

# "Developing Research Capacity for Mental Health Interventions for Youth in Haiti"

*Thursday, April 26, 2012, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. United States Eastern Time*

**Presenter: Giuseppe Raviola, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Assistant Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School**

Dr. Raviola's scholarly contributions center on the integration and application of quality improvement and public health approaches in innovating clinical practice, teaching and research in the domains of psychiatry and global mental health. This focus is best exemplified by his work on improving the implementation and quality of mental health services—delivered in the United States context at Boston Children's Hospital (BCH), and in the global context with the non-profit health organization Partners In Health (PIH) in Haiti and Rwanda—and the linkage of service delivery projects with teaching and research at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and at in-country sites for local practitioners through the HMS Program in Global Mental Health and Social Change (PGMHSC). This work meets a critical local and global need for innovative mental health delivery solutions, given the significant global burden of mental disorders, and the universal shortage of specialists to address this burden. Dr. Raviola has advocated strongly, through the work of PIH and in international journals, for the need for developing mental health services to address the burden of illness from these neglected conditions, to promote health equity, to build integrated primary health care systems, and to support economic development in low-income countries.

Dr. Raviola has studied and written on child and adolescent mental health concerns, and the mental health and well-being of health care workers. He has published on topics in clinical psychiatry, global mental health implementation, disaster psychiatry, research in ethnography and cultural anthropology, HIV/AIDS, and mental health policy. As an advocate for community and global mental health concerns, he seeks to promote the need for incorporating effective, evidence-based mental health programs within existing community and health care infrastructures.

*ABSTRACT: The widespread and catastrophic destruction and casualties following the 2010 earthquake centered near Port-au-Prince, Haiti imposed an acute and unprecedented burden upon already strained Haitian mental health care delivery resources. Traumatic exposures and new psychosocial adversities, including displacement from homes, jobs, and schools and major*

*disruptions in supplies and services, are expected to result in increased prevalence and severity of mental disorders in all sectors of the Haitian population. The anticipated extraordinary need will demand prudent and strategic allocation of inevitably limited resources. Development of novel, empirically supported models for extending scarce mental health care resources can leverage them for greater coverage and benefit within the Haitian population. Intrinsic to building requisite mental health services in Haiti, is the further development of local research capacity that can advance the empirical base for effective mental health care delivery strategies in Haiti. The overarching aim of the proposed work is to strengthen and extend an existing institutional collaboration between Zanmi Lasante (ZL), a nongovernmental organization delivering health care in Haiti, and Harvard Medical School (HMS), in order to develop local and collaborative capacity for epidemiologic, social science, and implementation research on mental disorders in Haiti. We propose to achieve this aim through coordinating needs assessment, reciprocal didactic seminar based training, and a practicum that encompasses design, implementation, and evaluation of a novel school-based youth mental health intervention in central Haiti. This intervention will potentially enhance school-based detection of youth at risk for mental disorders and then utilize teachers as mental health accompagnateurs to support youth access to appropriate care. If feasible, acceptable, and effective, this intervention can be studied for its potential to improve mental health outcomes for Haiti's youth in future research that will also further develop and consolidate ZL/HMS collaborative research capacity for mental disorders in Haiti.*