

Symposium | Local minority : [Symposium 19] AFRICA SYMPOSIUM: WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT HEALTH SYSTEMS TO REDUCE THE TREATMENT GAP FOR MENTAL DISORDERS IN AFRICA

📅 2025年9月25日(木) 16:25 ~ 17:55 🏢 Session Room 6 (Conference Room B)

## **[Symposium 19] AFRICA SYMPOSIUM: WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT HEALTH SYSTEMS TO REDUCE THE TREATMENT GAP FOR MENTAL DISORDERS IN AFRICA**

Moderator: Kiyoshi Yoshikawa

### **[SY-19-01] Distinctive social situations related to mental health in African countries**

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As is well known, colonialization by European powers accelerated in many areas of the African continent from the 19th century onwards. Even before that, it was common for many ethnic groups and cultures to interact in complex ways, forming "plural societies". Many African countries achieved independence in the 1950s and 1960s. However, reflecting the above history, their national borders do not necessarily coincide with ethnic or cultural boundaries. As a result, these countries have faced various challenging issues in building nation-states. Among others, the establishment and penetration of public healthcare systems is one of the most important issues, but many African countries face numerous difficulties in securing the human and material resources necessary for efficient medical practice, developing infrastructure, and nurturing trust in the healthcare system among local residents. In this situation, traditional medicine and religious practices, which serve as alternative medicine, also play an important role, especially in mental healthcare. In this presentation, I will provide an overview of the social circumstances related to mental health care in Kenya, Uganda, and Mozambique, where three invited speakers (Drs. Muthoni Mathai, Byamah B. Mutamba, and Palmira Santos) have been engaged in medical activities, as well as that in Namibia, where I have been conducting research for many years. Through this, I will discuss the relationship between the mental health (e.g., PTSD, adjustment disorders, attachment formation, neurodevelopmental disorders) and rapid social changes experienced by people living in each of these countries. I will also argue the human and material resources needed in the medical institutions of these countries in order to improve the mental health of residents, and the importance of support from NGOs and communities (e.g., the possibility of cross-border collaboration, non-pharmaceutical interventions) to supplement these resources.