

PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS VS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Expectation means a belief about what might happen in the future. In regard to health care what are the expectations of public from health facilities and health professionals...??? Every and every citizen of the country demands health care from infancy till old age. Demands include not only the availability of the best health care system but also this system should be accessible to him 24/7. Patients expect to be treated as soon as possible, despite the severity of their condition. They want to be treated equally in both emergency and out patient department. Each patient irrelevant of their social status wants best health care, state of the art diagnostics and best health care professionals and all of that Free of Cost....!!

Health care is defined as the prevention, treatment, and management of illness and the preservation of mental and physical well-being through the services offered by the medical and allied health professions.

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. >40 million of 176 million population live below poverty line. Only 0.75% of total GDP is expended for health care. Wealth distribution in Pakistan is highly uneven, with the top 10% of the population earning 27.6% and the bottom 10% earning only 4.1% of the income.

Health care is provided by both government (provincial) and private sector. Total health facilities in Pakistan = 13,937 with 103,708 beds for whole population. A large part of rural Pakistan is deprived of both outdoor and indoor medical treatment because the number of hospitals, doctors, paramedic staff, medicines etc. in the rural areas is insufficient.

Health care system is beset with numerous problems including

- ▶ structural fragmentation
- ▶ gender insensitivity
- ▶ resource scarcity
- ▶ inefficiency and lack of accessibility and utilization

Pakistani general population is dealing with fluctuating political situations and every government is burdened with burdened by heavy external debt, faltering productivity and growing poverty. So the situation worsens with rapid rise in population and since no health sector reforms are introduced in at least a decade population suffers with increase morbidity. In this situation public mostly relies on scarce health facilities and few health providers for basic health care. Rural areas which constitute the larger group of population are most affected by these inadequacies. Since health care is only focused on urban areas they have to travel long distances for minor ailments and even then they are deprived of necessary treatment.

This puts huge constraints on their resources. And as a result they opt treatment from quacks and further complicate the whole disease process. But not only the salaries of these young doctors are unimaginably low but also the service structure is unable to provide further improvement in their career path. This chaos has resulted in several strikes and protests by young doctors but all these cries for help have fallen on deaf ears. In addition to that there is shortage of nurses and paramedic staff for emergency situations.

So health care in Pakistan is one of the most neglected areas because average citizen does not want to participate for welfare and expects government to do everything for him in this regard. Health care professionals are face of the whole system they are also victims of criticism from media and general population, even though facts state inadequate health care facilities to start with.

Health System in Pakistan presents a complex picture of a continuous struggle to improve health status of the people served, amidst poor governance, inefficient management, low budget and unjustified resource allocations. Therefore, health care system has not been able to perform to its maximum capacity.

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