpidem Arrow	10 mg	tablet	14	400 000
Medication to treat side effects of antipsychotics/anti parkinsonism					
Trihexyphenidyl	trihexyphenidyl	2 mg	pill	100	250 000
Medication for opioid addiction/substitution therapy					





Generic name	Brand name	Strength of unit	Form	Number of units in the container	Price per box in VND
Morphine hydrochloride trihydrate (retard)	morphine hydrochloride	10 mg/ml	ampoule	10	1 750 000
Medication for alcohol addiction					
Acamprosate	Campral®	333 mg	tablet	84	500 000
Disulfiram	Esperal®	500 mg	tablet	20	350 000
Naltrexone	Nodict®	50 mg	tablet	Information not found	780 000
Thiamine	vitamin B1	250 mg	pill	100	80 000





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Annex 2: Terms of Reference (ToR)

Psychiatry; mood disorders like depression, anxiety disorders like PTSD, psychotic disorders like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, sleeping disorders. Addiction problems: e.g., alcohol- and opioid addiction.

General information

- Briefly describe prevalence and incidence of psychiatric diseases [mood disorders (e.g., depression), psychotic disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder), anxiety disorders (e.g., PTSD) and addiction problems (e.g., alcohol and opioid addictions)] / types of these diseases (epidemiologic data).
- How is the health care organized for psychiatric diseases?
- How is the disease treated – at specific centres, in primary health care centres, secondary care / hospitals, tertiary care etc.?
- Which kinds of facilities can treat psychiatric diseases [public, private not for profit (e.g., hospitals run by the church), private for-profit sector]? Include links to facilities' websites if possible.
- How are the resources organized in general to treat patients with psychiatric diseases? Are there sufficient resources available to treat all patients?
- Is there a particular type of psychiatric diseases for which no (or only partial) treatment exists in the country?
- Is there a (national) institute specialised in treating psychiatric diseases?
- Are there any national or international plans or (donor) programmes for certain psychiatric diseases; if yes, could you elaborate on such programme(s) and what it entails?

Access to treatment

- Are there specific treatment programmes for psychiatric diseases? If so, what are the eligibility criteria to gain access to it and what they contain?
- Are there specific government (e.g., insurance or tax) covered programmes for psychiatric diseases? If so, what are the eligibility criteria to gain access to it?





- Are there any factors limiting the access to healthcare for patients? If so, are they economic, cultural, geographical, etc.? Are there any policies to improve access to healthcare and/or to reduce the cost of treatments and/or medication? What is the number of people having access to treatment? Keep focus on e.g., waiting times rather than the exact number of specialists in the field.
- If different from information provided in the general section; is the treatment geographically accessible in all regions?
- What is the 'typical route' for a patient with this disease (after being diagnosed with the disease)? In other words: for any necessary treatment, where can the patient find help and/or specific information? Where can s/he receive follow-up treatment? Are there waiting times for treatments (e.g., for psychiatric hospitals, etc)?
- What must the patient pay and when?
- Is it the same scenario for a citizen returning to the country after having spent a number of years abroad?
- What financial support can a patient expect from the government, social security or a public or private institution? Is treatment covered by social protection or an additional / communal health insurance? If not, how can the patient gain access to a treatment?
- Any occurrences of healthcare discrimination for people with psychiatric diseases?

Insurance and national programmes

- National coverage (state insurance).
- Programmes funded by international donor programmes, e.g., Global Fund, UNAIDS, UNICEF, Clinton foundation etc.
- Include any insurance information that is specific for patients with psychiatric diseases

Cost of treatment

Guidance / methodology on how to complete the tables related to treatments:

- Do not delete any treatments from the tables. Instead, state that they could not be found if that is the case.
- In the table, indicate the price for inpatient and outpatient treatment in public and private facility and if the treatments are covered by any insurance or by the state.





- For inpatient, indicate what is included in the cost (bed / daily rate for admittance, investigations, consultations...). For outpatient treatment, indicate follow up or consultation cost.
- Is there a difference in respect to prices between the private and public facilities?
- Are there any geographical disparities?
- Are the official prices adhered to in practice?
- Include links to online resources used, if applicable (e.g., hospital websites).

Note: a standardised list of treatments was also included in the original ToR, as can be viewed in the report. Any treatment without a found price was removed at the editorial stage.

Cost of medication

Guidance / methodology on how to complete the tables related to medications:

- Do not delete any medicines from the tables. Instead, state that they/the prices could not be found if that is the case.
- Are the available medicines in general accessible in the whole country or are there limitations?
- Are the medicines registered in the country? If yes, what are the implications of it being registered?
- Indicate in the tables: generic name, brand name, dosage, form, pills per package, official prices, source, insurance coverage.
- Are (some of the) medicines mentioned on any drug lists like national lists, insurance lists, essential drug lists, hospital lists, pharmacy lists etc.? If so, what does such a list mean specifically in relation to coverage?
- Are there other kinds of coverage, e.g., from national donor programmes or other actors?
- Include links to online resources used, if applicable (e.g., online pharmacies).

Note: a standardised list of medication was also included in the original ToR, as can be viewed in the report. Any medication without a found price was removed at the editorial stage.





NGOs

- Are any NGOs or international organisations active for patients with psychiatric diseases? What are the conditions to obtain help from these organisations? What help or support can they offer?
- Which services are free of charge and which ones are at a cost? Is access provided to all patients or access is restricted for some (e.g., in case of faith-based institutions or in case of NGOs providing care only to children).



