



Health Media Monitor
Weekly Coverage of Health issues in Pakistani Media
February June 13 – 19, 2009

Public Health Program

Friday, June 19, 2009

Pakistan sanctions maternal mortality as human rights issue

Owing to the concerted advocacy efforts of civil society organizations and persuasion of the Ministry of Population Welfare, Pakistan has finally endorsed the Maternal Mortality & Human Rights Resolution in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). According to a press statement issued by World Population Foundation (WPF), the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, during its 11th regular session, adopted a landmark resolution on 'Preventable Maternal Mortality & Morbidity and Human Rights' without using the voting option. It is estimated that every 30 minutes, one Pakistani woman loses her life due to reproductive health complications that leads to 276 maternal deaths per 100,000 births. Most of these deaths are preventable.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183882

[http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-](http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/17-Jun-2009/Need-to-endorse-maternal-mortality-resolution-urged)

[online/Regional/Islamabad/17-Jun-2009/Need-to-endorse-maternal-mortality-resolution-urged](http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/17-Jun-2009/Need-to-endorse-maternal-mortality-resolution-urged)

92,700 children to get anti-polio drops

Around 92,700 children will be administered anti-polio vaccine in the rural areas of the Islamabad during a four-day campaign to be started on June 22. The district health department has constituted seven zones and 228 mobiles teams in this regard. Seven zonal supervisors and 43 area in-charges will monitor the drive. The department has set up 31 fixed points and 10 transit camps.

[http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/92%2C700-children-to-get-antipolio-drops-969)
[newspaper/national/92%2C700-children-to-get-antipolio-drops-969](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/92%2C700-children-to-get-antipolio-drops-969)

Eight HIV-positive mothers give birth to virus-free babies

At a time when the incidence of HIV/AIDS is increasing in Pakistan as in other parts of the region, doctors affiliated with the Sindh AIDS Control Programme (SACP) informed the media on Thursday that, under the said programme, eight HIV positive mothers have successfully given birth to virus-free babies in the past two years.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183835

Thursday, June 18, 2009

12m hepatitis patients in country, says expert

Epidemiologist of Chief Minister Initiative for Hepatitis-Free Sindh, Dr Mumtaz Brohi, has said that about 12 million people of Pakistan are suffering from hepatitis, adding that especially Sindh, is vulnerable to hepatitis virus. He was speaking at a workshop on "Role of civil society organizations in containing hepatitis" organized by the Association for Research and Development of Rural Areas at the University of East here on Wednesday.

[http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/12m-hepatitis-patients-in-country%2C-says-expert-869)
[newspaper/national/12m-hepatitis-patients-in-country%2C-says-expert-869](http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/12m-hepatitis-patients-in-country%2C-says-expert-869)

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

WPF asks Pakistan to support draft on maternal mortality

World Population Foundation, Pakistan chapter has lamented that Pakistan has shown itself to be a regressive participant seeking to eliminate most references to human rights within the draft resolution on 'Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights'. WPF said that this approach would undermine the value of the draft resolution, which was tabled last Friday at Human Rights Council by approximately 40 co-sponsors. The resolution will hopefully be adopted tomorrow (Thursday).

http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_news.asp?id=6

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Group formed to improve immunization campaigns

A core group has been formed to improve routine campaigns to immunize children in the Punjab. The group comprising senior health managers will review existing strategies and approaches in relation to routine immunization, and will monitor district-wise progress periodically. A meeting, which was held here with Provincial Secretary Health Mohammed Anwar Khan in the chair, was informed that Punjab government was committed to taking the lead in improving the immunization services.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/group-formed-to-improve-immunisation-campaigns-669>

Blood transfusion project being launched

Federal Minister for Health Mir Aijaz Hussain Jhokrani said on Monday that a national blood transfusion service project was being launched with the assistance of Germany. He said the project was aimed at reforming transfusion services and working towards the goal of achieving 100 per cent voluntary donations. He said PC-1 of the project was in an advanced stage, and The National Aids Control Programme will be responsible to implement this programme.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/blood-transfusion-project-being-launched-669>
http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183319

WHO donates \$3m medicines for Influenza A

The World Health Organization (WHO) donated \$3.07 million worth of adult doses of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) to the Ministry of Health for use in the treatment of Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) in Pakistan here on Monday. World Health Organization Representative Dr. Khalif Bile Mohamud formally handed over a consignment containing 200,024 adult does of Tamiflu to Minister for Health Mir Aijaz Hussain Jhokrani at a brief ceremony held at the WHO office. Secretary Health Khushnood Akhtar Lashari was also present on the occasion.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183321

Anxiety, trauma common among IDPs: NGO

A non-governmental organization (NGO), Horizon, which works in the mental health sector, has noted with concern that majority of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are suffering from anxiety, depression and trauma. The organization noted the observations during a free medical camp that it arranged in collaboration with another partner organization, ANAM, in Mardan to provide free medical and mental health facilities to over 500 IDPs.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183291

Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Ordinance, 2007

The so-called 'kidney mafia' is still in operation in various parts of the country, but those involved have gone 'underground' after the implementation of the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Ordinance, 2007, Daily Times has learnt. The mafia has shifted its activities to the remote towns and urban suburbs to avoid the attention of media and law enforcement agencies. Senior doctors and hospitals previously accused of providing the 'service' to foreign nationals, are apparently no longer part of the business. Sources in the Health Department have revealed that some of the junior doctors previously associated with the trade are still involved in the business, and have made makeshift surgical facilities in remote areas or on the outskirts of major cities.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\06\15\story_15-6-2009_pg13_4

Monday, June 15, 2009

Health allocations far less than targets of MDG

In the newly announced budget only 0.7 per cent of the GDP has been allocated for the health sector despite the fact MDGs require that the public health expenditure must be raised up to 2 per cent of the GDP by the year 2015. Like the previous years, there had not been a single

noteworthy project in health announced in the budget 2009-10 where Pakistan seems far lagging behind the MDGs set by the United Nations (UN). Similarly, the performance in majority of health sectors is not satisfactory. There had been poor performance in reduction of child mortality rate including mortality rate among children less than five years and infant mortality rate.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183125

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/health-sector-to-get-rs23.2bn-469>

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/health-sector-to-get-rs23.2bn-469>

World Blood Donor Day

Health experts around the globe emphasize on screening of donated blood for HIV, hepatitis B & C and Syphilis prior to transfusion, but in 31 countries, including Pakistan, not all donated blood is tested for one or more of these infections. The transfusion of infected blood contributes to an ever-widening pool of infection in the population with far-reaching consequences for society as a whole. Prescription of transfusions when simpler, less expensive treatments might be equally effective is a common practice in Pakistan that certainly exposes patients to the needless risk of infections or severe transfusion reactions due to incompatibility of blood groups.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183130

Saturday, June 13, 2009

WHO to upgrade Frontier health system

“You don’t have to be a doctor to save lives. You can also do so by donating blood,” was how Hashim Hanif, head of Falah Blood Bank, summed up Saturday evening’s seminar on ‘Give blood, save life’ held at the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH). The event was organized to mark the World Donor Day that falls on June 14 (today). Hanif, who runs the blood bank at the AKUH campus along with a group of volunteers, stressed on the need for regular blood donations because of the short life of the components of blood – platelets, plasma and red blood cells. He added that since these three components can be separately transfused as well, by donating a pint of blood a person can save three patients’ lives.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/who-to-upgrade-frontier-health-system-369>

Healthcare delivery system

Friday, June 19, 2009

THQ hospital runs out of medicines

The Sub-division Headquarters hospital Taxila (THQ) which caters to the need of around 4.80 million population and provides first aid facilities to the commuters traveling on the G.T., Hattar and Khan Pur Hazara roads is currently facing acute shortage of medicines. A visit to THQ hospital revealed that the patients, especially belonging to poor class and rural areas, visiting the hospital are facing difficulties due to unavailability of free of cost medicines in the hospital.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/thq-hospital-runs-out-of-medicines-969>

72pc of health ADP funds to be spent on upgrade of Sindh hospitals

The Sindh government has allocated about 72 per cent of the health sector annual development programme financing for the renovation, modernization and addition of facilities at various hospitals across the province for the coming financial year. According to the ADP 2009-10 allocations for the health sector, the government intends to initiate 12 new schemes for various hospitals, including seven for the teaching hospitals, at a cost of Rs1,148 million. The total cost of the 49 ongoing and new schemes at the teaching and other hospitals has been estimated at around Rs3,612 million in 2009-10.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/local/karachi-72pc-of-health-adp-funds-to-be-spent-on-upgrade-of-sindh-hospitals-769>

Indoor patients receive free medicines

Punjab Health Department has, in the light of the orders of Chief Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif's, ensured free treatment and provision of free medicines to indoor patients in the government hospitals. Health Department spokesman said that the hospital administration had procured the stock of all necessary medicines according to their budget and requirements. He said these medicines were issued to every ward according to the prescribed treatment chart of the patients.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183858

Cardio centers worth Rs350m to be inaugurated by month-end'

City Nazim, Syed Mustafa Kamal, has announced that cardio centers worth Rs350 million in Shah Faisal Colony and Landhi Town would be inaugurated by the end of June. He said that after the inauguration of the cardio centre the cardiac patients of Landhi, Korangi, Shah Faisal Colony, Malir and Gadap Town would get treatment facilities at their nearest points.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183828

X-ray machine at BBH remains dysfunctional

The X-Ray machine at 507-bed Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) Emergency Department (ED) is not functioning for the last many days. Instead of repairing, the hospital administration has closed the X-Ray room and referring even the serious patients to Outdoor Patient Department (OPD), which doubles the patient's agony. What is worse is that the hospital management has not floated a single tender for the repairing, maintenance or repurchase of the non-functional machine.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Islamabad/17-Jun-2009/Xray-machine-at-BBH-remains-dysfunctional>

Thursday, June 18, 2009

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Thalassaemia centre lacks cell separator

The absence of a cell separator machine at the Thalassaemia Patient Welfare Centre Nawabshah is causing perpetual wastage of blood components. These include red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. In-charge and Senior Paediatrician Dr Mohammed Sadiq Siyal expressed his satisfaction over daily blood collection but was critical of the absence of a blood separator as thalassaemia patients need only red cells but were being administered blood without separating its other components. He was apprehensive about the thalassaemia patients as they were being transfused other blood components which their bodies don't require.

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/thalassaemia-centre-lacks-cell-separator-869>

Call to keep hospital pharmacies open 24/7

The Young Doctors Association (YDA) has observed that in order to ensure the provision of 100 per cent quality medicines free of cost to the poor round the clock, main drug store of all

government hospitals should remain open 24 hours. In the main drug store, they said, all brands of medicines and all items for operation should be made available. Any drug can be required any time and if it is not available in the hospital, then young doctors have no option but to ask the patients to buy it from outside, they said.

http://thenews.jang.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183635

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Camps for heart patients

Under the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, the administration of Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) set up medical camps at the district headquarters hospital, Lodhran, and tehsil headquarters hospital, Dunyapur. The visiting teams of cardiovascular consultants provided free treatment and medicines to heart patients at Lodhran and Dunyapur hospitals. As many as 150 patients were also referred to the Multan Institute of Cardiology whereas serious patients were referred to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC), Lahore, for their treatment under the Punjab Chief Minister Pilot Project for modern health programme for all.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183287

Monday, June 15, 2009

Foundation to provide free eye treatment to IDPs

The Al-Basarat Eye Foundation has decided to open an eye treatment facility for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) at Shah Mansoor Hospital in Swabi district. It was also decided that outpatients' service would be started initially for two days a week and eye surgeries would also be performed at the government hospital at Shah Mansoor town in Swabi. The new hospital was recently made operational when doctors from Ayub Medical College Hospital, Abbottabad, started using it to provide medical treatment to the IDPs.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183119

Sunday, June 14, 2009

PIC camps at THQ level

In compliance with the orders of Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, the Punjab Institute of Cardiology has started holding medical camps for treatment of cardiac patients at the tehsil headquarters level. The spokesman for the Punjab Health Department said the chief minister had directed the department to hold medical camps for the cardiac patients at all THQ hospitals to facilitate such patients at local level.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183119

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Cantonment General Hospital

Patients visiting the Cantonment General Hospital (CGH) have complained that they were charged admission fees despite the fact that treatment in all government medical facilities was free. They urged the concerned authorities to take notice of this practice and improve the overall condition of the hospital. Mrs Qazi Naveedul Hassan, admitted in the Orthopaedic Ward for females, alleged that the Cantonment General Hospital administration does not provide free medical treatment to any patient. On the other hand, the concerned authorities claim that free treatment is provided to patients in all government hospitals.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_news.asp?id=6

Professional issues – hazards and negligence

Friday, June 19, 2009

DHQ Hospital terminates 150 daily wagers

The District Headquarters Hospital has terminated more than 150 employees working on daily wage basis due to shortage of funds. The hospital, facing acute shortage of staff, had inducted

employees in low grades as ward boys, sweepers, peons, labourers and technicians more than six months back.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183875

Thursday, June 18, 2009

بینظیر ہسپتال کے گریڈ 16 تک کے ملازمین تا حال میڈیکل الاؤنس سے محروم

راولپنڈی (خصوصی نمائندہ) بے نظیر ہسپتال کے گریڈ ایک سے 16 تک ملازمین کم جولائی 2008 سے تا حال محروم ہیں جب کہ دیگر دونوں ہسپتالوں کے گریڈ ایک سے 16 تک کے ملازمین کو یہ الاؤنس بمعہ بقایا جات مل چکا ہے۔ ادھر ہسپتال کی انتظامیہ کا کہنا ہے کہ انہیں ابھی تک اس سلسلہ میں کوئی خط نہیں ملا۔ ملازمین نے الزام لگایا کہ ہسپتال کے شعبہ اکاؤنٹس کے کردار دھرتا جان بوجھ کر یہ الاؤنس نہیں دے رہے جبکہ ان کو متعلقہ نوٹیفیکیشن بھی دکھایا گیا ہے۔

<http://www.jang.com.pk/jang/jun2009-daily/18-06-2009/cities/islamabad/index.php>

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Doctors support NWFP body

The Young Doctors Association has announced its support for young doctors of NWFP striving for substantial raise in salaries of House Officers (HOs) and Postgraduate Residents (PGRs). According to a press release here on Monday, YDA President Dr Rana Sohail and General Secretary Dr Salman Kazmi said that YDA would stand by the young doctors of NWFP, who had formed their Young Doctors Association on the model of YDA in Punjab to launch their movement for the raise in their salaries in accordance with the salaries of young doctors in Punjab.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183276

Monday, June 15, 2009

Second course on basic skills in GI endoscopy

The second two-day course on 'Basic Skills in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy' concluded at the Holy Family Hospital. "The main objective of the course was to train young gastroenterologists in basic techniques of GI endoscopy and medical specialists to promote health care in the remote areas on the subject," said President Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology & GI Endoscopy and Chief of the Gastroenterology & Hepatology Division of the HFH Professor Dr. Muhammad Umar.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183133

Saturday, June 13, 2009

List of doctors for regularization

The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) has thrown the ball in the government's court as it prepared a list of eligible postgraduate doctors for appointment as senior registrars, assistant professors and district specialists on the regular basis. This was disclosed by PMA Lahore chapter President Prof Dr Yasmin Rashid and General Secretary Dr Tanveer Anwar during a press conference at the PMA House here on Friday.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_news.asp?id=5

Consumer information

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Teen acne tied to better heart health in men

The activity of male hormones, androgens, can give rise to acne during adolescence, but may also protect against coronary heart disease in adulthood, UK researchers report. However, androgens also appear to be associated with an increased risk of dying from prostate cancer, the study in the American Journal of Epidemiology suggests. "Androgen level or androgen activity is implicated in several health outcomes, but its independent role remains controversial." Dr. Bruna Galobardes, from the University of Bristol, and colleagues note.

http://thenews.jang.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183640

Vigorous exercise raises heart risk

Recent research suggests that as the frequency of vigorous exercise increases, so does the risk of atrial fibrillation (AF). Although vigorous exercise has numerous health benefits, case reports and limited data suggest that elite athletic en engaging in endurance exercise may be at higher risk for the development of atrial fibrillation. Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a heart rhythm disorder, usually involving a rapid heart rate, in which the upper heart chambers (atria) contract in a disorganised and abnormal manner. This can cause an insufficient amount of blood to be pumped through the heart. Although the condition is usually well controlled with treatment, AF can lead to fainting, heart failure and stroke.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Karachi/18-Jun-2009/Vigorous-exercise-raises-heart-risk>

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Saffron helps fight blindness: study

Saffron, the spice, which is commonly used in Indian, Spanish and Italian cuisine, could hold the secret to preventing eye sight loss in old age. Through the study, researchers revealed that eating saffron on daily basis helped to make the delicate cells in the eye needed for vision more resilient against disease, BBC reported. Scientists based at the University of L'Aquila, in Italy, and Sydney University, in Australia, have discovered that saffron, often used in pilaf, can protect against some of the most common forms of blindness.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183302

Acupuncture eases back pain

Any type of acupuncture may be effective treatment for chronic back pain, researchers say. Researchers studied 638 adults who had never received acupuncture before. The patients were divided into four groups — those who received individualized acupuncture, those who received standardized acupuncture, those who received simulated acupuncture (without going through the skin), and those who received usual care (no acupuncture). In the simulated acupuncture group, practitioners mimicked needle acupuncture by using a toothpick in a needle guide tube — poking at traditional pressure points without breaking the skin.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=183281

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Lack of good sleep might be deadly

Two new studies suggest that chronic poor sleep can actually boost your odds for dying prematurely, while another study finds that more than half of older Americans aren't getting the recommended eight hours of slumber. All three studies were presented this week at the Associated Professional Sleep Societies annual meeting, in Seattle. The first study, from a consortium of researchers, found that death rates were higher among people who had more "fragmented" sleep, meaning they had more transitions between stages of sleep per hour. Those stages were: wake-to-non-rapid-eye-movement (NREM); NREM-to-wake; NREM-to-REM; REM-to-NREM; and REM-to-wake.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/arc_news.asp?id=6

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