

THIS ISSUE

This issue marks successful two years of regular publication of JPPS. The journal has achieved all the milestones of development normally and as the readers will bear it out is healthy and thriving. Resource scarcity is nothing to lament about while working in a developing country but this has a special meaning for JPPS. The 'editorial office' is a 4'x5' room with one computer and an office cabinet. Fortunately our only clerk who also manages all work of department of Psychiatry from the same office, as well as the members of the editorial staff are slim enough to be accommodated in this office. (This by the way may be one of the reasons for timely publication of the JPPS, once you are stuck up in office, you can only squeeze out with great difficulty!). All the members of editorial team deserve my special thanks on this occasion.

This is a special issue to mark the first anniversary of the disastrous earthquake on October 8, 2005. Although much has been written about the extraordinary traumatic stress experienced by the survivors, it has been the story of extraordinary courage and resilience since then. The mental health professionals have been at the forefront or rescue, recovery and as is evident from this issue, research as well. Considering the scale of disaster and the mental health resources in countries, two studies in this journal should be seen to herald more data on this subject. Both are small scale studies but serve to highlight the gaps in our knowledge and the challenges we are facing. While Ahmer et al did not identify a single case of PTSD in their study; Niaz et al reported a prevalence of 37%. Different methodologies (a questionnaire designed specifically to elicit PTSD vs. interview) and populations (earthquake survivors in a camp vs. primary care attendees) in two studies can explain some variations in the findings.

The discrepancies in these two articles reflect the controversial nature of the concept of PTSD, which Goel has elucidated in a remarkably lucid and scholarly article. It is rightly pointed out that the concept of traumatic stress has been broadened so much that its significance as a criterion for PTSD has become meaningless. If the birth trauma could be a cause of PTSD, as is claimed by studies cited by Goel, then the disorder could be considered as a congenital anomaly in developing world!

Few other important articles highlight that stress is not limited to the disastrous situation. The occupational

stress is another important theme running in the journal. Iqbal Saman et al noticed that the education may be a source of extreme stress especially when accompanied by physical punishment which unfortunately is not an uncommon occurrence in our setting. While research is of paramount importance, Yousafzai and Ahmer raise the issue of ethical considerations in investigating the vulnerable population in a traumatic situation like the earthquake. An interesting case report on the value of abreaction as useful intervention for PTSD also serves to highlight the need for preserving 'case reports' as highly valuable form of scientific publications.

We started our journey on the 15th International Psychiatric Conference and this biennial event of PPS is here again. So welcome to all the distinguished delegates. Continuous Professional Development is a concept which is very important but is practically non-existent in all the developing countries. On the occasion of the 16th International Psychiatry Conference, this topic assumes even more importance. The editorial on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) should help to highlight the importance of a well planned Continuous Professional Development programme for mental health professionals in developing countries which is a vital need rather than a luxury. This theme of education and training is also manifest in the guest editorial by Prof. Femi Oyeboode. He exhaustively reviews the extensive changes in the education system in UK over the last one decade. These represent a paradigm shift and unfortunately medical education in Pakistan seems to lack behind in adapting to these changes.

The JPPS has played pioneering role in promoting evidence based approach in Pakistan. Since the publication of the 1st issue, there has always been an article on evidence based medicine or systematic reviews. This along with a regular feature of "Cochrane Corner", which publishes abstracts of systematic reviews produced by Cochrane collaboration, has been a unique feature of JPPS. The special article in this issue by Ghani et al highlights the value of systematic reviews. The process of conducting systematic reviews is elaborated which should also help the readers to understand how these differ from ordinary narrative reviews. The systematic reviews and their findings need to be incorporated in our practice. The speciality organizations and regulatory bodies have to play an important role in this. JPPS welcomes the contributions which can help to promote the evidence based approach.

The Editor