**STUDENTS SECTION**

**EDITORIAL**

**PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH IN PAKISTAN: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

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In recent years,Pakistan has shown an encouraging improvement in its research output. In 2010, Pakistan ranked 43rd in publication output andby 2018, this rankis expected to improve to 27th.' There hasalsobeenarisein biomedical journalsin Pakistan working hardto earn their reputation. As of now, there are 76 indexed biomedical journals in Pakistan.' Out of these, only 5 journals are ISi Thompson andpubmedindexed.



The student section at JPPS is itself an achievement and it hopes to inspire the medical student community to invest their energies in psychiatric research. However, within this ray of optimism stands a very critical shadow of doubt especially from the community of mental health and psychiatry. What the ranking fails to show is the factthatwhile there have beennumerous publications coming forth from various fields of medicine in Pakistan, those on mental health and psychiatry have been found wanting. There has not been a satisfactory number of publications found under the field of psychiatry, nor hasthe fielditselfgained amainstream acceptance by the general public in Pakistan. There have been only 349 practicing psychiatrists in Pakistan according to a WHO report in 2009 and this number is unlikely to have raised much since then.' A huge number of Pakistani psychiatrists are working abroad. This seems like an appropriate decision for them considering burnout levels in psychiatrists in the USA rank amongst the secondlowest.' And while they may not get the highest salaries, American psychiatrists have a higher amount of optimism and satisfaction with their wages comparedto othermedical professionals.'

Indeed with the advent of the internet and increasing ways of acquiring education, the public of Pakistan has certainty adopted a more positive health seeking behavior but the ability to seek or acquirehelpin mentalhealthhasstillbeen foundlacking.Even in the settings of education suchas medical colleges and large universities, in major cities like Lahore, the concept of psychiatric illness is still deemeda stigma.'The public sofar hasadopted a fairly discouraging attitudetowards the concept of mentalillness.Thisishighlighted in a survey conducted among third year Pakistani medical students where only 7.6%of them chose psychiatry as a likely choice for their medical career for reasons like attractive life style and the subject beingintellectuallychallenging and interesting.'

In the research department, again countries like USA have a systematic and organized approach towards allocating grants and funding towards medical research. The NIMH allocates around 1.5 billion USDannually to fundresearches of all kinds.' Pakistan maynot evenoffer a fraction of such a sum if any to encourage researchers to take up projectsconcerning psychiatry.

To analyze the trends of publishing in Psychiatry in Pakistani biomedical journals, we took the mantle of auditing pubmed indexed journals of Pakistan. Currently, only 5/76 Pakistani medical journal are indexed in ISi Thompson and pubmed namely: JPMA, JCPSP, JAMC, PJPS and PJMS. Details of Articles related to mental healthand psychiatry published in fourjournals (JPMA,JCPSP,JAMC and PJMS) from January 2005 and December 2014 were included in this audit.The task of auditing was conducted by three authors, AW, HBand AGseparately and then the final datafilewasreviewedby the principleinvestigator(AW) to minimize errorsin dataentry.

Auditing was conducted in two phases.Firstly, the articles related to mental health and psychiatry were screened out by reading their titles and then their abstracts were read and following details were recorded: number of authors, corresponding authors' affiliation, numberof citations,typeofarticleandstudy design.

Data were analyzed in SPSS v 20. Frequencies of different variables were calculated and a line plot was created to analyze year wise publication trend of psychiatry related articles published from January 2005 to December 2014. Line graph revealed an increasing trendin publicationoutput of articlesrelatedto Psychiatry (Figure **1**). 478 articles related to mental health and Psychiatry have been published from January 2005 to December 2014.Most of the articles (205.42.89%) werecontributed fromInternational medical institutes especially fromIran and Turkey followed by 89(18.62%) articles from AKU and Dow University of Health Sciences (35, 7.3%) and the rest were contributed by other Pakistani institutes. Most of the articles were published in JPMA (248, 51.9%), PJMS (124, 25.9%), JCPSP (58,

12.1%) and JAMC(48,10%).

Categories related to type of articles had following distribution: Original 306 (64.4%), Special Communication 70 (14.6%), Letter to

editor36(7.5%),casereport26(5.44%),Editorial 23 (4.8%),Review 16 (3.3%) and Systematic review 1 (0.2%).Original studies had following study designs cross-sectional 224 (73.2%), case control 29 (9.48%),

RCT 17 (5.55%), prospective 12 (3.92%), retrospective 9 (2.94%),

experimental 7 (2.29%) and Quasi-experimental6(1.96%),case series

2(.65%).

Line graph revealed an increasing trend in publication output of articlesrelatedto Psychiatry (Figure1)

We observed a very satisfactory and year wise improving trend in publication output in Psychiatry. However, it is interesting to note that most of the original studies had cross sectional designsand only afew RCTs and case controlstudies have been conducted in Pakistan so far. Also, only 273/478 (58.16%) of these articles were contributed by Pakistanis. These results are in consonance with the statistics reported by Naqvi and Khanfrom1993-2004 out of which only 3/108 studies were clinical trials and 34% of the publications were contributedby only 5 Pakistani psychiatrists.' However,from 2005 to 2014,we observeda rapidlyincreasing trend in publication outputof Psychiatric research.Thismightbe dueto reasons such as promotion ofresearchculture amongthe faculty by PMDCand HEC,Pakistan.

It is a needof the hour to improve the knowledge of studydesigns in Pakistani researchers and also NGOs and research organizations should step forward to support research in Pakistan. Another aspect that canimprove the prospects of psychiatric research in Pakistan is mentorship initiatives by the Psychiatry faculty of Pakistan. Experienced researchers should introduce research methods and medical writing to young students and establish effective mentor/student relationships. As an example, we invited a few students from CMH Lahore Medical College and started a few research projects with them. Not only were they involved in all the steps of conducting a research project but also given workshops on literature review,medical writing andstatistical concepts. Respected Editor in Chief of JPPS, Professor Dr. Rana also aims to establish such student/mentor projects in various medical colleges in Pakistan to promoteresearchculture amongmedicalstudents.

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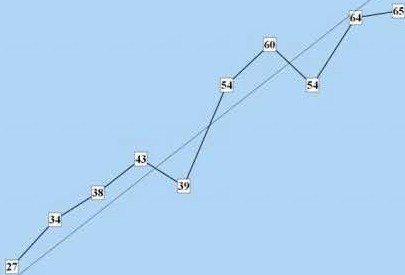
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