Sindh Mental Health Authority

- ❏ *"Intricate Relationship between Internet Usage, Social Media and Mental Health"*

- ❏ *"How Benazir Income Support Program Can help in Addressing Mental Health issues"*

- ❏ *"Psychiatric Camp in Umerkot"*

Round Table Discussion Explores the Impact of Internet and social media on Mental Health
Speakers and Participants:

Guest Speakers:

1. Dr. Suhail Ahmed Rajput, Chief Secretary Sindh
2. Madam Tanzila Umi Habiba Qambrani, Special Assistant to C.M for I.T Deptt.
3. Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja, Chairman SMHA
4. Eng. Prof. Dr. Samreen Hussain, Vice Chancellor Dawood University
5. Mr. Muhammad Zaeem Ahmed, FIA Cybercrime Wing, Karachi
6. Dr. Ayesha Mian, Founder and CEO, Synapse Neuro-Science Institute
7. Dr. Jawed Akbar Dars, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, JSMU, Karachi
8. Dr. Ayesha Sanobar, Synapse Neuro-Science Institute
9. Dr. Fawad Suleman, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, AKU Karachi
10. Prof. Zainab Bhutto, Director, Institute of Professional Psychology, B.U Karachi
11. Prof. Fauziah Rabbani, Department of Community Medicine, AKU Karachi

Participants:

1. Syed Dr. Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA
2. Mr. Amin Hashwani, CEO of Charter for Compassion Pakistan
3. Mr. Shehzad Aslam Khan, National Professional Officer, WHO
4. Justice (R) Arshad Noor, SHRC,
5. Dr. Ahson Qavi Siddiqui, CEO, Sindh Healthcare Commission
6. Meritorious Prof. Dr. Iqbal Afridi
7. Ms. Leela Kalplana Devi, Additional Advocate General Sindh,
8. Mr. M. Nasir Khan, DIG (Prison)
9. Prof. Dr. Amin Khawaja
10. Ms. Farah Yamin Khan, Consultant SFERP, World Bank
11. Prof. Riaz Ahmed Shaikh, SZABIST
12. Dr. Syed Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA,
13. Dr. Suresh Kumar, Ex-Secretary Health
14. Dr. Ali Wasif, President PMHA
15. Dr. Ajmal Mughal, Senior Psychiatrist
16. Associate Prof. Dr. Chooni Lal, Head of Psychiatry ward JPMC
17. Dr. Washdev, Head of Psychiatry ward, DUHS,
18. Dr. Suresh M.S, SCJIP&BS Hyderabad
19. Prof. Illyas Siddiqui, Head of Community Health Deptt. LUMHS
20. Mr. Saleemuddin Memon, Director SMHA
21. Mr. Aftab Memon, Director SMHA
22. Mr. Fayyaz Shaikh, Thar Foundation
23. Dr. Gulzar, LUMHS
24. Dr. Muzamil Hyder, Host the Seminar
25. Dr. Abdul Samad, Host the Seminar
26. Ms. Leela Ranjani, Edinburgh University, Scotland
27. Ms. Fareeha Kanwal, Bahria University
28. Dr. Fariha Iqbal

Seminar on "How BISP can help in addressing Mental Health issues"
Speakers and Participants:

Guest Speakers:

1. Madam Shazia Marri, Federal Minister, Poverty and Chairman B.I.S.P
2. Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja, Chairman, SMHA
3. Meritorious Prof. Dr. Iqbal Afridi
4. Prof. Majid Ali Abidi, Member, World Psychiatric Association (WPA)
5. Dr. Sarah Zuberi, Chapter Chief Sindh, World Health Organization (WHO)
6. Ms. Samina Vertejee, Assistant Professor, Aga Khan University, Karachi
7. Prof. Dr. Zainab Bhutto, Director IPP, Bahria University, Karachi
8. Advocate Riaz Hussain Baloch, Principal, SZAB Law College Malir

Participants:

1. Syed Dr. Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA
2. Dr. Maqbool Memon, DHO Malir
3. Dr. Greech, DHO Tharparkar
4. Dr. Ali Wasif, President Pakistan Association for Mental Health,
5. Dr. Suresh Kumar, Ex-Secretary Health
6. Prof. Qudsia Tariq, University of Karachi
7. Associate Prof. Dr. Choonil Lal, Head of Psychiatry Ward, JPMC Karachi
8. Mr. Muhammad Taufique, Director SMHA
9. Mr. Aftab Hussain Memon, Director SMHA
10. Mr. Karamat Ali, Executive Director PILER
11. Dr. Ajmal Mughal, Senior Psychiatrist Sindh
12. Dr. Muhammad Bux Dahani, M.S Thado Nalo, Malir
13. Dr. Abdul Razzaq Shaikh
14. Dr. Ayub Baloch
15. Mr. Zahid Hussain Lashari
16. Dr. Rakesh Bhagtwani, Head of Psychiatry Ward, Hamdard University
17. Dr. Rubina Kidwai, Member SMHA
18. Dr. Sooraj Palijo, Chief Medical Supervisor, IMC
19. Ms. Mahnoor Shah, Host the Seminar
20. Mr. Jannat Hussain, PILER
21. Mr. Kishor Kumar
22. Mr. Naresh Kumar
23. Mr. Razzaq Tagar, SMHA
24. Mr. Majid Khan Solangi, SMHA
25. Mr. Muhammad Faisal Umrani, SMHA
26. Mr. Shahzada Khan, SMHA
27. Mr. Mushtaq Ali, SMHA
28. Mr. Manzoor Ali, SMHA
29. Mr. Babu, SMHA

Sindh Mental Health Authority's Mental Health Camp at District Umerkot
Medical Team and Participants:

Medical Team of Camp

1. Associate Prof. Dr. Jawed Dars, NICH Karachi
2. Dr. Lakesh Khatri, Mirpurkhas
3. Dr. Suneeta Amrat, FCPS Neurologist, Umerkot
4. Dr. Bharat Kumar, Mithi
5. Dr. Parveen Channar, SCJIP&BS
6. Dr. Kheenpal Das, JPMC Karachi
7. Dr. Saima Qureshi, SCJP&BS
8. Dr. Rajesh SCJIP&BS
9. Dr. Shahryar Qambrani SCJIP&BS
10. Dr. Beenish IOM
11. Dr. Bushra IOM
12. Dr. Huma Agha, CWMO Umerkot

Participants of Camp

1. Mr. Rana Hamir Singh, Member of Provincial Assembly
2. Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja, Chairman, SMHA
3. Dr. Syed Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA
4. Mr. Muhammad Bux Dharejo, Deputy Ccommissioner, Umerkot
5. Dr. Fareed Ahmed, District Health Officer, Umerkot
6. Dr. Muhammad Ali Nohri, M.S Civil Hospital Umerkot
7. Ms. Laila Ranjani, University of Edinburgh, Scotland
8. Mr. Muhammad Taufique, SMHA
9. Mr. Muhammad Irshad, SMHA
10. Dr. Prem Malhi, SCJIP&BS, Hyderabad
11. Mr. Bhansi Malhi, Umerkot
12. Mr. Shankar, DHO office, Umerkot
13. Mr. Majid Khan Solangi, SMHA
14. Mr. Nadeem, IOM

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Digital transformation and mental health challenges: Are we aware and prepared enough?

Awareness and knowledge of positive Mental Health is the key to solve all Mental Health issues, and there is no health without Mental Health. The path to a healthy and prosperous society relies on physically, mentally and socially healthy individuals. With emerging social, economic, environmental and generational-gap challenges, we are in an era where technology and access to unlimited number of contents on digital media and internet as well as speedy and abrupt responses and interactions to anyone in the world, has not only made things easy for us but it has brought some unwanted side-effects as well. Internet and digital media are a reality that we all keep living and enjoy benefits associated. The importance in our modern world: the intersection of mental health and the internet is therefore essential to understand. The internet, a revolutionary invention of our time, has transformed the way we communicate, work, learn, and entertain ourselves. It has brought the world closer together, connecting people across continents and cultures. Yet, it has also brought about unprecedented challenges for our mental well-being. The internet has played a pivotal role in reducing the stigma surrounding mental health by allowing individuals to share their stories, connect with others who have similar experiences, and access valuable resources. It has, in many ways, democratized access to mental health information and support. However, the same tool that can be a source of support and information can also be a double-edged sword. The internet has ushered in an era of unparalleled connectivity, but it has also led to an increase in digital stressors and mental health challenges. During COVID-19 pandemic, internet was key tool that made the extreme suffocating and phobic years a bit survivable. Post COVID-19 and then Floods 2022 wreak havoc on mental health of too many Pakistanis. Statistics tell us that every fifth person living in this country, including children and adolescents, suffers from a psychological disorder; more than 75pc of them receive no treatment. That bleak scenario has become yet more grim on account of the pandemic-related challenges that have tested everyone's emotional resilience. Depression, anxiety and stress are increasing among everyone. Amid the exceptional circumstances wrought by the pandemic from 2020 onward, that isolation was further deepened. Sindh Mental Health Authority is systematically addressing the shortcomings in the Mental Health sector. We need a holistic and practical approach that brings mental healthcare to the vast population specially in remote parts where access to any health services is extremely limited. Sindh Mental Health Authority is scaling up quality mental health services and expanding network of services with the help of INGOs, different health institutions, universities, hospitals and private clinics run by the civil society organizations.

As part of its goals and utmost responsibility, SMHA organized Mental Health Camp in Umerkot, Sindh (Read details of camp in special report pages), where Specialists/ Doctors from different Universities, Medical Colleges, and other Institutions treated around 1000 patients & distributed free medicines. People took great interest in camp.

Sindh Mental Health Authority conducted a Seminar on Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic, Rain and Flood Havoc, and Environmental issues on Mental Health on the Population of Pakistan" and recommended for "How Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) can help in Mental Health issues?". The conference focused on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rain and flood havoc and environmental issues, in worsening mental health issues across the country. Honorable Madam Shazia Marri, Federal Minister, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme suggested the extension of mental health support services to all the women enrolled in BISP, in collaboration with the Sindh Mental Health Authority.

SMHA organized a round-table seminar on "Effects of social media on mental health". Seminar was attended by experts, dignitaries and members of civ il society organizations. SMHA in the field of mental health has been well recognized by different International and National institutions and Civil Society Organizations. The Tony Buzan Academy and World Brain Trust awarded Gold Medal to the Chairman SMHA, Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja, for the acknowledgement and appreciation for his services to the Mental Health Services in the Province of Sindh and Pakistan. Honorable Dr. Suhail Ahmed Rajput, Chief Secretary of Sindh, Madam Tanzila Ume Habiba, Qambrani Special Assistant to Chief Minister on I.T and Meritorious Prof. Dr. Iqbal Afridi presented this prestigious award on behalf of Datu Prof. Dr. Ahmed Ali Khan, Dean, Tony Buzan Academy (UK London) to the Chairman SMHA. Tony Buzan Academy is the world-renowned organization and pioneer in the field of Mind Mapping Technology. In addition to that, SMHA has established the helplines in remote areas of province with collaboration of leading institutes and hospitals, which are continuously providing guidance and services to mental health patients. Helplines are supporting for the prevention of suicide & awareness and prevention of mental illnesses. The SMHA has initiated different research studies, developed various survey forms and conducted surveys during the reporting period. All activities of SMHA are being regularly update and monitored by the SMHA team. Now all SMHA activities can be viewed at SMHA website, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube Channel. I hope our continuous efforts in Mental Health will further benefit communities. I am thankful to Dr. Muzamil Hyder, Psychiatrist, working in Lyari General Hospital who compiled this whole report. Dr. Syed Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA was active helpful in these all activities.

Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja
Chairman, Sindh Mental Health Authority

Dated: 27th of July, 2023

Round Table Discussion Explores the Impact of Internet and social media on Mental Health: Addressing
Individual and Mass-Level Impact on Society and combating the challenges

Executive Summary:

A diverse group of esteemed individuals, including renowned Psychiatrists: Dr. Ayesha Mian, Dr. Jawed Akbar Dars, Dr. Ayesha Sanobar, Dr. Fawad Suleman, Psychologists Prof. Zainab Bhutto, Community Health Specialist Prof. Fauziah Rabbani, influential Political Leaders, key Stakeholders, and passionate Social Activists, recently participated in a thought-provoking round table discussion. The focal point of the discussion was the profound effect of the internet and social media on mental health, examining both individual and mass-level impacts on society. The round table aimed to identify the challenges arising from these platforms and propose effective strategies to combat them.

The discussion panel consisted of experts who shared valuable insights on the intricate relationship between internet usage, social media, and mental health. The detrimental effects on self-esteem, body image, and overall well-being were among the key issues discussed. The discussion was shared by Vice-chancellor Dawood University Prof. Dr. Samreen Hussain, Mr. Shehzad Aslam Khan from WHO, Mr. Zaeem Ahmed from FIA and Mr. Amin Hashwani.

Special assistant to CM Sindh, Ms. Tanzila Umi Habiba discussed the limitations, possibility and practicality of recommendations given for children specially regarding limiting the use of social media and screen time among children insisting on need of developing locally applicable guidelines by experts considering socio-cultural aspects of Pakistan as internationally recommended guidelines may not be fully applicable in our society and parents will need simple and tailored versions. Political Leaders from various domains actively participated in the round table, recognizing the urgency to address this growing public health concern. They highlighted the need for comprehensive policies and regulations that strike a balance between preserving online freedom and safeguarding mental health. These leaders emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between government bodies, tech companies, and mental health professionals to achieve a sustainable solution.

Stakeholders in the technology and social media industry also contributed to the conversation, acknowledging their responsibility to ensure the well-being of their users. They shared commitment to developing and implementing tools and features that promote a healthier online environment, including content moderation, responsible algorithms, and enhanced privacy settings. The presence of passionate Social Activists underscored the impact of social media platforms on marginalized communities, cyberbullying, and online harassment. They called for inclusive and empathetic digital spaces that foster positivity, understanding, and support for all individuals. Promoting digital literacy, responsible online behavior, and awareness campaigns were highlighted as crucial steps towards combating the challenges faced by society.

Chief guest, Chief Secretary Sindh, Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput acknowledged the efforts of Chairman SMHA, Senator Karim Ahmed Khawaja for arranging much needed discussion involving experts from various stakeholders under one roof and proposed the need of developing rules and regulations related to safe and free use of internet and social media without compromising freedom of speech. The round table discussion culminated in the formulation of strategies and recommendations to tackle the detrimental effects of the internet and social media on mental health.

These recommendations include:

1. Implementing comprehensive educational programs to enhance digital literacy and foster responsible online behavior from an early age.
2. Encouraging mental health professionals and organizations to collaborate with technology companies to develop mental health-focused features and interventions.
3. Formulating and implementing the up-to-date regulations related to use of internet, digital and social media and upgrading the laws, rules and regulations in collaboration with concerned departments regularly, particularly regarding the protection of user data and combatting cyberbullying without suppressing the freedom of speech.
4. Promoting public awareness campaigns that highlight the potential risks associated with excessive internet and social media usage, while encouraging a balanced approach to technology.

The round table participants expressed their commitment to continuing the dialogue and taking collective action to prioritize mental health in the digital era. By fostering collaboration among all stakeholders, they aim to create a healthier online environment that nurtures well-being and supports individuals in their digital interactions.
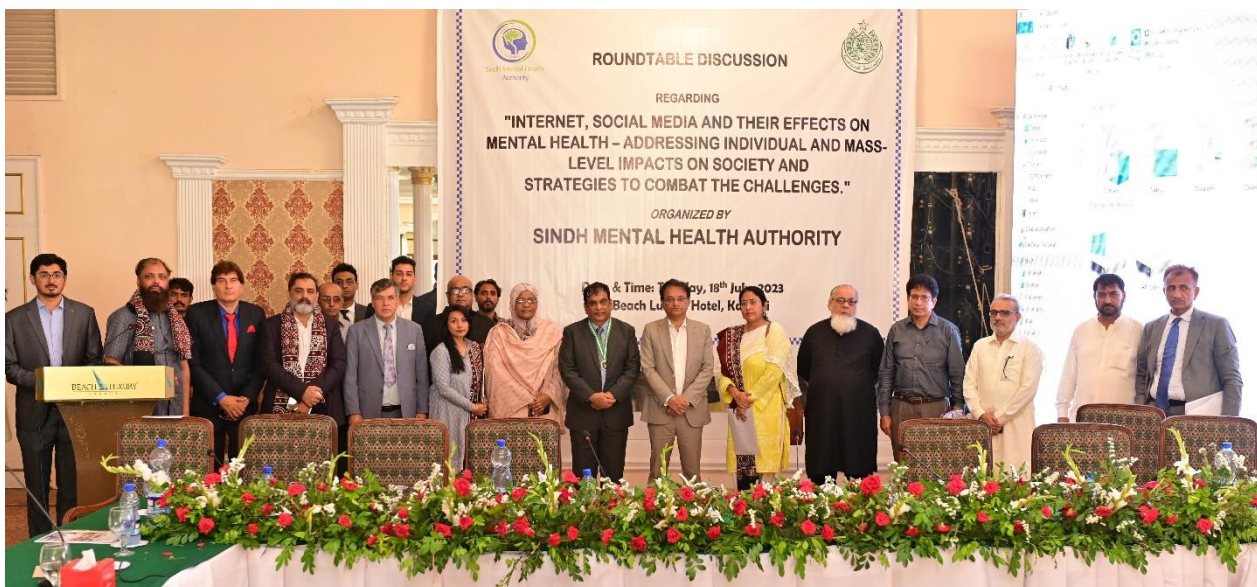
What did guest speakers and experts say?

Dr. Ayesha Mian, consultant child and adolescent Psychiatrist, Founder and CEO, Synapse Neuro-Science Institute, while addressing the conference, talked about parenting, good schooling and educational challenges for children and adolescents. She extended the discussion explaining the impacts of poverty, unemployment and mental health. The reality of internet and utilization of electronic devices cannot be denied and providing screen time to children in agreeable manner is essential.

She explained that the children and their thinking pattern is different from adults as their preferential cortex is the last part of brain to develop which is involved in higher mental functions. She further discussed some common myths related to internet and social media: social media is not just for fun 80% of time is used for brain development, social media is destroyer of kids, social media causes mental health issues busted it does not and it will disturb education plans.

The important step in addressing the issue by the parents requires initiating conversation with child and asking questions like what are kids using internet for, and how to regulate the use. Instead of getting scared, ask your children what they are doing of social media, ask kids to tell you and teach you how to use healthy internet, teaching children at a young age how to use internet at every possible level.

Amin Hashwani, President of Charter for Compassion Pakistan (CfC) talked about capitalistic society, and social media as a product of capitalistic society. He elaborated that we as humans are in amidst of grand experiment where outcome for future investment we don't know exactly.

In COVID-19 pandemic, all stakeholders including politicians, military, civil servants, and society came together locally as w ell as globally to combat the one of most fearful mass chaos and health hazard, to this example parents and teachers should be incorporated in today's policy making and delivery systems along with other stake holders, to curve the issues of problem internet use, internet addiction, cyber bully and cybercrime. We need to come together on all forum and to formulate and implement regulatory measures, he insisted.

In conclusion, "we need to go back to our roots; be it religion, ethical, appropriateness, and be role models. Ethical sense, purpose, values and responsible attitude is needed to be included in children as their character and personality building.

Dr. Ayesha Sanober Chachar, talked about youth in digital world and gaming. She explained the goodness of digital world especially digital gaming. She remarked that snooker game increased cognitive ability more than puzzle game. Higher mental functions like executive function, cognition, time management and organisation can be learnt and improved by the gaming.

She mentioned that we focus on ugly and negative, however the good of digital media and vulnerability factors are ignored. Gaming industry is blooming in Pakistan, however in conclusion she said that we are not thinking for our generation from their point of view but living in past and this way of dealing challenges needs a revised and reformed approach. Asking the participants, she stressed on the important question to be answered by the authorities, parents and relevant stakeholders, are we saving our future generation from artificial intelligence? If we don't talk about it now, we need to think more holistically.

Dr. Javed Akbar Dars, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Jinnah Sindh Medical University, Karachi and Hea d of Department of Psychiatry, National Institute of Child Health Karachi, stated that 10 crores of the Pakistani population are under 18 years of age. He emphasized the ambiguity regarding the future unfolding in this modern era and left question "how well prepared we are regarding internet use in terms of our young population and re-live our life with our children and not grounding with time?".

Dr. Dars explained common risks associated with internet use, including dating, sexual harassment, cyber bully, cyber-crime, internet addiction, depression and anxiety. Addressing the complex challenges better understanding of problem, vulnerability factors for at-risk population like children and adolescent and organizational team work under government umbrella can have a combine effect in curbing the problem.

As a society and parent, people expect that children should have and be provided opportunities to develop, but practically and in reality, when it comes to internet use, which is global reality, we don't explore it rather fear it hence avoid it. This will continue hurting the masses at every level and lead to a vicious cycle of perpetuating the problem. There for it is essential to emphasize that there is a need to increase awareness of internet use and social media use among parents and adults, so they can guide kids better.

Dr. Fawad Suleman, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi gave real life case-based understanding of internet addiction and issues of screen time mismanagement. He iterated the fact that internet is a reality that we cannot escape. Now globally there are compact guidelines being formulated for such issues related to internet use, like screen time, internet addiction.

Rolls of parent to guide kids and policy for safe use of social media will have impact on limiting the long hours screen-time for kids. Easy access of content on internet may have many folds effect on

the brain of children, as the brain is not mature enough especially the prefrontal cortex, which is last to develop.

Children be given examples with actual actions of parents to empathize the importance of teaching social skills to children, and preventing bullying and cyber bullying. Regarding limiting screen-time, a parent can explain the effect of Internet on brain, which is caused by dopamine release due to screen visuals, which leads to addiction through complex brain functions. Therefore, children should be encouraged to communicate and discuss about what did they see on screen and how they felt about particular content.

The recommendations included breaking the myth; internet cause psychiatric disorders, it doesn't on its own, however it is the vulnerability of individual that leads to grave consequences. Some simple suggestions in daily life include turning of screen in family meetings, and learn about parental control in browsing internet, its utilization, support and above all, validation of the concerns and problems raised by children.

Professor Zainab Bhutto, Dean and Director, Bahria University Institute of Professional Psychology, comparing internet use to a coin, explained there are two sides of internet use, on one side of coin there are several advantages which are essential and difficult to live without in modern world, and other side of coin are disadvantages of technology, which in some cases are extremely dangerous and undeniable, that are penetrating and damaging brains of every aged human.

Addressing the remedies of challenges she asked, "What to do at individual level to improve present scenario in our country?" Evidence based effects of increase internet use reported that it leads to cyber-crime, anxiety disorder, depressive disorder and addiction with actual withdrawal of effects.

How to overcome the problem? She further added that the first step is acknowledging the problem and then tapering of time for withdrawal symptoms, that is gradually reducing the amount of internet use with supervised and supportive health. She insisted that it should be through understanding of reasons for over use of internet, creating self-boundaries, and change of routine. Life style modification may include performing regular physical exercise, lase time in activities involving internet use, and improve interpersonal and social skills. Also, there should be accountability and online activities be avoided or re-schedule to in-person activities. Development of other healthy interests like outdoor or indoor gaming, arts and some other hobbies can be helpful. Above all, professional help and counselling or therapy should be sought.

Professor Dr. Fauziah Rabbani, The Noorudin M. Thobani Prof. Public Health, Brain and Mind Institute, Department of Community Medicine, The Aga Khan University talked about mental health for rural areas and challenge faced in the access of services. She mentioned that resources do not meet the demand generally and this is truer for availability and access of services of mental health in rural population.

She also briefed about her project "Pareshan" which aims improving mental health awareness and literacy at primary health care level by training lady health workers.

Muhammad Ahmed Zaeem, The Deputy Director, Cyber Crime Circle of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), talked about policy and pertinent laws specially in recent times related to cyber -crime. He also mentioned that stress counsellors were appointed by FIA for victims of cyber-crime. Some of the grave crimes including child abuse, sexual abuse and child pornography have been reported and lodging of complaints in FIA sometimes led to the suicide by the victim.

He also highlighted the problem faced due to some non-cooperativeness of some people who denies the rules under the flag of freedom of speech. At the end some common cyber-crimes lead to mental health problems like fraud in loan applications, hacking and leaking of personal content including messages, pictures and videos on social media. Now internet has been a source of spread of drug used and drug crimes as the drugs are being soul online wire social media platforms. Also, regarding parents and academics, the mobile phones and tablets that were provided for education to the children but are now being used differently.

Some recommendations included parental control, awareness of bullying at school, and awareness of internet use by kids in school both for the teachers and parents. There is dire need to recognize the importance of open communication and reducing the gap between children and their parents specially mother. He mentioned that FIA 15 helpline reporting centers are receiving complaints across the country.

Professor Samreen Hussain, Vice Chancelor Dawood University of Engineering and Technology Karachi addressed the participants and discussed the issues of unauthorized publication specially health related, and availability of such material in internet for layman access, which can have grave consequences. She stressed upon monitoring and filtration of authorized and unauthorized publications. With that, Inclusion of art and music in tough courses like medical sciences, chartered accounting and other challenging fields can have positive impact on wellbeing of candidates.

There is trend of following on social media and being center of attention, rather than opinion building and critical thinking among young population which needs intelligent approaches to direct the growing brains towards positive and meaningful, goal-oriented activities.

Ms. Tanzila Umi Habiba, Special Assistant to CM: Information Science &Technology, talked about internet and its benefits. She pointed out the scope of internet in current scenario, and how to take our children along with the fair use of technology.

Giving examples from local population, she narrated the fact that we cannot forcibly limit the access of electronic devices and screen time to kids, hence these days, to curb such problems and limit their screen time in conventional methods, we need to understand and developed locally and culturally tailored and applicable policies and methods that deals with such issues involving teachers, parents and professionals.

Observation and learning of kids and parents are very important so parents should be a good example for their kids in terms of teaching them social norms and ethics to children. Mental health stigma and mentally challenged individuals should be encouraged to get help from professional psychiatrist and psychologist. She highlighted the importance of strict, controlling and restrictive parenting which may worse the problem on long-term, and therefore setting the rules and limits are also very important.

Chief Guest Honourable Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput, Chief Secretary Govt. of Sindh, talked about issues arising due to internet in daily life activities, and use of technology and its impact on daily living including mental health. He insisted upon the significance of cost benefit use of technology as it takes a lot on your health since now a day even resting on a leave for someone is difficult because of easy interne t and mobile access remotely.

Setting limits of use and scheduling free and leisure time is important. Therefore, managing the important work and handling over of such important work during period of leave to some nominee as part of work policy should be implemented, as is practiced in developed countries. Culture of use of electronic internet devices and social media at workplace needs deeper understanding in terms of its effects on quality of work and life and associated risks, and its appropriateness as well as applicability be regulated by the department ensuring safe use only.

He further extended talk by understanding, acknowledging and accepting the freedom of speech and abuse, both are different and should be decided and explained in every domain. It should be clarified that forwarding of information on social media and groups needs authentication and monitoring, and regularization under certain policies, laws and rules.

At the end, he insisted upon the urgent need of formulating, enacting and updating the laws for defamation, cyber-crime and cyberbullying. There should be a rapid response team to deal with such complaints. Setting a healthy workplace balance regarding use of social media and internet is very important. There is essential need to develop wide consensus among various stakeholders including

government, civil society and judiciary to work efficiently in collaboration to meet the needs of time.

At the end vote of thanks was presented by meritorious Professor Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Afridi, followed by presenting the gold medal for the recognition of services of Senator Karim Ahmed Khwaja on behalf of the prestigious Tony Buzan Global Academy and World Brain Trust, London.

Chief Secretary Sindh Dr. Suhail Ahmed Rajput, Special Assistant of Chief Minister on I.T Madam Tanzila Umi Habiba and Meritorious Prof. Dr. Iqbal Afridi give this award on behalf of Datu Prof. Dr. Ahmed Ali Khan, Dean, Tony Buzan Academy (UK London) to Senator Dr. Karim Khawaja. Tony Buzan Academy is world renowned organization and pioneer in the field of Mind Mapping. Tony Buzan Academy is manned by world stars in Brain Sciences and Mind Mapping Technology. Braintrust is building the world's first and largest user-owned professional network and job marketplace. Braintrust aims to help the world's talent realize all of their potential, with access to high-paying jobs. Dr. Karim Khawaja is the founding Chairman of Sindh Mental Health Authority. Under his leadership the SMHA has laid down sound foundations for the development of mental healthcare in the entire province of Sindh. Dr. Khawaja besides SMHA is on board of several healthcare institutions and social organizations.

MENTAL HEALTH, INTERNET, AND SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Background:

In the 21ˢᵗ century, the internet has revolutionized the way we communicate and connect with others, particularly through social media platforms. Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, allowing us to share experiences, ideas, and emotions with friends, family, and even strangers across the globe. While these platforms have undeniable benefits in terms of fostering connectivity and information sharing, they also come with potential risks, particularly concerning mental health. In this regard, Sindh Mental Health Authority took another leading step towards understanding the impact of internet social media on mental health, exploring both the positive and negative effects with the help of experts from respective domain of public health, mental health, law and justice, cyber-crime, media regulatory authorities, and national and international NGOs.

Let's discuss briefly about the dynamic effects both positive and negative, of internet on life of humans, individually and collectively and the ways to deal with the challenges.

I. Positive Aspects of Internet and social media on Mental Health:

- **Social Support and Community Building:** Social media provides a platform for people to find and connect with like-minded individuals and communities, helping those who might otherwise feel isolated to find support and camaraderie. Virtual support networks can be beneficial for individuals struggling with mental health challenges, as they create a sense of belonging and understanding.
- **Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy:** Social media has facilitated conversations about mental health, breaking down the stigma associated with mental illness. People now feel more comfortable sharing their stories and seeking help online, leading to increased awareness and access to mental health resources.
- **Educational Resources and Coping Strategies:** Numerous online communities and experts provide educational resources and coping strategies for managing mental health issues. These resources can empower individuals to better understand their emotions and develop effective strategies for coping with stress and anxiety.

II. Negative Aspects of Internet and social media on Mental Health:

- **Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** Social media platforms can be breeding grounds for cyberbullying and online harassment, which can have severe negative impacts on an individual's mental well-being. Harassment, trolling, and constant exposure to negative comments can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of worthlessness.
- **Social Comparison and FOMO:** The constant display of curated and idealized lives on social media can trigger feelings of inadequacy and social comparison. The fear of missing out (FOMO) can lead to anxiety and depression as individuals feel pressured to keep up with others and their perceived perfect lives.
- **Sleep Disruption:** Excessive use of social media, especially before bedtime, can lead to sleep disruptions. The constant engagement with screens and exposure to stimulating content can interfere with the quality and duration of sleep, which can adversely impact mental health.

- **Addiction and Overuse:** Social media platforms are designed to be addictive, leading some individuals to spend excessive amounts of time scrolling through feeds and engaging in virtual interactions. This overuse can lead to feelings of loneliness, disconnection from reality, and reduced self-esteem.

III. Mitigating the Negative Impact: How to curb the challenges?

- **Digital Wellbeing Tools:** Social media platforms can implement digital wellbeing tools to help users manage their time on the platform and set limits on notifications. These measures can promote healthier social media habits and reduce addiction-related issues.
- **Mental Health Support Services:** Social media companies can collaborate with mental health organizations to provide readily accessible mental health support services and resources. This can include crisis helplines, mental health self-assessment tools, and referral services.
- **Encouraging Positive Content:** Platforms can actively promote positive and informative content related to mental health, encouraging discussions on well-being, self-care, and coping strategies. Combatting mental health problems associated with internet and social media requires a proactive and balanced approach. Here are some strategies that can help:
- **Awareness and Education:** Increasing awareness about the potential negative impacts of excessive internet and social media use on mental health is crucial. Educate yourself and others about the risks involved, including cyberbullying, social comparison, and addiction.
- **Set Boundaries:** Establish healthy boundaries for internet and social media use. Allocate specific times for online activities and avoid using these platforms excessively, especially before bedtime.
- **Limit Screen Time:** Reduce overall screen time by engaging in alternative activities such as physical exercise, spending time with loved ones, pursuing hobbies, or reading books.
- **Digital Detox:** Consider taking occasional digital detox periods where you completely disconnect from social media and digital devices. This can help you regain perspective and reduce dependence on these platforms.
- **Selective Social Media Use:** Evaluate your social media use and consider limiting your exposure to platforms that trigger negative emotions. Choose to engage with content that promotes positivity, education, and mental well-being.
- **Unfollow or Mute Triggering Content:** If certain accounts or content consistently affect your mental health negatively, unfollow or mute them to limit exposure to triggering material.
- **Seek Support Offline:** Prioritize face-to-face interactions and seek support from friends, family, or mental health professionals. In-person connections can provide a deeper sense of support and understanding.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Incorporate mindfulness practices into your daily routine to stay grounded and present. Techniques like meditation, deep breathing, or yoga can help reduce anxiety and stress.
- **Engage in Physical Activity:** Regular exercise can have a positive impact on mental health. Incorporate physical activities that you enjoy into your routine to release endorphins and improve mood.

- **Volunteer and Help Others:** Contributing to your community or helping others can give you a sense of purpose and improve your self-esteem and overall well-being.
- **Recognize and Address Cyberbullying:** If you encounter cyberbullying or witness it happening to others, take appropriate action. Report it to the platform administrators and consider seeking help from trusted adults or authorities if needed.
- **Limit News Consumption:** Constant exposure to distressing news and information can contribute to anxiety and stress. Limit your news consumption and ensure you get information from reliable and balanced sources.
- **Create a Supportive Online Environment:** If you are active on social media, focus on creating a positive and supportive online environment. Be mindful of your interactions with others and avoid engaging in negative or harmful discussions.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If you find that internet and social media use are significantly impacting your mental health, consider seeking support from mental health professionals. They can provide personalized strategies and coping mechanisms.

Finding a healthy balance with internet and social media usage is essential for maintaining positive mental health. By implementing above mentioned strategies and being mindful of online activities, one can mitigate the negative effects and harness the benefits that these platforms can offer.

Conclusion:

Internet social media has become an integral part of modern society, offering both opportunities and challenges for mental health. While it has the potential to provide support, awareness, and educational resources, it also presents risks of cyberbullying, social comparison, and addiction. To ensure a healthy balance, individuals must be mindful of their social media usage, while platforms should prioritize user well-being through digital wellbeing tools and mental health support services. Ultimately, a more responsible and compassionate approach to internet social media can help foster a positive impact on mental health in the digital age.

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA: CYBERBULLYING AND CYBER-CRIME

While social media can foster connections and support, it also has negative consequences for mental health. The constant exposure to carefully curated images and content on social media can trigger feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and depression. People often compare their lives to the idealized versions presented on social media, leading to a sense of discontent and low self-esteem. Moreover, the addictive nature of social media can contribute to excessive screen time, leading to sleep disturbances and further exacerbating mental health issues.

The Rise of Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying refers to the use of digital platforms, such as social media, to harass, intimidate, or harm others. It can take various forms, including spreading rumors, sharing humiliating photos or videos, or sending hurtful messages. Due to the anonymity and perceived distance of the internet, cyberbullies may feel emboldened to engage in harmful behaviors that they might not otherwise pursue in-person.

Impact of Cyberbullying on Mental Health:

Cyberbullying can have severe consequences for the mental health of the victims. They may experience feelings of fear, sadness, anxiety, and a loss of self-worth. The constant online attacks can lead to social isolation, withdrawal from friends and family, and a decline in academic or work performance. In extreme cases, cyberbullying has been linked to suicidal ideation and self-harm.

Preventing Cyberbullying:

Combatting cyberbullying requires a multi-faceted approach involving individuals, communities, and platforms:

a) Awareness and Education: Raise awareness about cyberbullying and its impact on mental health through school programs, workshops, and online campaigns.
b) Empower Bystanders: Encourage bystanders to take a stand against cyberbullying by reporting incidents and providing support to the victims.
c) Stronger Policies and Reporting Mechanisms: Social media platforms should implement clear policies against cyberbullying and provide easily accessible reporting mechanisms for users to flag abusive content.
d) Support and Resources: Ensure that mental health support services are readily available to victims of cyberbullying. Schools and communities should provide counseling and resources to help victims cope with the emotional toll.
e) Parental Involvement: Parents play a crucial role in educating their children about responsible online behavior and recognizing the signs of cyberbullying.

Promoting Positive Online Culture:

Fostering a positive online environment can also contribute to combating cyberbullying and improving mental health on social media. Encouraging empathy, kindness, and respectful communication can help create a safer and more supportive space for users.

INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA AND LAW: ACTS, RULES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES IN PAKISTAN

Developing effective policies and laws related to cybercrime, cyberbullying, and the fair use of the internet, digital applications, and social media is crucial to create a safe and secure online environment for users. These policies should strike a balance between protecting individual rights, promoting freedom of expression, and ensuring public safety.

Recommendations for regulating policies in Pakistan:

- **Cyberbullying Laws and Reporting Mechanisms:** Pakistan needs robust cyberbullying laws that protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Social media platforms should be required to implement effective reporting mechanisms for users to report cyberbullying incidents promptly.
- **Privacy Protection and Data Security:** Regulating policies should ensure that social media platforms adhere to strict privacy standards and safeguard user data from misuse or exploitation. Transparent data policies and user consent should be prioritized.
- **Digital Wellbeing Tools and Age Restrictions:** Social media platforms should introduce digital wellbeing tools that allow users to manage screen time and limit notifications. Additionally, age restrictions can help protect younger users from potential harm.
- **Mental Health Support on Social Media Platforms:** Collaboration between mental health organizations and social media platforms can lead to the provision of resources and helplines for users experiencing mental health issues.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** The government can launch public awareness campaigns to educate people about the potential risks of excessive social media use and promote responsible online behavior.
- **Media Literacy Programs:** Implementing media literacy programs in schools can help students develop critical thinking skills and navigate social media responsibly, reducing the impact of harmful content.
- **Digital Citizenship Education:** Integrating digital citizenship education into the curriculum can teach students about online etiquette, cyberbullying prevention, and the responsible use of social media.
- **Defining Cybercrime and Cyberbullying:** Clearly define what constitutes cybercrime and cyberbullying in the legal framework. This should encompass a range of offenses, including hacking, identity theft, online harassment, and spreading false information with malicious intent.
- **Penalties and Punishments:** Establish appropriate penalties and punishments for different cybercrimes and cyberbullying offenses. These should be proportionate to the severity of the offense and serve as a deterrent to potential perpetrators.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Implement user-friendly and accessible reporting mechanisms for victims of cybercrime and cyberbullying. Encourage social media platforms and digital applications to establish easy-to-use reporting features that can quickly address incidents.

Outline guidelines for the fair use of the internet and social media, emphasizing the importance of respecting intellectual property rights, avoiding hate speech, and preventing the spread of misinformation.

- **Content Moderation and Accountability:** Encourage social media platforms and digital application providers to adopt transparent content moderation policies. Hold them accountable for enforcing these policies and addressing issues related to harmful or illegal content.
- **International Cooperation:** Establish partnerships and agreements with other countries to address cybercrime that transcends national borders. International cooperation can be critical in tracking down cybercriminals and prosecuting them effectively.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate the general public about cybercrime and cyberbullying risks and provide guidance on how to stay safe online.
- **Digital Application Security Standards:** Develop and enforce security standards for digital applications, ensuring that they are designed with user safety and data protection in mind.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Groups:** Prioritize the protection of vulnerable groups, such as children and marginalized communities, from cyberbullying and online exploitation. Create specific policies tailored to address their unique needs.
- **Oversight and Review Mechanisms:** Establish regulatory bodies responsible for overseeing the implementation and enforcement of these policies. Regularly review and update the laws to keep up with evolving cyber threats and technologies.

Conclusion:

Effective policies and laws related to cybercrime, cyberbullying, and the fair use of the internet, digital applications, and social media are essential for creating a secure and responsible online environment. By defining offenses, establishing penalties, promoting user reporting, protecting data privacy, and encouraging digital citizenship education, governments can safeguard individual rights and public safety in the digital era. Collaboration between governments, technology companies, civil society organizations, and individuals is essential to ensure these policies are effective and adapted to the ever-changing online landscape.

CYBER-CRIME, CYBER-BULLYING, DIGITAL MEDIA HARASSMENT LAWS IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan has taken significant steps to address the issue of cyberbullying and online harassment. The need for specific legislation to combat cyberbullying and protect individuals from online abuse has been recognized widely. Here are some key cyberbullying laws and initiatives that have been brought:

➢ **Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-Organization) Act, 1996:**

This act serves as the primary legislation governing telecommunication and internet services in Pakistan. It provides the legal framework for the establishment, regulation, and operation of telecommunication services, including internet service providers.

➢ **Section 37: Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content:**

Section 37 of PECA grants the government the authority to block or remove online content deemed unlawful or against the "glory of Islam" or the "integrity, security, or defense of Pakistan." Critics argue that this section may be misused to censor online speech and infringe upon freedom of expression.

➢ **Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (PECA):**

PECA is a comprehensive piece of legislation that addresses various forms of cybercrime, including cyberbullying. Under this law, cyberbullying is criminalized, and offenders can face imprisonment and fines for their actions.

- **Section 21: Cyberstalking and Cyberbullying:**

  Section 21 of the PECA specifically addresses cyberstalking and cyberbullying. It defines cyberbullying as "the intentional tormenting or harassing others through the internet, email, text messages, or any other digital communication." The punishment for cyberbullying under this law can be up to three years in prison and a fine of up to PKR 1 million.

➢ **Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules, 2020:**

The government introduced the Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules in 2020 to regulate social media platforms operating in Pakistan. The rules mandate companies such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to establish offices in Pakistan and appoint local representatives to address government concerns and cooperate in investigations.

➢ **Digital Media Advertising Regulations, 2021:**

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) introduced Digital Media Advertising Regulations in 2021 to regulate digital media advertising in Pakistan. These regulations aim to bring digital media advertising within the purview of PEMRA and ensure transparency in the advertising industry.

➢ **National Response Centre for Cyber Crimes (NR3C):**

NR3C is a specialized unit of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) responsible for investigating and handling cybercrimes, including cyberbullying. Victims can report incidents of cyberbullying to NR3C, which will take appropriate action against the perpetrators.

➢ **Cyber Harassment Helpline:**

The Digital Rights Foundation (DRF), in collaboration with NR3C and other stakeholders, launched the Cyber Harassment Helpline. This helpline provides support and legal assistance to victims of cyberbullying and online harassment.

➢ **Social Media Platforms Cooperation Rules:**

The government of Pakistan has introduced draft rules to regulate social media platforms in the country further. The rules aim to hold social media companies accountable for content on their platforms and provide a framework for addressing grievances

Governments and stakeholders must continue to work together to ensure effective implementation of these laws and support systems to protect individuals from cyberbullying and online harassment. Additionally, as with any regulatory framework, ensuring transparency, respecting human rights, and fostering public consultation are crucial elements in developing and implementing these laws and policies.

Internet Addiction: An unrecognized rising challenge

Internet addiction, also known as problematic internet use, is a behavioral disorder characterized by excessive and compulsive internet use. Individuals with internet addiction often spend an excessive amount of time online, neglecting real-life responsibilities, relationships, and self-care. Internet addiction can lead to social isolation, sleep disturbances, and negative impacts on mental health.
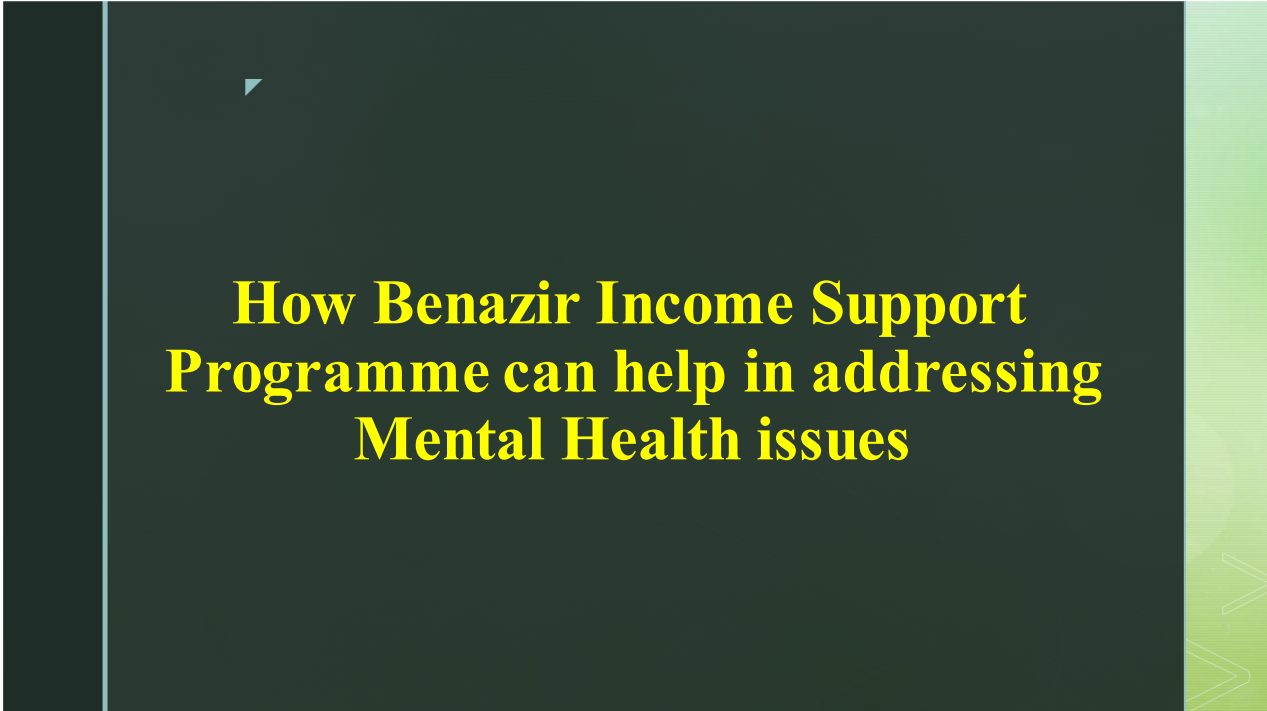
Mental Health Problems Associated with Internet Use:

a) **Anxiety and Depression:** Excessive internet use, especially on social media, can contribute to feelings of anxiety and depression due to social comparison and fear of missing out (FOMO).

b) **Cyberbullying:** Online harassment and cyberbullying on social media can lead to emotional distress, anxiety, and a decline in mental well-being.

c) **Sleep Disruptions:** Engaging in internet activities, particularly before bedtime, can disrupt sleep patterns and lead to sleep deprivation, which can impact mental health negatively.

d) **Escapism and Avoidance:** Some individuals may use the internet as a way to escape real-life problems and challenges, leading to avoidance behaviors and exacerbating mental health issues.

Addressing Internet Addiction and Mental Health Problems:

a) **Setting Boundaries:** Establish healthy boundaries for internet and social media use, allocating specific time for online activities and reducing excessive screen time.

b) **Seeking Support:** If internet use is negatively impacting mental health, consider seeking support from mental health professionals or support groups.

c) **Engaging in Offline Activities:** Balance internet use with offline activities, such as physical exercise, spending time with loved ones, and pursuing hobbies.

d) **Digital Detox:** Take periodic digital detoxes to disconnect from the internet and social media, allowing time for relaxation and self-reflection.

e) **Promoting Digital Wellbeing:** Social media platforms and technology companies can implement features and tools to promote digital wellbeing and limit addictive behaviors.

Conclusion:

Excessive internet use and internet addiction can have detrimental effects on mental health, contributing to anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. By promoting responsible internet use, setting boundaries, and seeking support when needed, individuals can mitigate the negative impacts and foster a healthier relationship with technology. Additionally, technology companies can play a role in promoting digital wellbeing and responsible usage to create a more positive online environment for users.

How Benazir Income Support Programme can help in addressing Mental Health issues

SMHA conducted Seminar on "How BISP can help in addressing Mental Health issues"

Introduction

Sindh Mental Health Authority conducted a Seminar on Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic, Rain and Flood Havoc, and Environmental issues on Mental Health on the Population of Pakistan" and found out the utilization of "How Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) can help addressing Mental Health issues", in which the Honorable Madam Shazia Marri, Federal Minister, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme was Chief Guest of the

Seminar, Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja, Chairman, Sindh Mental Health Authority welcomed to the Chief Guest and other esteemed participants included, Dr. Maqbool Memon, DHO Malir,
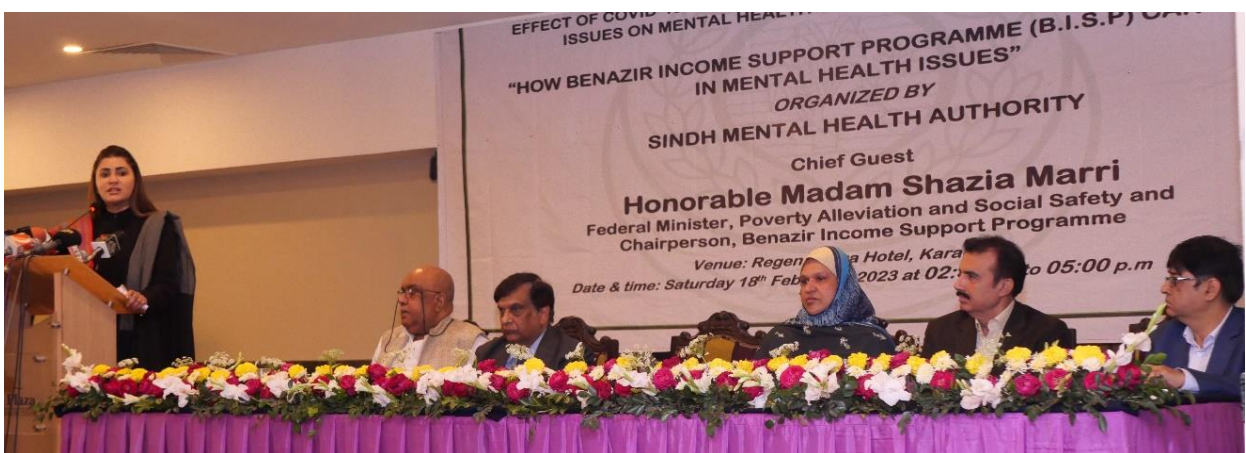
Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Afridi, Meritorious Professor of Psychiatry, Madam Samina Vertejee, Assistant Professor in School of Nursing and Midwifery at the Aga Khan University, Dr. Ali Wasif, President Pakistan Association for Mental Health, Dr. Suresh Kumar, Ex-Secretary Health, Prof.

Majid Ali Abidi, Member, World Psychiatric Association (WPA), Prof. Qudsia Tariq, UoK, Dr. Zainab Bhutto, Director, Institute of Professional Psychology at Bahria University, Dr. Sarah, Chapter Chief, World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Greech, DHO Tharparkar, Dr. Chooni Lal, Head of Psychiatry ward, JPMC, Advocate Riaz Hussain Baloch, Principal, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali

Bhutto Law College Malir, Syed Dr. Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA, Dr. Ajmal Mughal, Ex-Chief Psychiatrist Sindh, Dr. Muhammad Bux Dahani, M.S Thado Nalo, Malir, Dr. Ayub, Mr. Zahid Lashari, Mr. Muhammad Taufique, Director SMHA, Dr. Rakesh Bhagtwani, Head of Psychiatry Ward, Hamdard University, Dr. Rubina Kidwai, Member SMHA, Dr. Sooraj Palijo, Chief Medical Supervisor, IMC, Dr. Abdul Razzaq Shaikh, Mr. Kishor Kumar, Mr. Naresh Kumar, the medical community, civil society, particularly doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists from some of the most renowned hospitals and universities in Karachi were also participated in the Seminar.

The conference focused on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rain and flood havoc and environmental issues, in worsening mental health issues across the country. on this occasion Madam Shazia Marri stressed on the importance of mental health issues stating that there was no health without mental health, as the brain was a vital organ that needed care too. She further stressed the necessity of ending the stigma surrounding mental health issues, through the efforts of the media in promoting mental health awareness, Minister suggested the extension of mental health support services to all the women enrolled in BISP, in collaboration with the Sindh Mental Health Authority.

In this regard, chairman SMHA, followed up with honourable minister, Madam Shazia Mari and requested in writing her kind consideration for the inclusion of mentally retarded women in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and the allocation of a considerable amount in the upcoming budget for their support and rehabilitation. Following recommendation was made:

Recommendations:

- Sindh Mental Health Authority respectfully request to include mentally retarded women's (Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Dementia, Mental Disorder and other Psychiatric Diseases) in the BISP, so that they can receive the financial support and to meet their daily needs. Additionally, I urge you to allocate a considerable amount in the upcoming budget to provide them with the necessary rehabilitation and care facilities.

SMHA is optimistic and ready to serve the socially, economically and mentally challenged and isolated vulnerable women of society and their families. We aim in providing such access to mental health not only on provincial level but it must be extended to national level with the utilization of BISP.

Report of Sindh Mental Health Authority (SMHA) Psychiatric Camp in Umerkot

Report on the Sindh Mental Health Authority (SMHA) Psychiatric Camp in Umerkot, Sindh

Date: June 4th, 2023

Introduction:

The Sindh Mental Health Authority (SMHA), in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration-UN (IOM), organized a pioneering psychiatric camp in Umerkot, Sindh, on Sunday, June 4th, 2023. The camp's main objective was to address the critical mental health challenges faced by the community in the region. The event was inaugurated by Honorable Rana Hamir Singh, MPA Sindh at Umerkot.

Background of the city

The city of Umerkot is the capital of the district Umerkot District (also known as Amarkot District), located in the province of Sindh, Pakistan. According to the 2017 census, Umerkot district had a population of 1,073,469, with a sex ratio of 929 females per 1000 males.

The DHQ hospital, Umerkot runs a daily OPD with an inflow of 700 to 1000 patients, and is equipped with a team of doctors comprising of a neurologist, pediatrician, pulmonologist and general physician; as well as inpatient facility.

Purpose of the Camp:

The primary purpose of the psychiatric camp was to provide much-needed mental health support to the community in Umerkot. With the assistance of a team of senior doctors and dedicated healthcare professionals, the camp aimed to conduct comprehensive mental health assessments and offer personalized treatment recommendations to all individuals seeking help.

Medical Team:

The camp saw the participation of a skilled team of healthcare professionals, including psychologists, psychiatrists, neurophysicians, and children's health physicians. The team

consisted of esteemed doctors such as:

1. Associate Prof. Dr. Jawed Dars
2. Dr. Lakesh Khatri
3. Dr. Suneeta Amrat, FCPS Neurologist
4. Dr. Bharat Kumar
5. Dr. Parveen Channar
6. Dr. Kheenpal Das
7. Dr. Saima Qureshi
8. Dr. Rajesh SCJIP&BS
9. Dr. Shahryar Qambrani SCJIP&BS
10. Dr. Beenish IOM
11. Dr. Bushra IOM
12. Dr. Huma Agha, CWMO

Activities and Impact:

The psychiatric camp catered to a total of 800 individuals, including men, women, andchildren from the region. The medical team conducted comprehensive mental health assessments and provided individualized treatment recommendations to each participant.The collaboration with IOM-UN allowed the camp to distribute essential medicines, generously donated by the organization.

Acknowledgments:

Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khawaja, Chairman Sindh Mental Health Authority, extended a warm welcome to Honorable Rana Hamir Singh, Mr. M. B Dharejo, D.C Umerkot, and other District Administration Officers. He also expressed gratitude to Mr. Shafique Mahesar, Commissioner Mirpurkhas, Mr. M.B. Dharejo, D.C Umerkot, Dr. Fareed Ahmed, DHO Umerkot, and Dr. Muhammad Ali Nohri, M.S Civil Hospital Umerkot, along with the media and civil society for their unwavering support
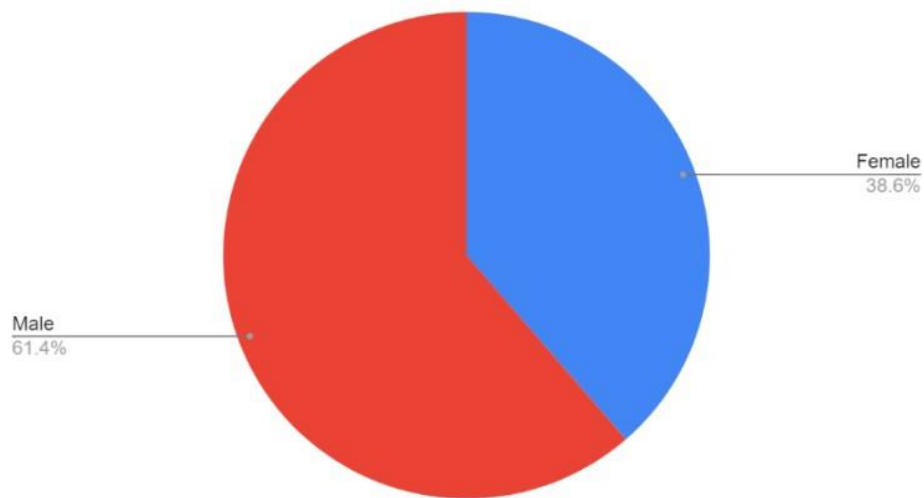
Participant Insights:

Notable attendees included Dr. Syed Zafar Mehdi, Secretary SMHA, Ms. Laila Ranjani, a PhD candidate in International Development from the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, Dr. Prem Malhi, Mr. Majid Khan, Mr. Nadeem IOM, andothers.
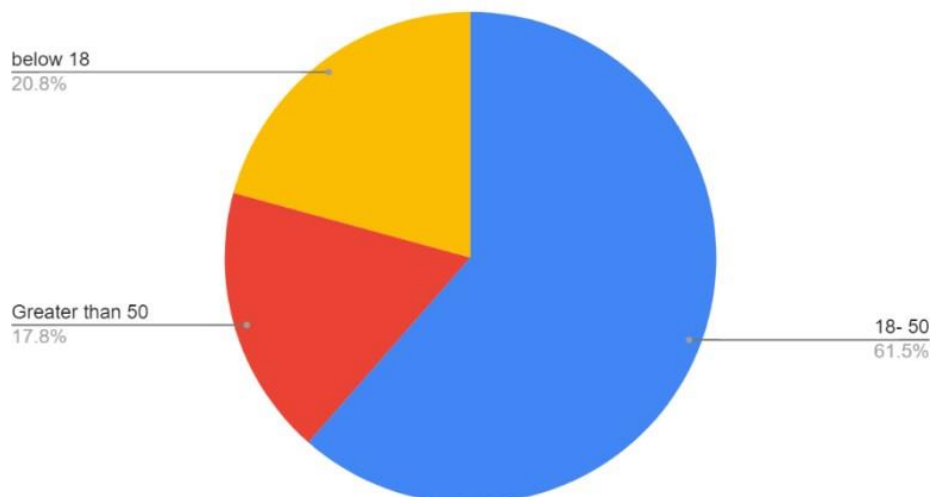
Patient Demographics and Diagnoses:

A total of 800 patients were seen during the camp, comprising 61.4% males and 38.6% females. The age distribution showed that 60.15% were between 18-50 years of age, 20.8% were below 18 years, and 17.8% were above 50 years.
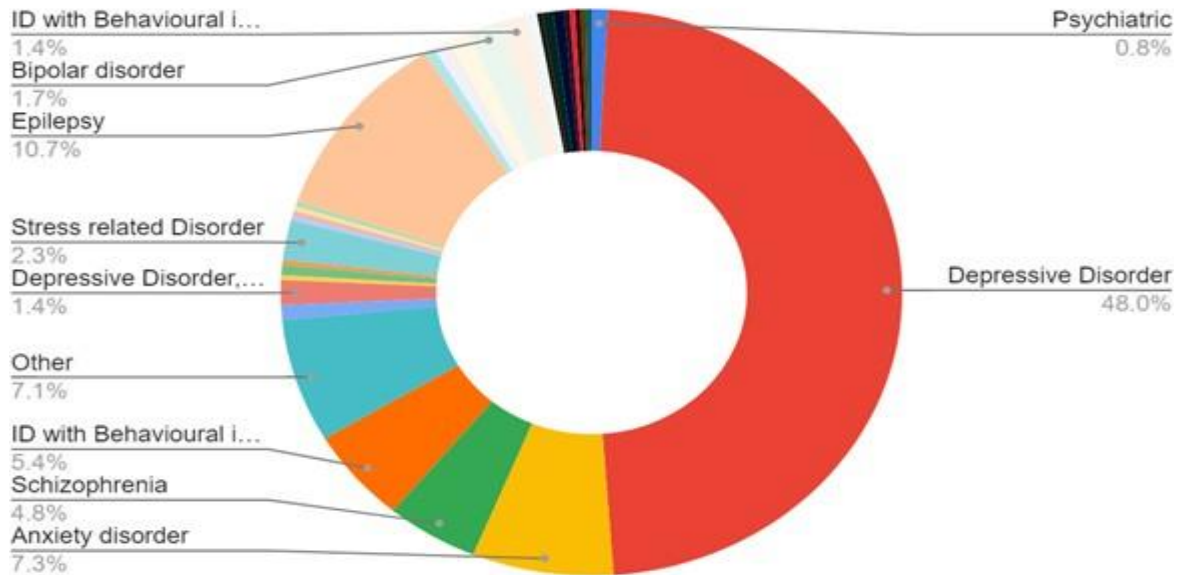
Count of Gender

Female
38.6%

Male
61.4%

Count of Age of Patient

below 18
20.8%

Greater than 50
17.8%

18- 50
61.5%

The most common mental health disorder observed was depressive disorder, affecting 48.0% of patients. Epilepsy was present in 10.7% of cases, schizophrenia in 4.8%, intellectual disability with behavioral issues in 5.4%, anxiety disorder in 7.3%, stress-related disorder in 2.3%, and 7.1% were referred to the medical and surgical department.
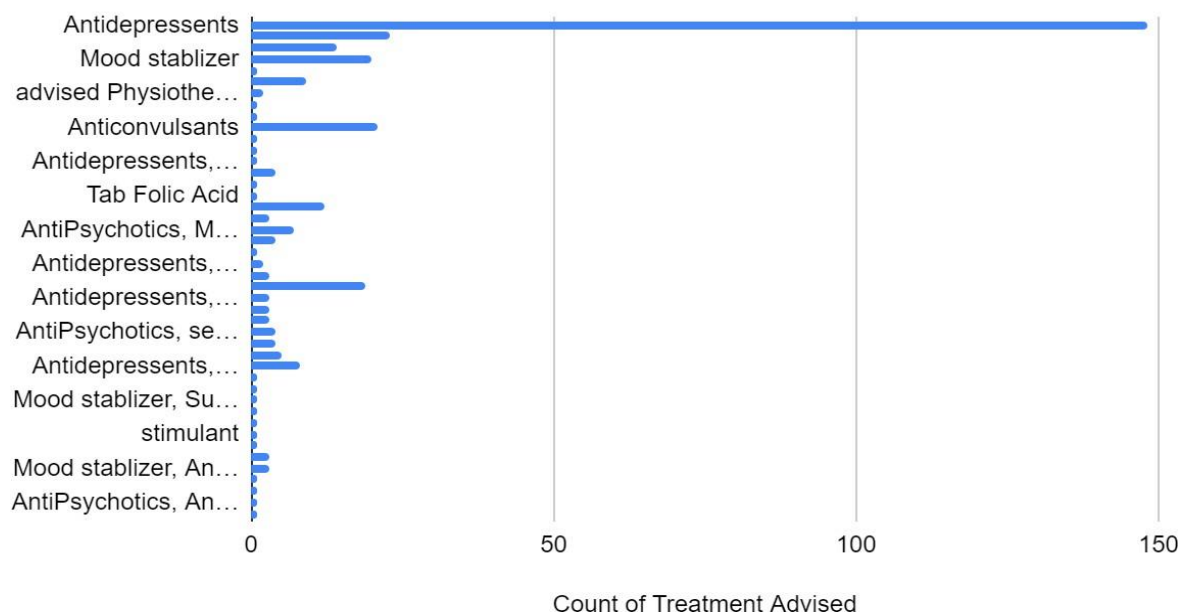

Count of Diagnosis [Psychiatric and other]

- ID with Behavioural i… 1.4%
- Bipolar disorder 1.7%
- Epilepsy 10.7%
- Stress related Disorder 2.3%
- Depressive Disorder,… 1.4%
- Other 7.1%
- ID with Behavioural i… 5.4%
- Schizophrenia 4.8%
- Anxiety disorder 7.3%
- Psychiatric 0.8%
- Depressive Disorder 48.0%

Treatment and Medication:

A significant number of patients presented complaints of headaches, insomnia, and palpitations, indicating their inability to effectively express their emotions. Antidepressants were prescribed for 58% of patients, antipsychotics for 16.2%, and anticonvulsants for 8.6%.

Count of Treatment Advised

- Antidepressents
- Mood stablizer
- advised Physiothe…
- Anticonvulsants
- Antidepressents,…
- Tab Folic Acid
- AntiPsychotics, M…
- Antidepressents,…
- Antidepressents,…
- AntiPsychotics, se…
- Antidepressents,…
- Mood stablizer, Su…
- stimulant
- Mood stablizer, An…
- AntiPsychotics, An…

Count of Treatment Advised

Conclusion:

The SMHA and IOM-UN collaborative psychiatric camp in Umerkot, Sindh, proved to be an invaluable initiative in addressing the pressing mental health challenges faced by the community. The dedication of the medical team and the support from various stakeholders were instrumental in making this camp successful. The personalized care provided to each patient and the distribution of essential medicines will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the mental well-being of the individuals served. The authorities involved hope to continue organizing such camps in the future to promote mental health awareness and well-being in the region.

Compiled by:

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King Priest and Dancing Girl of Moen Jo Daro

Umerkot Fort, Birth place of Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great and Shiv temple