Two-thirds of people with schizophrenic disorders (69%) in developing countries have no access to specialized mental health care, according to a study published today in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. The study of 50 low- and middle-income countries conducted between 2005 and 2010 found that a key factor determining service access was the number of psychiatrists and nurses in mental health facilities.

“Studies show that treating people with schizophrenic disorders with first-generation antipsychotics and psychosocial interventions in the community represents a cost-effective use of health resources,” said Antonio Lora, one of the authors. “Despite this, only a minority of people with schizophrenic disorders in low and middle-income countries are receiving care from formal mental health services.”

Schizophrenic disorders are characterized by profound disruptions in perception and thinking, including hearing voices or experiencing delusions. These chronic and severe mental conditions affect 26 million people worldwide and result in moderate or severe disability in 60% of cases. Due to their early onset and debilitating effects, schizophrenic disorders rank fifth among men and sixth among women as a leading cause of disability.

Read the paper here: http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/90/1/11-089284.pdf