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Current Status of Psychiatry in Pakistan

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At present there are about 3,000 beds in state sector (a little more than 2,000 in mental hospitals and about 1,000 in state run teaching medical institutions). In private sector estimated beds are approximately 2,000. There are 300 psychiatrists in Pakistan mostly located in major cities.

Current problems: At present large number of population is unattended as there is less number of mental health professionals. As most of the mental health professionals are in big cities there is non availability of mental health professionals in district, tehsils and rural areas. Most of the mental health professionals are drifting towards foreign countries because of economic reasons. During the medical education there was not coverage of behavioural sciences but some interest have been taken to include it in curriculum. Other problems included:

- Less developed infrastructure i.e. psychiatric nurses, psychiatric social workers
- Psychiatry not well recognized as specialty in undergraduate education
- Inadequate training of GPs
- Few psychiatric beds in general medical hospitals
- Few research activities

Solutions

As we know that a lot of progress have been done in the field of mental health in Pakistan from its inception and now it is being recognized among medical professionals and general population. But we must have to take some key steps in promotion of mental health in Pakistan.

Behavioral sciences should be the compulsory subject at medical graduate under graduate level. And there should be training of medical graduates in the field of psychiatry. Posts of psychiatrists in general hospitals including district hospitals should be created so to make mental health services to reach at the area of each district and at rural areas. Training of Primary Care Physicians should be taken in account as most of the patients first present to them.

There should be exchange program between local and foreign mental health institute and our mental health professional should have exposure to foreign mental health expert regularly via conferences, web and teleconferences.

Already some psychiatrists are running individual community program but it is need of the hour that proper and regular community programs should be conducted with special focus on patients, caregivers, teachers, clergymen and media. Free camps should be con-

ducted frequently that would help in community awareness and mental health services would reach to unreached.

Although some psychiatrists are doing research but there should be standard research protocols that would equip the psychiatrist with tool to do the research according to the circumstances of Pakistan as social aspect have influence on presentation of psychiatric illness.

After inception of Pakistan there were only two mental health institutes and few psychia-

trists but now there are psychiatric facilities almost in every major city. As being a developing country we are striving hard to meet the international standards in mental health but it is a first step of long journey. We need constant struggle and vigilance to improve our skill in this field. We have to develop a better infrastructure for education, research and awareness of mental health among medical professional and general population.

(この論文は抄録集より転載しました)