

## COMMENTARY

### ACADEMIC MENTAL HEALTH GALA: BRIDGING THE GAP

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According to a BBC report published in 2016, around 15 million people of Pakistan are struggling through psychiatric disorders of any cause. The irony of the fact is that the psychiatric patients of Pakistan are still in search of rights to treat as patient, chained or tied, swinging like a rolling stone between ancient cultural beliefs and modern psychiatric management (mhGAP).

Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences (MH Rana), Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital (SZMCH), Rahim Yar Khan has been a strong advocate of providing effective treatment to the mentally ailing community. As a part of efforts, Academic Mental Health Gala: Bridging the Gap was organised in Rahim Yar Khan on 06-07<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The academic mental health gala was organised by Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences SZMCH in collaboration with World Psychiatric Association, Pakistan Psychiatric Society, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (RYK campus), Enabling Center IUB, Mind Health Movement and Al-Mustafa Mental, Addiction and Behavioural Health Services.

The academic mental health gala was a state-of-the-art academic activity and was a blend of online and face to face academic sessions. The online workshops commenced w.e.f 12<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and there were 05 online state-of-the-art workshops organised, i.e., forensic, drug addiction, time management, posttraumatic stress disorders and social media. These workshops were facilitated by Prof. Dr Tariq Hassan (Canada), Prof. Dr. Fareed Aslam Minhas, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Bashir, Prof. Dr. Nazish Imran and Dr Khadija Masood (UK).

In the face to face academic sessions, there were 05 workshops organised. The physical workshops intended to build the capacity in multiple domains like borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, parenting, mini neuropsychiatric interview, and faiz. The physical workshops were facilitated by Prof. Mowadat Hussain Rana, Prof. Nasar Khan (Canada), Prof. Raza ur Rehman, Prof. Nadeem Bajwa and Dr Muhammad Zeshan (US). On the other hand, keynote sessions were facilitated by the keynote speakers, i.e., Meritorious Prof. Muhammad Iqbal Afridi, Prof. Muhammad Ayub (UK), Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed Dogar, Prof. Ali Zulqarnain and other eminent mental health professionals.

During the academic gala, multiple projects were inaugurated like the Ketamine clinic, Psychiatric ICU, digitalisation of inpatient and virtual case conference rooms. As a part of an academic gala, a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Vice

Chancellor IUB, Prof. Dr Ather Mehboob and Principal SZMCH, Prof. Dr Tariq Ahmed in academia, research and capacity building of mental health services.

A state-of-the-art seminar was organised after the academic mental health gala and was well-attended by mental health professionals, intelligentsia, civil society and students. The keynote speakers included Dean Faculty of Psychiatry CPSP/Chief Editor JPPS, Meritorious Prof. Muhammad Iqbal Afridi; President Pakistan Psychiatric Society, Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed Dogar; President World Psychiatric Association (WPA), Prof. Afzal Javed. The Chairman Organising Committee, Prof. Ali Burhan Mustafa paid thanks to the speakers and delegates which gathered across the world to Rahim Yar Khan and extended support in raising awareness, destigmatisation and capacity building.

In the post academic mental health gala, Dr Afzal Javed and Prof. Afridi paid a visit to District Jail and Department of Psychiatry SZMCH. Both guests appreciated the efforts of Prof. Mustafa and his team in the promotion of mental health. In the end, Dean Faculty of Psychiatry CPSP chaired the online Dean's Lounge, delivered his vision towards the improvement of existing structure and addressed the grievances of Postgraduate Trainees of Psychiatry.

