

EDITORIAL

In 1995, Ziauddin University was established with a vision to promote the advancement of knowledge in health sciences through excellence in teaching, research, and public service. The institution focuses on developing competence, personal fulfillment and leadership in the students towards their professions. The purpose behind the establishment of this university is also to provide Community-Based-Education (CBE) in order to enhance health education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles in populations from all socio-economic strata of Pakistan. The university encourages research based projects and practices relevant to national and community needs. Alongside Medicine, Dentistry and others, Rehabilitation Sciences has emerged as an essential component in the field of health sciences.

Rehabilitation sciences aim to enhance and restore functional ability and quality of life of not only those with physical impairments or disabilities but also deals with the concepts of health and wellness. The rehabilitation team consists of number of professionals including Physicians, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and many others who contribute in the preparation and implementation of treatment plan. Unfortunately, in Pakistan these professionals are mostly working independently or the team work is in a very primitive stage. At the same time, some individuals and organizations are trying to establish this field to improve the functionality of patients and reduce their sufferings by providing the best possible treatment.

Physical Therapists play an essential role in virtually every condition that rehabilitation medicine addresses. The goal of physiotherapy is to improve mobility, restore functional movement, increase independence, relieve pain, and minimize limitations due to permanent disabilities. Speech Language Therapists/Pathologists are also significant members of the Rehabilitation team. They are trained to investigate and treat abnormal manifestations of communication and swallowing disorders, for whatever cause, in children and adults. Speech-Language Pathologists collaborate with other health care professionals and work as part of a multidisciplinary team to provide and appropriately accommodate diagnostic and treatment services to individuals.

Ziauddin University is one of the leading institutions in the development of these professionals and fulfills the needs of major portion of the local market. To achieve this task, Ziauddin University established College of Physical Therapy in 2001 which has produced skilled, dedicated and hardworking Physical Therapists over the past decade. In 2010, Ms. Sumaira I. Farooqui joined Ziauddin College of Physical Therapy (ZCPT) as the Principal and Head of the Physical Therapy Departments. Ever since, there has been a prominent development and growth in this section. Ziauddin University strives to initiate advance programs in this field and has proven to be the first to start graduate and postgraduate programs in our part of the country. We have upgraded the four years Bachelor of Physical Therapy course to five years Doctor of Physical Therapy, Masters Program to M.Phil and at present we are on our way to produce the first PhDs in the emerging fields.

Ziauddin University is the pioneer in establishing College of Speech and Language Therapy in Pakistan. While, considering a large population suffering from communication, swallowing and/or hearing disorders in Pakistan, Ziauddin took the initiative to set up this institution with a faculty of internationally trained and qualified Speech and Language therapists/pathologists (SLTs or SLPs).

Advance programs in these fields are designed to prepare individuals to conduct research independently and in collaboration with other researchers. Students investigate an area of research relevant to rehabilitation through critical analysis of problems related to basic sciences, clinical practice, or in development of theory.

Research has also become an integral part in the field of medicine and the world is sharing their experiences with each other in order to enhance and upgrade their fields. Ziauddin University Hospital is a teaching hospital comprising of six campuses, treating major population of Karachi, which makes it an ideal place for career and professional development. Its vision is to promote the development of individuals professionally as well as improving their interpersonal skills. The emergence of the Journal of Rehabilitation is also a contribution in this regard. Ziauddin is one of the few universities that has launched independent journal on rehabilitation which will provide a forum to all related professionals to share their experiences and researches to other professionals and students for their better understanding and evidence based practice.

The purpose of this research journal is to publish material that is robust enough scientifically to help health care professionals to practice in their respective fields in a better way. It is important that this journal is influential enough to have an impact on health care system with interesting educational and peer reviewed papers, so that it retains a reputation for excellence. It should help to promote evidence based practice with broad range of knowledge both clinical and theoretical. This Journal is intended to be a rallying point for the local and international exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge for a wide array of health professionals.

I truly believe that through this Journal of Rehabilitation, the field will not only prosper but will also reach a higher level of excellence with quality research work and critically analyzed studies. This will provide a forum to promote the coordination among professionals and at the same time also help the students to understand their profession in a wide spectrum.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

LACK OF EMPHASIS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION FOR STROKE PATIENTS

To the Editor,

It has been observed that most of the patients are not aware of the dilapidating affects of post stroke depression on their recovery, survival and a return to normal activities of life. The lack of emphasis on psychological rehabilitation for stroke patients is a source of concern for me and I would like to bring to your attention about the facts regarding the implications of proper psychological rehabilitation is not undertaken.

Stroke survivors report a range of emotional difficulties, most common being fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, sadness and a sense of grief for their physical and mental losses.

Usually these feelings may fade over time however, some patients may struggle with adjusting to the many changes following stroke. When this happens these feelings can develop into depression. It is estimated that approximately one-third of stroke¹ survivors develop post-stroke depression (PSD).

A Stroke Association survey of 2700 stroke survivors and cares has highlighted that many patients feel their emotional and psychological needs² go unrecognized and unmet. Many said they felt "abandoned" after leaving the hospital.

Compared to stroke survivors without depression, those with post-stroke depression (PSD) tends to have a poorer response to physical recovery and rehabilitation³, reduced social functioning, and greater use of health care services. Studies also suggest a strong association between PSD and a higher risk for subsequent strokes and cardiac events.

There are various treatments and self help techniques for patients identified with post-stroke depression (PSD) as follows:

1. Anti depressant medications⁴: these medications have shown varying degrees of short-term efficacy for PSD patients.
2. Psychological intervention⁵: A new study involving patients with mild to moderate communication problems suggests that stroke patients who meet with therapists within just a few weeks of their stroke for motivational talk-based therapy may be less prone to depression and death than patients who receive standard care.

During sessions therapists asked the patients their thoughts about the future, what obstacles they expected to face in recovery and how confident they were about approaching these obstacles. They encouraged patients to identify their own solutions to problems they anticipated to face during recovery.

According to researchers motivational techniques may give patients more hope. Combination of talk therapy with antidepressant medications. The most effective treatment is psychological intervention or talk therapy, combined if appropriate, with anti-depressant medication. Acknowledging what has happened, and accepting how life has changed is an important step in the recovery process.

Treating depression not only improves the survivor's mood, it improves their physical recovery and their cognitive or intellectual recovery as well. Without treatment, researchers have found that post-stroke depression can go on for up to three years after the stroke.

It is important to screen patients for depression following a stroke. Treatment and support can help ease the pain and help the survivor make gains in recovery.

I would urge the readers of this letter to encourage patients who have gone through a stroke to undertake psychological therapy immediately to prevent the onset of post-stroke depression.

Samina Masood Haider

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