Primary
prevention of
mental, neurological
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# **Preface**

In 1986, when it was becoming clear that effective and affordable measures could have a significant impact on the incidence of mental, neurological and psychosocial disorders, the Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly passed a resolution (WHA39.25) in which it asked the Director-General of the World Health Organization to prepare detailed guidelines on the prevention of these disorders. The Organization responded by producing a series of documents on various forms of mental disorder, revised and updated versions of which form the basis of this book. The reasons for choosing particular disorders are discussed in the opening chapter; let it be said here that they were chosen in the hope that the guidelines proposed for their prevention would not only be of great practical benefit, but would also point the way forward and serve as a model for efforts to prevent other disorders.

This book is intended to serve primarily as a handy reference book for policy-makers and professionals within and outside the medical sector who are in a position to help prevent mental, neurological and psychosocial disorders. As the book makes clear, primary prevention is not purely a medical matter — far from it. The contribution of doctors, nurses, midwives and other health workers is obviously extremely important, but vital preventive work can also be carried out by lawmakers, government departments, the police, administrators, educators, civic organizations (particularly women's organizations), engineers and many others. It is hoped that the book will encourage all these groups to intensify their efforts to prevent the disorders discussed here and tackle the root causes of other disorders using a similar approach.



