



LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Editor of JPPS,

I wish to draw your and your readers' attention to the current situation with respect to psychiatric training in Pakistan.

Pakistan has been listed as a developing country by the UNO for several decades now. However, in terms of accredited opportunities for further specialisation abroad by students gaining their MBBS in Pakistani medical colleges and universities, it is evident that mental health and psychiatric training is not at par with, say, medicine and surgery entry pathways. The reasons for this lag are likely to be multifactorial, including but not limited to the lack of attention by the Pakistani educational institution in developing the training pathways within Pakistan; the stigma attached to mental illness, including the cultural and sub-cultural aspects of guilt and shame experienced by the families of the persons suffering mental illnesses and disorders; as well as the lack of interest in bright students having an ambition towards specialising in this field; lack of funding and resources; and lack of alignment with international institutions.

I think it is high time that the thought leaders in mental health and psychiatry within Pakistan strategise collaboratively and in a true multidisciplinary manner, on how best to at least bring the training and curriculum of psychiatry in Pakistani institutions to be at par with our medical and surgical colleagues. Such an intellectual exercise is the need of the hour and should demonstrate our commitment to work together towards a progressive pathway for incremental improvements in the lives and wellbeing of our patients, while opening up training and career pathways for our bright and ambitious younger doctors, as well as nurses and allied health students with an affable predisposition towards compassionate care, treatment and support provision for such neglected groups of patients, clients and consumers.

Remember: mental illness does not discriminate and can affect anyone; it is best countered by the professionals with the same discrimination-free approach.

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