



SIRS

Schizophrenia International Research Society

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

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Global Brain Coalition Event, Science Summit at the 79th United Nations General Assembly

I participated at the UNGA Brain Health Days in New York 19-20 September. The event was hosted by major global stakeholders in this area including UNICEF, European Brain Council, Davos Alzheimer's Collaborative, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluations, Child Mind Institute, among others. The presentations and discussions underscored the importance of evidence-based strategies to improve global brain health and to influence policymakers toward a better understanding of the economic impact that brain disorders have on individuals and on healthcare systems. We discussed the global challenge of brain disorders and explored ways that an increase in investment in research into brain health could significantly reduce their burden. Some of the major takeaways were as follows:

- To destigmatize mental health issues, we need more effective strategies to emphasize the importance of viewing mental health as brain health, enhancing public awareness, and embedding mental health care within general health practices
- We should shift our mindset from cost to investment. Investment in brain health - specifically, in innovative neuroscience research and therapeutics – is key to reducing the burden of brain illnesses, improving health outcomes and strengthening economies. The private sector and policymakers need a more informed understanding of the return on investment that can result from advancing brain health
- To better communicate our message related to the two points above, we need to effectively disseminate research and other relevant findings that demonstrate the connection between mental health and brain health. This can be achieved by better use of multimedia platforms which ensure that the narratives we develop resonate with specific stakeholders