

Medical News

Pakistan's First
Independent
Medical Periodical from
Karachi

Vol. 53 No. 10 / November 1-14, 2020

Published Fortnightly | Reg. No. ID. MC-153 | ISSN 1728-1520 | Controlled Circulation

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Pakistan imposes Rs100 fine for no mask in public place

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) recently issued new guidelines banning indoor marriages, fixing Rs100 as fine for not wearing the mask and allowing 'work from home' for 50 per cent staff of public and private institutions. The decision was taken at a meeting of the NCOC attended by representatives of the Centre and the provinces. Under the new guidelines, wearing of mask and 'work from home' policy has been made compulsory throughout the country from Nov 7, while

the ban on indoor marriages will be enforced from Nov 20. The NCOC observed that since 16 major cities of the country were highly sensitive these days due to COVID-19 positivity among the people, the 'Non-

as fine will be utilised to buy a mask for the violator so that he/she can wear a mask at the spot," he added. About the ban on indoor marriages, the official said only outdoor marriages would be

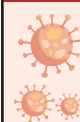


allowed with an upper limit of 1,000 persons. "The ban will be enforced with effect from Nov 20 so that already arranged marriages at indoor venues can take place," he added. He said that 50pc of the staff in all public and private offices would be allowed to work

from their homes as the offices could only accommodate 50pc staff. The provinces have been asked to follow the policy of smart lockdowns based on hotspot areas (where cases of COVID-19 will be reported). Meanwhile, Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Ali Shallwani directed the administration to take strict action against the people not wearing a mask in public places. Official sources said a fine of Rs 500 would be imposed for violating the notified SOPs, including wearing of mask COVID-19 cases Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir collectively reported 366 coronavirus cases and five deaths during the last 24 hours.

Pharmaceutical Interventions' (NPIs) or new guidelines would remain in force till January. The cities with high positivity and higher disease spread potential are Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad, Gilgit, Muzzafarabad, Mirpur, Peshawar, Quetta, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur and Abbottabad. The NCOC official said a model for enforcement of mask-wearing was being implemented under which that fined Rs 100 for not wearing a mask would be given three masks on the spot. "In fact, it is not fine; the money to be received

CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN



CONFIRMED CASES

348,184

REPORTED DEATH

7,021

SINDH

151,352

PUNJAB

107,831

ISLAMABAD

22,432

BALUCHISTAN

16,195

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

41,069

GB/AJK

4,394 / 4,911

RECOVERED CASES

320,065

*Stats as of 11 November, 2020 - 07:03am, Provided by Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination, Government of Pakistan



SHCC is promoting quackery in Sindh: PMA

MN Report

KARACHI - Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Sindh, and PMA Karachi chapter recently said that Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) has failed to deliver in Sindh province. They noted that the regulatory body has been promoting quackery in the region instead of curbing it.

Addressing a press conference at PMA House, Dr Mirza Ali Azhar, President PMA Sindh, and Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, General Secretary, PMA Karachi, said that SHCC key responsibilities were to register all healthcare service providers. "SHCC should take necessary steps to ban quackery, monitor the quality and

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'PMC will conduct National MDCAT Exams on Nov 15'

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - Muhammad Ali Raza, Vice-President, Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) recently said that the commission has planned to hold



National Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) exams on November 15.

Addressing a press conference, he said the final date for registration of

Continued on Page 08

‘Pakistani pharma exports increased in current financial year’

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - Abdul Razak Dawood, Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment, recently told that by the grace of God, exports of medicines from Pakistan have increased this year.

In his message on the social networking website, Twitter, the Federal Commerce and Investment Adviser said that the exports of the pharmaceutical products from Pakistan had

increased by 22.6 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year 2020-21.

Mr. Dawood wrote on the social networking website that the pharmaceutical exports in the first quarter of the current financial year had increased to US Dollars 68.1 million as compared to US Dollars 55.6 million exports in the corresponding period of the last financial year 2019-20.

The Federal Adviser said

that this increase in exports had been achieved due to hard work by the industrialists of the pharmaceutical sector and renewed focus of the present government on exports.

He also expressed gratitude to Special Assistant to PM on National Health Services, Dr Faisal Sultan, and his team members for their valuable support to the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan in this regard.

Sindh to crack down on protesters at DUHS

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh government has recently decided to conduct a crackdown on the protests of employees of Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) in the wake of increasing COVID-19 cases in the province.

According to sources, DUHS has been considered as service institution in which any kind of union activities are not allowed and it was further informed that the protests could disrupt the

long-stalled educational process due to the existence of an ongoing pandemic. Sources further told that the corona wave during the first quarter of this year, DUHS actively played the role of frontline force against the Corona wave during the first quarter of this year.

Meanwhile, Sindh government has also tightened measures and enforced precautionary measures against the growing

number of cases in coronavirus province. According to the data released by the Sindh government yesterday, the deadly disease recently killed 12 people. Six hundred and twenty new cases have come to surface. As of November 8, about six and a half

thousand patients are being treated across the province. The number of positive cases has gone up to about 1.5 million while the government has tested around 1.8 million.

The Sindh government is preparing to increase the scope of testing.

Sources said that according to the report sent to the Sindh government, due to the sit-ins and strikes, there are difficulties in carrying out medical affairs of Dow University Hospital. Teaching activities at the largest medical institution may be closed.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Dow University employees has recently announced a protest at Karachi Press Club on 9 Nov. Sources said that the Sindh government has already taken up the baton. In this regard, the activities of Qaim Jokhio, the leading leader of the Joint Action Committee, have been closely monitored. His phone calls are also being monitored. While the health care allowance should be paid soon, other demands have been assured to be met. However, the disruption in the medical education process may be due to a conspiracy, so the conspiracy must be detected or known.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) leader Qaim Jokhio could not be reached for comment.



CONDOLENCE

The Publisher, Editor and the staff of Medical News Pakistan express their heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of Prof. Dr Nizam ul Hasan, Founder, Child AID Association (CAA) and former Director, National Institute of Child Health (NICH), and pray that God gives his soul eternal peace and enough courage to the family members to bear this irreplaceable loss, Amen!



Sindh appoints health officers to meet medico-legal requirements



MN Report

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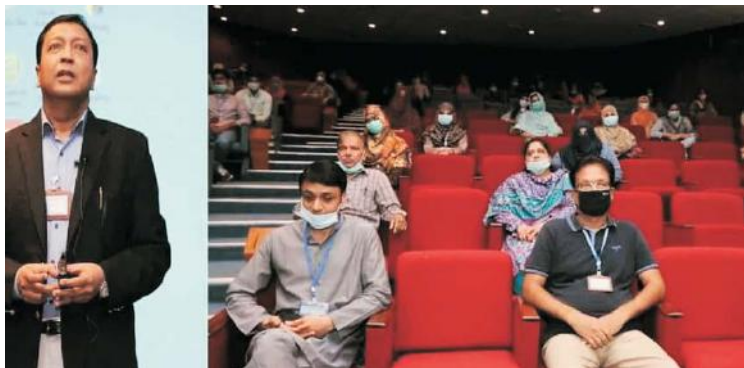
COVID-19 pandemic reveals the importance of indigenous science

MN Report

KARACHI - The ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of indigenous science for the strength and sustainability of the economic recovery. This is the right time for Pakistan to build science capacity, and prepare the nation for future challenges.

Prof Dr M Iqbal Choudhary, Director of International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBBS), University of Karachi (UoK) and Coordinator-General, Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) expressed these views while addressing the orientation class held for the new students of M. Phil. & PhD program-2020 in the Prof Salimuzzaman Auditorium. A large number of students, research officers, and faculty members attended the orientation class.

Prof Choudhary, describing the current pandemic situation, said that it was a fiasco of international support at a time of severe health cases, and countries were left on their own to face the health challenge of an unprecedented magnitude. The ongoing hard time requires the nation to develop a culture



of scientific thinking and rationality, as there is no worst self-deception than thinking of knowing everything, he observed. He said, "The fact is that learning is based on humility and thrust for knowing." "Scholars have got an excellent opportunity to get admission in one of the finest research establishments in the world," he added.

Prof Choudhary welcomed all the students of the new batch-2020 to the internationally famous doctoral program and said that ICCBS owned a single most massive 100 per cent merit-based doctoral program in the country with over 600 PhD students, including international students from different countries of the world. "Every student needs to know that merit should be the essential character of the personality, which is regardless

of caste, creed, and colour," he pointed out.

As many as 102 admissions have been given in various disciplines of sciences, which included Organic Chemistry, Analytical Chemistry, Textile Chemistry, Physical Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, Bio-Organic Chemistry, Pharmacology, and Molecular Medicine.

Students now will be able to carry out their researches in two internationally famous research centres, namely, HEJ Research Institute of Chemistry, University of Karachi and Dr Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research, University of Karachi.

Senior professor Dr Shaiq Ali, Dr Syed Ghulam Musharraf, Dr Maqsood Ahmed Chotani, Dr Zaheer Ul-Haq Qasmi and others also spoke on occasion.

PMA organises candlelight vigil for martyred doctors

MN Report

KARACHI - The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) recently arranged a candlelight vigil to pay tribute to Pakistan's martyred doctors who lost their lives in the battle against the coronavirus.



A large part of the medical fraternity, as well as the family members of the doctors who lost their lives in the war against COVID-19, attended the candlelight vigil ceremony held at the PMA House.

The Central Leader of the PMA, Prof Dr Tipu Sultan, Secretary-General, PMA-Centre, Dr S M Qaisar Sajjad, Treasurer, PMA Centre, Dr Qazi Wasiq, Dr Shoukat Malik, and others also attended the ceremony.

Secretary-General, PMA-Centre, Dr S M Qaisar Sajjad, said a total of 133 healthcare professionals lost their lives to the coronavirus to date across Pakistan, out of which 109 were doctors, and 24 were others. He informed that COVID-19 had claimed the lives of 49 doctors in Punjab, 34 in Sindh, 19 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5 in Balochistan, and one each in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir.

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Experts put good nutrition under the spotlight

MN Report

KARACHI - The 17th Annual General Body Meeting of Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic Society (PNDS) recently organised a panel discussion titled 'Promotion of Good Nutrition and Health by Media Professional in Pakistan.' The aim of organizing this panel discussion was to develop a plan of action in collaboration with media professionals to spread information about good nutrition and health in public.

Yasmeen Taha, Urdu Journalist, Ausaf News, Sana Hashmi, Broadcast Journalist, Ajnabi, Radio Presenter, FM 107, Naheed Apa, Cooking Expert were invited as panel experts. Nusrat Sehr Abbassi, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA), Sindh, was invited as chief guest. Dr Romaina Iqbal, Department of Community Health Sciences, Agha Khan university hospital, moderated the Panel Discussion.



Speaking on occasion, Fayza Khan, President, PNDS, said that good nutrition is essential not only in the management of chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, lung diseases, and certain types of cancers. It also plays a pivotal role in preventing public health issues such as malnutrition and stunting.

"Unfortunately, there is a lack of awareness in the general public about the role of good nutrition in

disease management and prevention," Dr Fayza said. Speaking to the participants, Secretary-General, Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Dr Qaisar Sajjad said, "Health and education sectors have been badly neglected by the federal and provincial governments in the past." He lamented that there was no space for health awareness programs in mainstream media, and only political talk shows aired on prime time.

He stressed the need to introduce complete health-related channels in Pakistan to educate the general public about waterborne, vector-borne, and other lethal diseases like Coronavirus in the future.

Dr Qaisar Sajjad said that mainstream and local media could play a significant role in solving society's health-related problems. He suggested airing health awareness programs in channels to address issues linked with public health.

TV Anchor Sana Hashmi said, "Children die due to malnutrition and polluted water in Sindh and other provinces."

She said joint efforts needed to resolve public health issues. PNDS is a registered professional society since 2003, which aims to develop, strengthen, and advance the profession of nutrition and dietetics through capacity building and improve Pakistan's people's nutritional status.

401 dengue cases recorded in Karachi in a week

MN Report

KARACHI - The Vector-Borne Diseases Department of the Directorate General Health Services Sindh has registered 416 dengue fever cases across the Sindh province in a week out of which 401 were recorded in Karachi alone.



The Vector-Borne Diseases Department registered 1034 dengue fever cases in October 2020 across the province, out of which 1019 were detected in Karachi and 15 from other districts.

In Karachi, District East topped the list with 420 dengue cases in October, followed by District South, District Central, District Korangi, District Malir, and District West, respectively.

The VBD registered 1950 dengue cases all over the Sindh province from 1 January to 28 October 2020 in Sindh, out of which 95 percent of the cases were reported in the Karachi division while five percent were from other districts of the province. A death due to dengue fever was also reported in Karachi city this year so far. Deputy Director-General Health, Vector-Borne Diseases, Dr Mahmood Iqbal Memon, said that the Sindh Health Department had constituted special teams for vector control in affected Union Councils of Gulshan-e-Iqbal, North Nazimabad, Saddar/Defence, and Gulberg areas of the city.

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Doctors stage protest at KMC Head Office

MN Report

KARACHI - The unpaid doctors of the Sobhraj Maternity Hospital recently staged a protest demonstration over the nonpayment of salaries.

The doctors working in the oldest maternity hospital of the city run by the



Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) have not been paid their due salaries for the past two months, while some have not been paid since 18 months.

The protesters have blocked M A Jinnah Road for a while and later moved towards the KMC Head Office to record their protest. The protesters demanded the Sindh government, Provincial Minister for Local Government, and other high ups of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation to release funds for the KMC hospitals and ensure the timely payment of salaries. The doctors ended their protest after reassurance from the Municipal Commissioner, KMC.

AKUH's introduce 'Early Childhood Parenting Clinic'

MN Report

KARACHI - Recognising the importance of supporting parents in their early parenting journey, the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) launched its Early Childhood Parenting Clinic on Friday at the Stadium Road campus.

more aware of your child's developmental needs and with be provided support to deal with your concerns, including but not limited to: what to do for in-utero development, first-time parent counselling, early challenges of parenting, new-borns learning and development,

Hospital, and Dr Shelina Bhamani, Lead Consultant, Early Childhood Parenting Clinic, among others.

"This is a very critical goal and on the radar of AKDN. As a mother of two, I believe that this service is so valuable and helpful for all parents", commented Hassan, Chief



As one of the few initiatives in Pakistan to offer this educational caregiving from a hospital setting, this clinic will make parents resourceful to make their child's early development well-rounded and robust.

According to research, the first 1,000 days of life, starting from inception inside the mother's womb, make up the most crucial period of human development. Parents often question and worry if they are doing all they can to support their child's development.

While there may not be a one-size-fits-all strategy, there are evidence-based tools that parents may be equipped with as they set on their journey. At this clinic, as a parent, you will become

making your home new-born friendly, preparing kids for playgroup and school, and balancing the needs of your child as working parents. Adhering to strict SOPs, the attendees of the inauguration ceremony included the leadership of AKU and AKUH: Shagufta Hassan, Interim CEO, AKUH, Dr Adil Haider, Dean AKU Medical College, Dr Asim Belgaumi, Chief Medical Officer, Salma Jaffer, Chief Nursing Officer, Shamsah Virani, Director Marketing and Communications, Dr Salman Kirmani, Chair, Division of Women and Child Health, Dr Lumaan Sheikh, Service Line Chief, Women's Health Care, Dr Ali Faisal Saleem, Service Line Chief, Children's

Executive Officer (CEO), Interim while stressing the need to support parents in their journey.

"I have worked for years with mothers of new-borns and young children in various community settings. I hear the question very often, 'am I a good parent?' I always tell them that 'good parenting' is hard to define. However, it can be learnt and adapted to," said Dr Bhamani on parents' confusion about their parenthood.

The Early Childhood Parenting Clinic will provide a wide range of integrative programmes, including group-based consultations and one-to-one referrals for innovative parenting solutions.

Medical body urges Police to probe lady doctor's abduction

MN Report

FAISALABAD - The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) and the Young Doctors Association (YDA) have recently criticised the police for not heeding the request of 'abducted' lady doctor's parents for her recovery.

They said the police were silent on the 'kidnapping' issue following her video in which she was claiming that nobody had abducted her.

However, the point of parents is not being focused that since kidnapping neither Dr Kashaf has joined her duty nor her mobile phone is active.

Both organisations demanded that the police conduct a transparent investigation to ensure

whether the lady doctor has given video statement with her

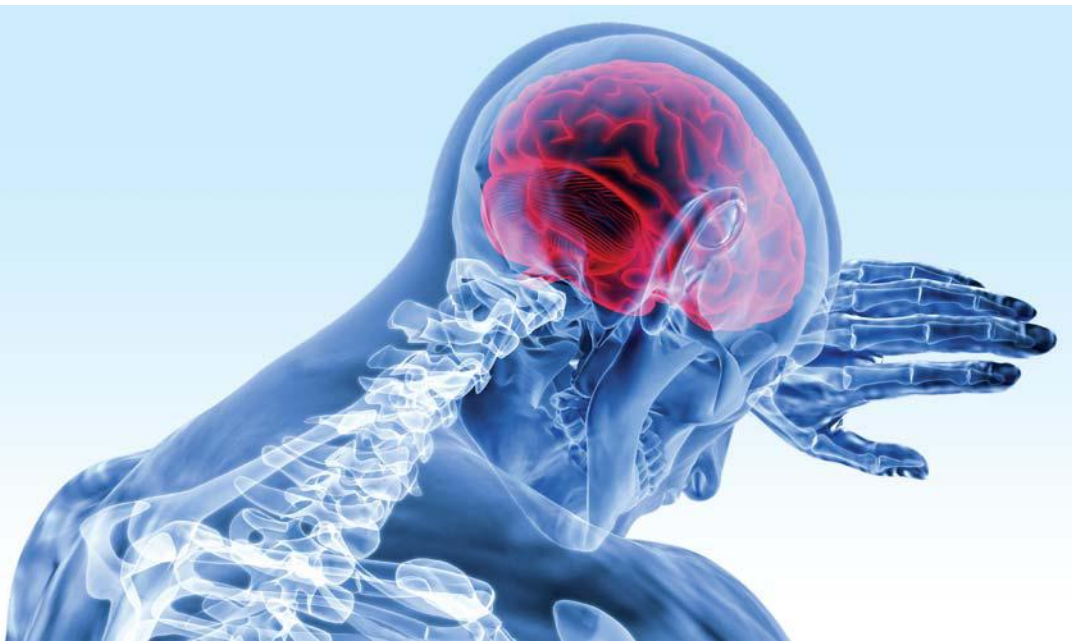
consent or she has been pressured by the suspect to do so.

On Nov 2, Dr Kashaf of the DHQ Hospital was allegedly kidnapped in broad daylight on Canal Road when she was on her way to hospital to join her duty.

A case under section 365-B of PPC was registered against [her husband] Kazim Farooq, Nelofer (mother of Farooq)



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Around **350,000** new stroke patients are reported every year in Pakistan

MN Report

KARACHI - "Stroke is responsible for more deaths annually than those attributed to AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined while there are 350,000 new stroke patients every year in the country. Two out of three people who suffer from a stroke live in low and middle-income countries". Health experts shared these facts to create awareness at the occasion of World Stroke Day 2020, which is observed on October 29. Dr Rehan Omar Siddiqui, Consultant Cardiologist, Medical Director, Family Care Hospital, said atrial fibrillation (AFib) is a common type of irregular heartbeat, also known as arrhythmia. With AFib, a clot can form in the heart's chamber and can travel to the brain. This can lead to a potentially devastating thromboembolic stroke. Moreover, people with AFib are at an increased risk of stroke and are estimated to account for 15% of the 15 million strokes that occur worldwide every year. AFib may happen rarely or every now and then, or it may become an ongoing or long-term heart problem that lasts for years. That is why early identification and

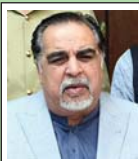
management are critical. Dr Abdul Salam Majeed Agha, Consultant Cardiologist, Tabba Heart Institute, said people should not undermine the risk factors for AFib include: age 60 or more, especially 75+; congestive heart failure; high blood pressure (hypertension); diabetes; previous stroke, transient ischemic heart attack (TIA), or thromboembolism; vascular disease; ischemic heart disease; hyperthyroidism; chronic kidney disease; heavy alcohol use; enlargement of the chambers on the left side of the heart. Many people who have AFib do not know they have it and do not have any symptoms. Others may experience one or more of the following symptoms: irregular heartbeat, heart palpitations (rapid fluttering or pounding); lightheadedness; fatigue; shortness of breath, chest pain, he added. Dr Imtiaz Khalid, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Ziauddin University Hospital, said that we also know that high blood pressure, the major risk factor for stroke, is very common in Pakistan. A national health survey revealed that more than 30% population above age 45 is suffering from high BP, most of whom are undiagnosed and

uncontrolled. Up to 25% of patients with stroke die if they do not get good initial care after stroke. This could be reduced to 10% by providing good emergency care and in-hospital care in the first 48 hours. As many as 20% of patients with disabling stroke have a minor stroke or warning signs a few days or weeks before the stroke. If those patients can be identified, stroke incidence can be reduced. Prof Abdul Rasheed Khan of the Karachi Institute of Heart Diseases said all health sector stakeholders should prioritize their activities to create awareness among patients on World Stroke Day 2020. The faster stroke is treated, the more likely the patient will recover. Patients who are treated within 90 minutes of their first symptoms are almost three times more likely to recover with little or no disability. High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke and the most important controllable risk factor for stroke. You can reduce your stroke risk by addressing these modifiable risk factors, including high blood pressure, overweight, cigarette smoking, high cholesterol, diabetes, physically inactive, and poor diet.

Pharma exporters to be facilitated: Imran Ismail

MN Report

KARACHI - Governor Sindh, Imran Ismail, has said that the pharma industry of the country has great growth potential, and the international market provides vast opportunities in this capacity due to the quality of the medicines made in Pakistan. He said this while



talking with a 10-member delegation of the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) at the Governor House, led by renowned industrialist Zahid Saeed. Other members of the delegation included Qasir Waheed, Tauqeer ul Haq, Dr Mehwish Khan, Najeeb ur Rehman, Saboor Ahmed, Asad Ullah, Jalal Uddin Zafar, Naveed Hakim, and Taimur Ahmed. Matters regarding the export of medicines from Pakistan, blockages, and the need for a viable strategy were discussed at length during the meeting. On the need to activate the pharma export council, which was notified a year ago, Governor Sindh assured that he would take the matter up with the concerned authorities to facilitate pharma exporters. He asked the PPMA to take measures for the production of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) locally to ensure the availability of raw materials required for the preparation of medicines at affordable prices. This would not only decrease the cost of drug manufacturing but would also ensure the availability of the same at cheaper rates to patients, he observed. He further asked the PPMA to prepare detailed recommendations and take the State Bank of Pakistan and other banks on board to initiate this project. He assured that he would also contact the concerned quarters to effectively utilize the Central Research Fund (CDF) collected from the pharma industry. He said that the pharma industry could play a vital role in strengthening the country's economy as its exports would bring valuable foreign exchange to the national exchequer. Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Faisal Sultan, would be invited to Karachi for meeting with the PPMA members to find a solution to their problems, he added. Delegation members Zahid Saeed and Qasir Waheed thanked Governor Sindh for his keen interest in the pharma industry and his pledge to resolve its problems. They also thanked his support in bringing the pharma fraternity's problems to the knowledge of the Prime Minister. Due to his personal interest, the pharma industry was able to survive the COVID-19 pandemic and was not affected compared to other sectors of the economy, they added.

Psoriasis affects 125 million people worldwide

MN Report

KARACHI - Psoriasis affects the lives of more than 125 million people worldwide. Dr Javed Ahmed Memon, Incharge, Dermatology Department, Sindh Government Lyari General Hospital, said, "The whole world is passing through a very critical time. We have seen unprecedented health challenges, but we have no focus on patient education and proper counseling in the country. Psoriasis awareness should be a part of our health policy."



Psoriasis is a chronic, inflammatory skin disease clinically evident as raised inflamed, scaly red skin lesions that crack and itch.

Skin problems are generally the most common diseases seen in primary care settings all over the globe, and its prevalence ranges from 20-50% in developing countries.

Health experts and the public must exercise due diligence and change the notion that skin disease is less harmful because it is not fatal," he said. This mindset needs to be changed because psoriasis affects patients in their everyday life. People with the disease think that society and doctors are just ignoring their illness and their hardships.

Psoriasis is a skin disease of organic nature that has attracted the attention of social and health scientists and psychologists regarding the mental health of people affected by the ailment. The Pakistan Psoriasis Foundation reported the results of a survey with data collected from 5000 psoriasis patients. As per the data, 20% of women said psoriasis was a massive problem in their everyday lives, compared to only 12% of men. In addition, approximately 60% of women said that psoriasis interferes with their ability to enjoy life compared to only 52% of men. Overall, women have greater difficulty dealing with the psychological and social issues that accompany psoriasis.

Similarly, childhood psoriasis has a bimodal age of disease onset. The first peak is around the age of 20, and the second peak is around the age of 60. Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory, immune-mediated disease in which one-third of patients suffer under 18 years. The exact pathogenesis of psoriasis has not been completely discovered; however, it is agreed that psoriasis has a genetic basis, as 23.4% to 71% of children will have a family history of psoriasis.

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Neurologists urge federal and provincial governments to launch 'Stroke Prevention Program'

MN Report

KARACHI - Eminent Neurologist Prof Dr Muhammad Wasay recently urged the national and provincial governments to launch stroke prevention programs on the pattern of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Malaria, and Dengue Control Programs as stroke incidents are on an

with diabetes, hypertension, and tobacco users are at a greater risk of having strokes if they contract the coronavirus infection.

"In addition to launching national and provincial stroke prevention programs, there is an urgent need to have a national stroke treatment center and research institute

emergency. The life of a person can be saved and prevented from disability if he or she is taken to a stroke unit within three to four hours after experiencing symptoms of a stroke.

"Knowing the symptoms of stroke is very important. If a person is experiencing difficulty in speaking, his one



alarming rise in Pakistan. He said this while addressing a news conference in connection with World Stroke Day 2020 at the Karachi Press Club (KPC). The Pakistan Stroke Society (PSS) organized the news conference in collaboration with the Neurology Awareness and Research Foundation (NARF), Pakistan Islamic Medical Association, and a local pharmaceutical firm to mark World Stroke Day, which is observed every year on October 29.

Vice President, PSS, Dr Abdul Malik, General Secretary, PSS, Dr Ravi Shankar, and Pakistan Society of Neurology (PSN) member, Dr Bashir Soomro, also addressed the news conference.

Dr Wasay said every day, around 1000 people have large and minor strokes in Pakistan, of which 400 die on the same day while around 200 or 250 become disabled for life. In addition to the conventional risk factors of strokes, COVID-19 has emerged as another serious risk factor and has increased the ratio of strokes to 100 percent worldwide. People

in Karachi, like the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD). Both strokes and cardiovascular diseases have some risk factors, and like heart attacks, brain attacks are also on the rise, killing hundreds of people daily," said Prof Dr Wasay.

In 2005, hardly 250 out of 100,000 people got strokes in Pakistan, but according to a recent study conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it was revealed that 1200 out of 100,000 people get strokes in Pakistan now, which indicates a fivefold increase in the incidence of strokes in the country, he said.

Dr Wasay maintained that stroke is a preventable disease where people can modify their risk factors by living a healthy life. He added that they were striving to prevent schoolchildren and college students from having strokes, as they were more prone to this disease due to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension because of a sedentary lifestyle and junk food consumption.

General Secretary, PSS, and neurologist Dr Ravi Shankar said that stroke is an

side is paralyzed, difficulty in walking, confusion: these are signs and symptoms of having a stroke and such patients should immediately be shifted to stroke units," said Dr Ravi Shankar, adding that there should be stroke units at all tertiary-care hospitals and district-level health facilities in the country.

Dr Abdul Malik, VP, Pakistan Stroke Society, said that they were holding awareness and training activities all over the country in connection with World Stroke Day 2020, which is observed every year on October 29. He added that the Pakistan Stroke Society and other associations of neurologists are ready to support the government in preventing stroke and other neurological diseases.

"We can help governments in establishing stroke units at each government hospital by training doctors and paramedics while we can also launch programs to create awareness about prevention from stroke," he added.

Dr Bashir Soomro spoke about the prevalence of strokes in the COVID-19 era.

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MN Report

KARACHI - As the world waits impatiently for a COVID-19 vaccine, the Pakistani arm of the largest global study to test if hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine can prevent COVID-19 in vital healthcare workers has begun enrolling participants at the Aga Khan University in Karachi.

COPCOV, is a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial, which is considered the most robust method to prove a drug's efficacy. The trial will see half of the participants given hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine while the other half will receive a placebo.

Selection will be at random. In order to eliminate the chance of bias, neither study participants nor the administrators of the trial will know which group is receiving the drug or the placebo.

Used for over 60 years to treat malaria, amoebic liver abscess, and other diseases like lupus and rheumatoid arthritis,

hydroxychloroquine - or chloroquine - has been shown in the laboratory to kill the novel coronavirus.

AKU is the first centre outside of the UK to be participating in the study led by the University of Oxford in the UK and Wellcome-supported Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit

(MORU) in Bangkok, Thailand. Although there is increasing evidence that hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine could work as a form of preventive medicine for COVID-19 - rather than when a person gets sick - researchers are still not sure.

"I don't know if hydroxychloroquine can prevent

COVID-19 or not. But I do know that we really need to find out, and quickly. We could be waiting a long time for an effective vaccine," said one of COPCOV's co-principal investigators Professor Sir Nick White.

"If there is a chance that it can offer valuable protection against COVID-19," said Prof Asim Beg, the COPCOV's principal investigator in Pakistan. "It's imperative that the study finds out if it does."

The Pakistan COPCOV site at AKU is the first site outside the UK, joining five COPCOV sites operating in the UK. COPCOV is the only non-vaccine COVID prophylaxis study

deemed to be of urgent public health importance by the UK's NIHR Clinical Research Network. In Pakistan, AKU's Dr Farah Qamar, Faisal Mahmood, Noshin Nasir, Momin Qazi, Sonia Qureshi, and Professor Saeed Hamid, director of the AKU's Clinical Trials Unit., are supporting the study.



Study to test if hydroxychloroquine can prevent COVID-19 among frontline healthcare staff

Sindh Government decides to hire 3723 more vaccinators to boost immunization coverage

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Government recently decided to recruit more vaccinators to increase immunization coverage to 100% in the province. This decision was taken in a meeting chaired by the Sindh Chief Secretary, Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah, which was attended by the Health Department, WHO, and UNICEF representatives at the Sindh Secretariat. The briefing by the Sindh Health Department authorities and the PD EPI noted that children are being vaccinated in 30 districts of the province. Along with the polio campaign, children from birth to 23 months are vaccinated against measles, hepatitis, and other diseases. It was also informed in the meeting that at



present, there are 1518 EPI centers in the government and 235 in private hospitals where children are being vaccinated free of cost. It was further informed in the meeting that the 17 thousand LHWs and 3918 vaccinators are vaccinating 3.5 million children from birth to 23 months. Despite the coronavirus outbreak, immunization coverage has improved, and a helpline 1166 had also been set up. In the meeting, the Chief Secretary Sindh, Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah, directed the Health Department to increase

immunizations coverage to 100%. "All children of the province should be vaccinated," said CS Sindh. He said that 3723 more vaccinators would be recruited to increase the coverage of immunizations to 100%. For this, the CS asked the Sindh Health Department to move a summary. It was also decided in the meeting that immunizations would soon be given in the province's primary and tertiary hospitals 24 hours a day, and the salaries of the vaccinators of the province would be equal to those of vaccinators of other provinces. It was decided in the meeting that special mobile vans would be used to vaccinate children in the slum areas during the evening time.

PSS introduces stroke data registry in Pakistan

MN Report

KARACHI - The Pakistan Stroke Society (PSS) has introduced a data registry to record stroke cases through a smart-phone based mobile application in Pakistan.

Eminent Neurologist and General Secretary, PSS, Prof Dr Muhammad Wasay said that the PSS had introduced a data registry to register stroke cases, and 40 centers are sharing data from all over the country via a mobile-based app, which was launched a few months ago for the job.

He informed that there was no national and provincial level data available in the country in the past; therefore, the data registry has started to register stroke cases and make a national-level comprehensive policy to avoid stroke cases.

He further explained that millions of people live with risk factors that can cause strokes, and there is an urgent need to adopt primary prevention strategies to control the prevalence of strokes in society.



SHCC is promoting quackery ...

Continued from front page

standards of the healthcare services developed by the Government. SHCC should operate accreditation programs regarding the healthcare services and grant accreditation to such healthcare services providers who meet the prescribed criteria and standards," PMA officials said. They said, "SHCC enquire and investigate into maladministration, malpractice, and failures in the provision of healthcare services and issue consequential advice and orders, advocate rights and responsibilities of recipients and providers of the healthcare services and issue regulations, guidelines, instructions and directives to persons involved in the provision of healthcare services and others." PMA officials further said that the mechanism of registration of SHCC has been faulty. "Online registration system is not working, frequent raids by the healthcare commission officials, misbehave/abuse, and threats with impolite behaviour and quackery is rampant as ever. No serious efforts are visible to stop this menace and incidences of violence in healthcare facilities. No notices are being taken by SHCC, the present structure of the SHCC not according to the law as no law being followed." They demanded that SHCC people's behaviour be polite and friendly. "The process of registration should be made accessible and approachable at the district level. The online facility should be adequately restored. The issue of eliminating quackery should be on top of the priority list. The notification

of six divisional representatives of PMA should be immediately issued." They further demanded that the divisional representatives be on board before any field visit and inspection of health care facilities, electronic media campaigns for awareness regarding registration of healthcare facilities. Dr Vasdev, Vice-President of Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Sindh, and Dr Nisar Ali Shah were also present.

PMC will conduct National ...

Continued from front page

the students for MDCAT had been changed from November 2 to November 6. He said automated admission process for private colleges had been finalized, allowing students to choose the college of their liking under their requisite merit. He said each provincial government would make public colleges' admissions while the Foreign Medical Graduates (FMG) process is being undertaken to verify foreign colleges. He said the necessity of having a uniform MDCAT is to teach a level playing field for all aspirants. He said there is no quota for international students; however, provincial and Federal governments may establish any allocation deemed appropriate for seats allocated to a public college under their jurisdiction. He added only two requirements applicable to all such public quotas included any student being admitted on such a quota is to have qualified the national MDCAT to obtain a license post-graduation, and no

allocation can cause the maximum seats allocated to a public college to be exceeded above the approved assigned number. Ali Raza said the need for a standardized national admission examination is necessary so that the entire country can be on a level playing field in terms of merit for the benefit of all aspirants across all provinces. He said the disparity in the merit would further exacerbate individual admitted students experience going through a challenging degree such as medicine. "In the past, the MDCAT conducted by University of Health Sciences (UHS) for Punjab has been consistently stated by students and other provincial universities to be not as comprehensive and hence, lower in difficulty level, to the MDCAT being conducted by other provincial universities," Ali said. "This resulted in students in Punjab scoring higher than the national average, which affected the merit for other provinces, leaving students at a disadvantage," he added. He said it is on this basis that, in the past, provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa asked the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) to restrict admissions in private colleges based on domicile, contrary to the regulations as were applicable at that time. Ali Raza said, "To make this MDCAT, we took all provincial boards and extracted the overlap to create a common syllabus from which the exam will be made from." He said to reiterate; a new syllabus has not been created for the MDCAT

this year. The exam is composed of all material from all provincial boards that overlap. He said in terms of exemption from the MDCAT; only international students would be eligible to apply to medical colleges in Pakistan using their SAT-II results according to the weights like Biology 40%, Chemistry 35% and Physics/Maths 25%. In these cases, due to the impact of COVID-19 on SAT-I availability around the world; English would be exempted if their HSSC/High school program's medium of teaching was English. He said international students would be required to compete with Pakistani students based on merit so that there is no discrimination. Replying to a question on FMG, he said if the FMG has obtained their qualification from a college which is recognized by the commission, they will receive a provisional license to do their house job in Pakistan. Their full license will be issued after they pass their National License Examination (NLE). He said if the FMG has completed their house job, their provisional license will expire. They will be required to take the NLE to obtain a full license, the Good Standing Certificate has nothing to do with NLE, and it will only be issued if the FMG has a valid permit issued by the commission to practice medicine in Pakistan. "The only exemption from NLE is under Section 20(3), where it allows a full license to be issued to a practitioner who is licensed to practice in a foreign country and has acquired a recognized post-graduate

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Sindh largest teaching hospital faces an acute shortage of staff

MN Report



KARACHI - Sindh's largest tertiary care institution, known as, Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) has been facing acute shortage of doctors and other support staff since several years, which has badly affected the functioning of this significant hospital of the province, sources at CHK told recently. There are 3,000 sanctioned posts in more than 1700 bedded CHK out of which 900 posts are lying vacant including doctors, nurses, paramedics, support staff and administrative staff. The shortage of staff has badly affected the performance of this healthcare facility. Around 100 posts of doctors, 150 posts of staff nurses, 150 posts of paramedical staff, 05 posts in grade-15, 100 posts of sweepers and others administrative seats have been lying vacant in this teaching hospital since last several years. Similarly, about 400 posts of non-technical and support staff from grade-1 to grade-14 are lying vacant since several years various sections including hospitality services, kitchen, transport, general store, laundry, workshop, electrical, mechanical, ward boy, wooden, security, ministerial staff, ancillary staff, telephone exchange etc.

The hospital administration has also urgently needed nurses, paramedics and doctors who could check the patients with the emergency requirement. The number of Intensive Care Units (ICUs) has been increased in the hospital with time, and the administration needs skilled staff nurses and paramedical staff to attend such patients.

The number of patients has also been increased from 7,000 to 8,000 in OPDs. In contrast, 900 to 1,000 patients are brought to the Accident and Emergency Department every day, over 150 women visit Gynecology units for delivers, 500 children attend Pediatric OPD. The significant number of diagnostic tests is being performed in the institution free of cost daily at a state-of-the-art laboratory. The authorities concerned of Sindh health department Sindh has not been paying heed towards the shortage of staff in public sector hospitals like Civil Hospital where doctors, nurses and support staff are performing their duties under extreme pressure and the extra burden of work that leads them towards various behavioural issues. The unavailability of doctors, medicines, diagnostic facilities and shortage of staff in major hospitals of Karachi, including Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, Sindh Government Lyari General Hospital and other districts hospitals, have also doubled the patients' turnout in this teaching hospital. Dr Ismail Memon, Additional Medical Superintendent, CHK, was not available for comments.

DoSindh appoints health officers to ...

Continued from page 02

government has tested around 1.8 million. The Sindh government is preparing to increase the scope of testing. Sources said that according to the report sent to the Sindh government, due to the sit-ins and strikes, there are difficulties in carrying out medical affairs of Dow University Hospital. Teaching activities at the largest medical institution may be closed.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Dow University employees has recently announced a protest at Karachi Press Club on 9 Nov. Sources said that the Sindh government has already taken up the baton.

In this regard, the activities of Qaim Jokhio, the leading leader of the Joint Action Committee, have been closely monitored. His phone calls are also being monitored.

While the health care allowance should be paid soon, other demands have been assured to be met. However, the disruption in the medical education process may be due to a conspiracy, so the conspiracy must be detected or known. The Joint Action Committee (JAC) leader Qaim Jokhio could not be reached for comment.

PMA organizes candlelight vigil for ...

Continued from page 03

He said that the second wave of the coronavirus might prove to be more dangerous; thus, the federal and provincial governments' concerned authorities must ensure the strict implementation of precautionary measures to control the prevalence of COVID-19. He advised the citizens to wear masks, wash-hands regularly, and avoid public gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

401 dengue cases recorded in ...

Continued from page 04

In the end, the PMA distributed certificates amongst the family members of the martyred doctors. He informed that the team members are visiting major sites, including nurseries, graveyards, lakes, ponds, swimming pools, tire shops, water pumping stations and hydrants, construction sites, as well as waste and dump areas.

Dr Mahmood Iqbal urged citizens to keep their houses clean, remove accumulated water, use mosquito spray, and sprinkle insecticides on unnecessary water reservoirs, which are considered a primary mosquito-breeding site that causes dengue fever.

Medical body urges Police to probe ...

Continued from page 04

Hafiz Habib and others who were not named in the FIR.

PMA Faisalabad Secretary Dr Muhammad Irfan, an assistant professor of medicine at the Allied Hospital, said both organisations held a meeting in which they had expressed serious concerns over the alleged 'indifferent' attitude of the police officials.

He said parents of the doctor were struggling for her recovery as she had no contact with them. He said if the doctor issued video statement with her consent then why she kept her mobile phone off and not joining the duty.

He said instead of producing the doctor before the court, her statement had been submitted. Such statements can be obtained from anyone under duress, he added.

The 'kidnapper' (husband of the woman) claims that she is living with him with her consent, Dr Irfan said adding if she is living wilfully than why she was not produced before the court for legal backing.

Psoriasis affects 125 million ...

Continued from page 06

He also said that psoriasis might trigger associated fatal diseases, including psoriatic arthritis (almost 10 to 15 percent), diabetes mellitus (62% in patients with severe psoriasis), depression, and anxiety and early cardiovascular-related deaths. People suffering from the disease should contact their healthcare providers to seek proper treatment, he stressed.

Neurologists urge federal and ...

Continued from page 06

He said that the coronavirus infection increased the risk of having strokes and urged people to take precautionary measures to prevent themselves from contracting COVID-19 as well as having a stroke. In the end, an awareness walk was held at the Karachi Press Club (KPC) to highlight the importance of a healthy lifestyle to prevent stroke.

DRAP launches new app to ...

Continued from page 12

body, DRAP ensures access of safe, quality and efficacious therapeutic goods at affordable prices in the country.

Dr Rashid said that DRAP was on the way to become a world class regulatory organization at par with international standards and best practices, through effective management strategies for implementations of regulations and their enforcement throughout the country.

He said that DRAP was adopting the globally harmonized science-based standards for the evaluation, registration and monitoring of safety, quality and efficacy of therapeutic goods. He said that the harmonization of regulatory standards would improve the acceptance of products in international markets, enhance product quality and would ultimately promote the public health.

'Breast cancer is a major health risk for women'

MN Report

KARACHI - Breast Cancer Day was observed at the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) in the Hanifa Suleman Dawood Auditorium. The event was largely attended by the doctors, paramedics, medical students, and other hospital employees. The event was also telecasted on social media, with the aim to increase public awareness about early detection of breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer of women globally, and Pakistan has the highest rate of breast cancer in South Asia. In Pakistan, patients present late for diagnosis and treatment due to a lack of access to healthcare and education. Our country's daily wages translate to less than PKR 20,000 per month, whereas the treatment of breast cancer can run into thousands of rupees and so are not within the reach of the common person. The SIUT provides free



of cost treatment to every patient. It is therefore not surprising that our number of patients has

grown over the past three years. Women now come not only for treatment but also to get advice for breast cancer screening. On this occasion, Dr Bushra Shirazi from the Breast Surgery Oncology Department of the SIUT said that in our country, 90,000 cases are diagnosed every year, and approximately half of them die because of late presentation. 1 in 9 Pakistani women may develop breast cancer. Highlighting the last three years of the department, she said that we have treated about 500 breast cancer patients' majority are between the ages of 30-50 years. The Breast Oncology Clinic is held on Mondays on the Hanifa uleman Dawood Oncology Building's first floor.

It is a combined clinic run in a joint approach with breast surgeons, oncologists, and radiologists. Talking about breast cancer and its various treatments, Dr Narjis Muzaffar said that the clinic's services are from clerking in a new patient to onsite breast ultrasounds and biopsies, which cuts down the waiting period for diagnosis and treatment. She highlighted that the breast unit provides treatment under one roof, including diagnostics, surgery, chemotherapy facilities, and radiation

therapy. Dr Narjis Muzaffar pointed out the different methods of treating breast cancer with chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and hormonal therapy. She further said that not all patients are candidates for or require chemotherapy as treatment depends on many factors, including the stage of the disease, the biology of the tumor, co-existing medical problems, and the age of the patients. She also said that all chemotherapy agents have side effects, but these are temporary and reversible. The experts stressed the need for nationwide awareness and implementation of cancer preventive measures to check this growing menace. Countries with limited resources and confronting financial constraints should aim for early detection efforts, which can be cost-effective by reducing the stage at diagnosis and therefore improving the survival rate and recovery. Among the others who spoke on occasion from SIUT included Dr Uzma Malik (radiation oncologist), Dr Sana Saqib (radiologist), Dr Shaheera Shakil (histopathology), Ms Rabia Basri (dietician), and Ms Hameeda (chemotherapy nursing staff).

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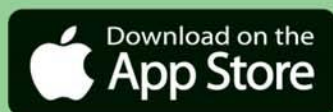
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COVID-19: Infectious expert warns of re-infection if precautions not taken

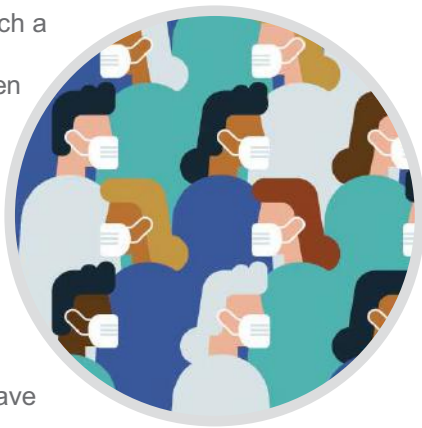
MN Report
KARACHI - Infectious expert recently told that re-infection of COVID-19 can happen and urged people to wear facemask in public places to avoid the chances of contracting COVID-19, especially when the surge in active coronavirus cases are reported.

In an exclusive conversation with Medical News, Dr Najam A. Zaidi, Infectious Disease Physician at Morton Hospital, USA, warned that ignoring COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) can increase the cases and will lead to a jump in infection rate. Dr Najam said that many people assume that people affected by the second wave of COVID-19 will tend to have severe breathlessness and high fever. He said that there has no evidence of any changes in symptoms, and "they are the same."

Answering the query regarding that the mutation of the strain of SARS-COV-2,

Dr Najam said that such a thing would be highly unlikely. "There has been no such a thing on record or any scientific evidence to report that mutation happened. There are indeed some mutations as with all viruses, but local spread and no major changes in pathogenicity so far have been noted."

Explaining the importance of smart-lockdown, Dr Najam said that such an action by the government could reduce the active cases. "The actual impact of smart-lock down depends n how 'smartly' lockdown has been implemented. Suppose markets, especially animal markets or crowded ones, are partially opened, and schools opt for alternating shifts to reduce class size and distance learning. In that case, I am sure the cases will see a downward trend. But having said that, wearing a mask is an utmost



necessity to ensure COVID-19 transmission is prevented. Answering a question regarding the possibility of re-infection, Dr Najam said that re-infection could happen. "But still it is very unlikely to happen and hence an uncommon. To be more precise, re-infection cannot happen to anyone less than 4-6months brackets. Even if it happens, it will be usually less severe. However, we still don't know what re-infection will look like and how the vaccines will prevent it from happening. Research is still going on."

WHEN PILL CAN KILL

Glass particles found in essential medicines

MN Report
KARACHI - Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) recently issued a notification to recall all the stocks of several medicines as glass particles were found in them. The drugs were termed as 'Adulterated and Sub-Standard' by the regulatory authority.

An official document released by DRAP read that manufacturers should alert their sales officers/suppliers/ distributors to issue instructions to the pharmacies/hospitals, point of sales/purchase/use for the return of suspected stocks of product in question. "Furthermore, you are directed to submit a compliance report of recall to this division within seven (07) days positively," the notification read.

The medicines recalled due to contamination of glass particles are the following:

S No.	Generic Name	Drug Name	Manufacturer
1	Xylop 1% injection	Kanbact 500mg Injection	Kanel Pharmaceuticals, Islamabad
2	Oxiphin	Oxiphin 1gm injection	Kannel Pharmaceuticals, Islamabad
3	Oxiphin	Oxiphin 1gm injection	Ameer and Adnan Pharmaceuticals (Pvt.) Ltd.,
4	Xylop 1% injection	Kanbact 500mg Injection	Palpex Pharmaceuticals (Pvt.) Ltd., Karachi
5	Diclofenac	Fenacold injection	Epoch Pharmaceuticals, Karachi
6	Metronidazole	Flazol Infusion 500mg/100ml	Bosch Pharmaceuticals, Karachi

Meanwhile, Remdesivir, a crucial medicine used in treatment against coronavirus, was also recalled by DRAP. Redzi 100mg Solution for infusion (Remdesivir 5mg/ml) manufactured by WNSFEILD Pharmaceuticals was reportedly found to have bacterial contamination.



DRAP launches new app to report drug reaction cases

MN Report
ISLAMABAD - Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) recently launched 'MED safety mobile application' in Pakistan to report adverse drug reactions (ADRs) cases for taking action by the authorities concerned.



Sharing details of this mobile app, Director Pharmacy Services DRAP Dr Abdur Rashid said that in case of any such grievance, the victims can submit complaint with the DRAP through this mobile app.

He said that only seven countries have created this mobile app so far for the purpose. He added that the World Health Organization (WHO) will directly receive this complaint on any such matter regarding adverse reactions of drug.

He said that the complainer could submit report on adverse reactions even when offline or to view and submit updates to previously submitted reports. He said the complainer could also see immediate acknowledgment of receipt of report.

Shahbaz, Bilawal responsible for delaying provisional province status to GB: Gandapur He said that there was a watch list of medications to receive personalized news and alert. He added while using this option one can create a watch list for drugs that are using for receiving specific news.

He added on emergency cases, quick action will be taken and in this regard SOPs have been developed by the authority. He said that the app was launched on the occasion of Med Safety Week from November 2-8.

Dr Rashid said that there would be separate reporting form for suspected adverse drug reactions in relation to COVID-19. "ADR reporting is a just a touch way and with active participation, citizens can contribute to the cause of safety of medicines in the country". He said that all submitted reports could also be viewed later for adding more information. He said that the process of having this app was very simple and phase wise like opening the play store (Android) or the app store, search for Med Safety, tap the Med safety Icon, tap to 'install' to download the app, open the tap, select a region which is Pakistan, click continue as guest or create an account and last step is report suspected adverse reactions to medicines that have been used.

Twitter to label premature US election results posts

He advised citizens to keep updated with the safety alerts issued by the National Pharmacovigilance Centre at DRAP.

He said that several innovative steps have been taken for maintaining quality and availability of necessary medicines in the country. He said that as a national regulatory

Continued on Page 09