

Dear readers,

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, we find ourselves at a poignant intersection of remembrance, resilience, and reflection. This issue of the Rwanda Public Health Bulletin (RPHB) is released against the backdrop of profound historical significance and contemporary challenges, presenting a theme that resonates deeply with the ethos of our nation.

In the midst of honoring the memory of those we lost during one of the darkest chapters of our history, we are still confronted with the stark realities of mental health problems that test our collective strength and fortitude, with far-reaching impacts on health, society, and economy. These challenges have brought to the forefront the importance of mental health care and support.

Apart from our nation's historical challenges with a devastating impact, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has also not only tested our physical health, but it has also put a considerable strain on our mental health, particularly within our academic institutions where minds converge to shape the future of our nation. This was attributed to experienced increased stress, worry, and depression as a result of uncertainty, interruptions, and social isolation.


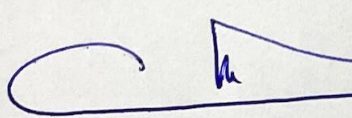
This publication showcases Rwanda's resilience and success against all challenges, becoming the beacon of hope by putting mental health care first and cultivating a resilient culture. It also highlights the persistent diverse perspectives and problems that our community members encounter, as well as depression and anxiety among university students following the COVID-19 pandemic. The articles in this issue lay the groundwork for informed interventions and support systems.

This RPHB issue also sheds light on early weaning of children and its influencing factors. Early weaning of children holds significant implications for child health and development, and understanding it could help promote good practices and educational interventions to support exclusive breastfeeding and healthy weaning practices.

As we deal with the consequences left by the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, cultivating a culture of empathy, resilience, and solidarity remains critical. By acknowledging and managing mental health problems in our communities, we reaffirm our commitment to the overall well-being of Rwandans. The lessons of resilience and unity that emerged from the aftermath of the genocide against Tutsi serve as guiding beacons as we confront the psychological toll while commemorating the lives lost.

I extend my gratitude to the researchers, scholars, and healthcare professionals whose unwavering commitment to advancing public health knowledge has enriched this publication. Their contributions not only deepen our understanding of mental health dynamics but also underscore the imperative of prioritizing holistic well-being in our pursuit of a better, more inclusive future for all Rwandans.

May this issue of the Rwanda Public Health Bulletin inspire and inform, developing a better awareness of the critical role data plays in shaping policies that benefit our communities.

The seal of the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) is circular. It features a central emblem with a sun, a book, and a caduceus. The text 'RWANDA BIOMEDICAL CENTER' is written around the top, and 'REPUBLIC OF RWANDA' is written around the bottom. Below the seal, the text reads: 'Prof. Claude Mambo Muvunyi, PhD, PhD', 'Editor-In-Chief - The Rwanda Public Health Bulletin (RPHB)', and 'Director General - The Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC)'.

Prof. Claude Mambo Muvunyi, PhD, PhD
Editor-In-Chief - The Rwanda Public Health Bulletin (RPHB)
Director General - The Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC)