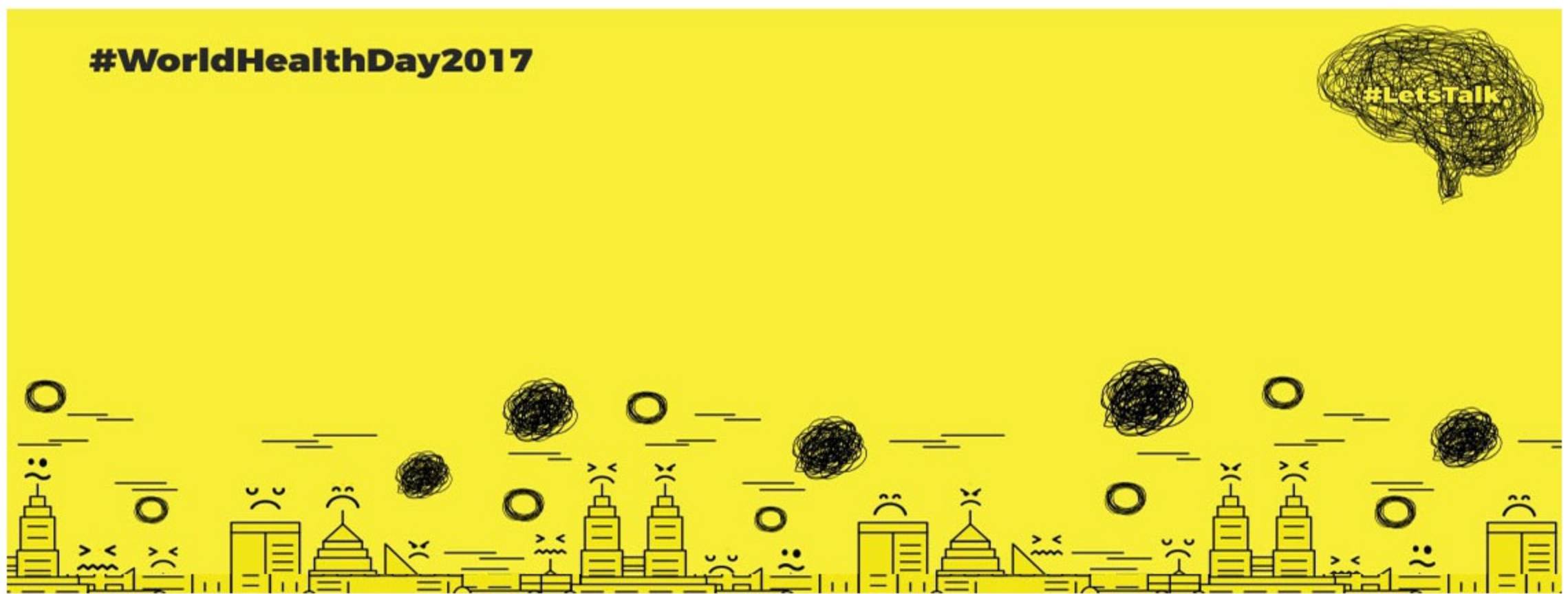


## Greater Research is Needed on Mental Health and Urban Planning in the Global South



Posted by Samvita Kalyan Kumar in [Public Policy Advisory](#), [Private Sector Development](#)

The link between urban living and mental health has been long established, even as early as the 1900s when city planners and public health officials arrived at what they determined to be a 'healthy population density'. Studies carried out in Sweden and the Netherlands have correlated living in highly urbanized environments to higher rates of depression, anxiety and psychosis. German researchers from the Central Institute of Mental Health in Mannheim have extensively compared how urban and rural dwellers react to stressful situations, with those from the countryside faring much better than their urban counterparts. Densely populated urban environments suffer from high noise levels, unfriendly commuting systems, rampant environmental toxicity and a lack of green public spaces, to name a few.

Urbanization related problems faced by developing economies are exacerbated by the rapid and uncontrolled manner in which urbanization occurs. With large swathes of the population moving from rural to urban centers, cities in these economies are faced with accommodating severe social and economic inequality. Social stress attributed to a sense of no control, social disparities, and importance accorded to social status, has proven to be a bigger factor in causing mental health issues than environmental stress. Researchers in Australia studied depression rates around the world and created a cartographic representation of these numbers. Unsurprisingly, some of the highest rates of depression occur in Africa and large parts of the Middle East. Cairo, for instance, is one of the noisiest cities in the world and considered amongst the most stressful places to live. While there has been a lot of research on urban stressors as triggers for mental health issues in Western Europe and North America, very little has been done in Africa, Asia and South America. Given that these geographies are home to over 80% of the world's population and all of the 10 most overcrowded cities in the world, there is a tremendous need for more attention to be given to the effects of urban living on mental health in these areas.

References:

- <http://urbanist.co/four-ways-the-built-environment-affects-mental-health/>
- <https://files.lse.ac.uk/cities/files/2014/11/LSE-Cities-2014-Transport-and-Urban-Form-NCE-Cities-Paper-03.pdf>
- [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/14/world/middleeast/14cairo.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/14/world/middleeast/14cairo.html?_r=0)
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/oct/08/where-world-most-stressful-city-urban-life-depression-anxiety>
- <http://www.newgeography.com/content/003945-health-happiness-and-density>
- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/11/07/a-stunning-map-of-depression-rates-around-the-world/?utm\\_term=.5554d18ed405](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/11/07/a-stunning-map-of-depression-rates-around-the-world/?utm_term=.5554d18ed405)
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/feb/25/city-stress-mental-health-rural-kind>

[Back to Blog](#)

Tags: [Public Health](#), [Governance](#), [Urban Development](#), [Infrastructure Development](#), [Vocational Training](#)

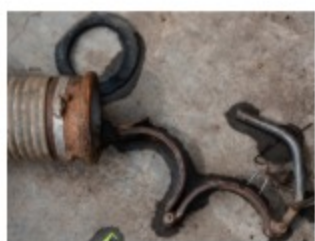
Share this article:



### About Samvita Kalyan Kumar

Samvita is interested in include Local Governance, Urban Infrastructure and Sustainability. She previously worked as a Project Officer at IIT Madras with the Environmental and Water Resources Engineering department.

### Related Articles



**When the Pits Fill Up: A Day in the Life of Sanitation Workers in Urban India**



**Where There Are No Sewers: The Toilet Cleaners of Lucknow**



**Ending Open Defecation in Rural India: Re-thinking our 'Subsidy Policy' and 'Swachagrahi Strategy'**



**World Toilet Day: From the Field**

### Categories

- [Public Policy Advisory](#)
- [Impact Advisory](#)
- [Behavioral Research](#)
- [Data Solutions](#)
- [MEL](#)

### Recent Posts

- [Dispatch - December 2018](#)
- [City Wide Inclusive Sanitation: SAIS AECOM Speaker Series](#)
- [Athena Marks Bengaluru Office Launch](#)
- [When the Pits Fill Up: A Day in the Life of Sanitation Workers in Urban India](#)
- [Creating Liveable and Clean Cities: Presentation at the Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

### Tags

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Child Protection](#)
- [Climate Change](#)
- [Data Science](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Governance](#)
- [Indian Context](#)
- [Infrastructure Development](#)
- [Livelihoods](#)
- [Newsletter](#)
- [Public Finance](#)
- [Public Health](#)
- [Rural Development](#)
- [SME](#)
- [Urban Development](#)
- [Urban Planning](#)
- [Vocal Training](#)
- [Vocational Training](#)
- [WASH](#)
- [Women's Empowerment](#)

### Latest Tweets

- [Athena Infonomics Consultant Kun Zhang recently spoke as a panelist at @SAISHopkins and @AECOM's City Wide Inclusiv... https://t.co/7kOOYWEIcl](#)
- [Our in house team of IT experts will zero in on the ever expanding use of technological innovations impacting the d... https://t.co/kKlOD5il9F](#)
- [Working across eight cities in five countries, Athena Infonomics is supporting @gatesfoundation to strengthen the... https://t.co/MNm8Bz6DET](#)

Follow [@a\\_infonomics](#)

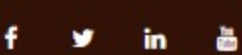
### Download Brochure

**Know more about us**  
**Download our brochure**



[Download](#)

### KEEP IN TOUCH



### Athena Infonomics

CIN: U74999TN2010PTC076608

*In case of any queries or grievances contact:*

[vijay.b@athenainfonomics.com](mailto:vijay.b@athenainfonomics.com)

### LATEST TWEETS

- [Athena Infonomics Consultant Kun Zhang recently spoke as a panelist at @SAISHopkins and @AECOM's City Wide Inclusiv... https://t.co/7kOOYWEIcl](#)
- [Our in house team of IT experts will zero in on the ever expanding use of technological innovations impacting the d... https://t.co/kKlOD5il9F](#)

Follow [@a\\_infonomics](#).

### RECENT POSTS

- [Dispatch - December 2018](#)
- [City Wide Inclusive Sanitation: SAIS AECOM Speaker Series](#)
- [Athena Marks Bengaluru Office Launch](#)

### RECENT PROJECTS

