**SPECIAL ARTICLE:**

**SILVER JUBLEE CONFERENCE OF PSYCHIATRY**

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The 25-year celebration of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society’s Conference, known as the Silver Jubilee, has the theme of "Changing dynamics of Mental Health in Rural Areas: Challenges and Opportunities." The focus is on addressing the mental health needs of people in remote areas. The conference aims to create awareness about the unique obstacles encountered by rural communities in accessing mental healthcare and to highlight innovative solutions and partnerships that can overcome these obstacles.

The conference shall bring together mental health specialists, decision-makers, and members of the community to exchange knowledge, effective approaches, and personal stories related to the mental health challenges in rural areas. The event will highlight the importance of working together in order to establish a healthcare system that is not only equal, but also cover all aspects of mental health to ensure that people everywhere can receive high-quality mental healthcare services.

Healthcare providers in Sukkur encounter numerous obstacles when it comes to providing top-quality care to the local and surrounding rural population. Mental health professionals are particularly vulnerable to safety and security risks due to factors such as high illiteracy rates, unemployment, poverty, jealousy, injustice, political uncertainty, low tolerance, drug addiction, and high inflation. Other contributing factors are limited access to care, low health literacy, limited funding, stigma around mental health, lack of trained staff, and limited resources.

The successful resolution of these challenges will necessitate a well-coordinated effort from healthcare providers, policymakers, and community members to improve access to care, boost awareness of mental health issues, and reduce stigma, and invest in the resources necessary to provide quality care to patients in Sukkur.

The mental health care providers of Sindh and especially Sukkur can enhance the provision of quality care, and broaden their service scope by taking advantage of the different opportunities available to them. These opportunities encompass:

1. **Raising awareness**

In order to increase demand for their services, mental health providers can effectively raise awareness about the importance of mental health and the benefits of seeking treatment within the community.

1. **Collaborating with other healthcare providers**

Healthcare providers in Sukkur can collaborate with primary care physicians to provide a holistic approach to care, addressing both the physical and mental health needs of patients. This partnership ensures that patients receive comprehensive care to meet their complete healthcare requirements.

1. **Offering telehealth services**

As a result of the increasing availability of telehealth technologies, mental health practitioners in Sukkur are now able to provide their services remotely, which ultimately improves patient access to care in rural and remote areas.

1. **Focusing on prevention**

Those who offer mental health care services in Sukkur can focus on prevention by providing mental health education and screening services in schools, community centers, and other locations. This can aid in the early identification of mental health problems and the prevention of more severe conditions.

The Patron-in-Chief for this 25th Silver Jubilee conference is the highly respected and accomplished Distinguished National Professor Muhammad Iqbal Afridi, who has extensive knowledge and expertise in the areas of Psychiatry, Research, and Academia. He is known for his outstanding leadership, inspiration, and encouragement of aspiring medical professionals.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the Silver Jubilee Conference 2023 of Pakistan Psychiatric Society, we invite the entire psychiatric community to join us in Sukkur from November 10th to 12th, 2023 and contribute to this important academic gathering.

We warmly welcome you and look forward to hosting you in the city of “sugarcanes.”