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PAKISTAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



July 1, 2020

PRESS CONFERENCE

We welcome all of you to this important press conference. My name is Dr. S.M.Qaisar Sajjad, and I will conduct today's press conference. It's my pleasure to have with us Mr. Faisal Edhi, Head of the Edhi Foundation, Ms. Uzma Noorani, Co-Chairperson Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Ms. Mehnaz Rehman, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation, Mr. Anwar Kashif Mumtaz, member public interest law association of Pakistan, Ms. Anis Haroon Member National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan, Dr. Qazi M. Wasiq, Treasurer PMA Centre, Dr. Muhammad Usman Mako, President-Elect PMA Sindh and Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, General Secretary PMA Karachi. We have organized this press conference in collaboration with senior members of civil society regarding Coronavirus situation in Pakistan.

Corona situation in our country is worsening day by day. The number of corona patients and death toll due to corona is increasing rapidly. Till now 213,470 people have been found positive for coronavirus and 4395 people have died according to the official report. It is just because there does not exist, any uniform policy in Pakistan to control the spread of coronavirus. Federal and Provincial Governments are not on the same page. People are confused over the pandemic due to the rivalry of our governments. People only take their patients to hospitals when they are near to die. At this stage when patient's condition is worsened at hospitals or dies, they start damaging the hospitals and brutally attack the medics.

There is panic in the society. Beds are not available in the hospitals. So, people are keeping their patients at home by turning a room into hospital. Federal Government was informing through press conferences or tweets that different drugs are helpful for the treatment of coronavirus. Similarly the government is also informing the people that oxygen and pulse oximeter is needed to manage and monitor the patient. Now people have hoarded all these medicines and equipments, which is causing shortage and price hike of these products in the market. People are totally confused and are in panic, they are being advised through social media by some renowned persons not to go to hospital because they will declare you corona patient and the family will also be declared corona affected. Now the people say there is nothing like corona in Pakistan, it's a conspiracy of doctors and government. Whereas different government officials say COVID-19 is a simple cold & flue, it's just grade -C virus. It is not so serious as compared to corona more people die in road traffic accident. While another officials say that coronavirus has 19 points i.e why it is called COVID-19.

If Federal Government does not want to lock down the country then it should implement SOPs strictly throughout the country. There is no concept of Smart lockdown in the world. It is just a fun. Streets are being closed by tents and everything is happening behind the curtain, there is no prohibition over any activity behind the tent. You can stepwise impose smart lockdown, only when numbers of cases goes down. PMA believes that during smart lockdown Government should collect data (age, sex, co-morbid) of the areas being locked, random testing for coronavirus should also be done in these areas. The world Model to control COVID-19 is lockdown. The countries which followed this model and implemented strict lockdown are now lifting the lockdown because they have controlled the situation, whereas we ignored it and did not implemented even after the advice from WHO. We are now facing the consequences of our mistakes.

According to the government officials, from the last one week our number of corona cases are decreasing in the country, but it not because of the smart lockdown, it is just because we have reduced testing for coronavirus. Our corona testing capacity is not up to the mark. We should have 25,000 testing capacity per day in each province. People have been left with no option other than to go to private labs. Government should manage for the treatment of coronavirus and fix the rate of corona test and hospital charges with the consultation of the management of labs / hospitals. Government should also not allow to sale any medicines and health related items without the prescription of qualified doctor.

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More than 3000 health care workers are in isolation after being corona+ve. As the burden of disease on hospitals is increasing and we are facing shortage of health care workers. Because of this situation doctors and paramedics are suffering the most. Till now 60 doctors and paramedics have died of coronavirus. After repeated demands for implementation of shuda package and payment of risk allowance, nothing has been done.

After our repeated demand Now we are going through a hard time. People are in rage. There is revulsion in people for doctors. This is why we see incidents of violence against health provider in hospitals. The doctor patient relation is worsening day by day, we should improve the doctor and patient relationship in the country.

PMA believes that we should follow the advice of WHO otherwise the number of cases and deaths will increase. PMA suggest strictly implementing SOPs during Eid ul Azha or be ready for another hard time like we faced after Ramadan. We suggest government not to allow holding of cattle markets for sacrificial animals inside the cities and should not allow people, especially children not to get close to the animals.

Now a day's people of Karachi are very much disturbed because they want to stay at home to avoid coronavirus, but there is no electricity during this scorching weather (temperature goes above 40°C). In these circumstances people are compelled to sit in their streets. How could they save themselves from coronavirus and dehydration / strokes? KE should feel pity for Karachi people and make sure the provision of uninterrupted power supply. People are going through a difficult time due to covid-19 with long hours of load shedding.

All the participants also spoke and supported the efforts of PMA and demanded the government to form a uniform policy to fight with coronavirus.

Mr. Faisal Edhi, informed the media that they have conducted a study with the help of Mr. Mansoor Raza and Mr. Mashood Tariq. The study was done on 813 deaths in Karachi from 1st June 2020 to 27th June 2020. The study revealed that 70% deaths consist of age group of 45-70.

PMA and all the participants demand:

1. Complete strict lockdown as per advise of WHO to prevent spread of COVID-19 / smart lockdown should be implemented with strict SOPs.
2. Government should protect healthcare workers from coronavirus and from the violent mob who attack healthcare workers in hospitals.
3. Coronavirus testing should be done at the areas of lockdown and proper data should also be recorded.
4. DRAP / Healthcare Commission should manage the panic situation in the country regarding the management of coronavirus.
5. Treatment of all corona patients should be free of cost even at private hospitals with consultation of hospitals management.
6. No medicine / Health related items should be sold without the prescription of qualified medical practitioner.
7. No load-shedding until we are facing COVID-19 pandemic and to keep people save from heat wave.
8. No cattle market should be established within the city and all the established market should follow all SOPs.
9. There should not be any shortage of medicine in Pakistan (corona or non-corona medicine).

1. Dr. S.M.Qaisar Sajjad, Secretary General PMA Centre
2. Mr. Faisal Edhi, Head of the Edhi Foundation
3. Dr. Qazi M. Wasiq, Treasurer PMA Centre
4. Ms. Uzma Noorani, Co-Chairperson Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
5. Dr. Muhammad Usman Mako, President-Elect PMA Sindh
6. Ms. Anis Haroon Member National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan
7. Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, General Secretary PMA Karachi
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