

Kashmiris must get rid of Sardars if they wish to see real progress

During 1987 I visited India to attend Asia-Oceania conference on Head and Neck Surgery. Over a dozen ENT, Head and Neck Surgeons from Pakistan also participated in this meeting. During the conference we met an ENT surgeon, a faculty member from Srinagar Medical College in Indian occupied Kashmir. He and his other colleagues were so delighted to meet us that one of them invited the Pakistani delegation to a dinner reception at a local hotel. Many issues including medical education and health services came under discussion and we wished that if relations between Pakistan and India improve, there should be an exchange of medical students and faculty members from Pakistan. Our friend from Srinagar extended us an open invitation and also offered to be the host.

According to reports there has been tremendous progress in health services in Indian held Kashmir. Apart from the medical college, now they have an Institute of Medical Sciences with state of the art facilities with exceptionally good academic set up. This is also evident from the fact that one often comes across eminent speakers from that institution at different medical conferences in Pakistan and overseas. On the contrary if we look at the situation in Azad Kashmir, the ground realities are very disappointing.

Even till today we have neither established any medical or dental college there nor there is any proper tertiary healthcare facility. Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences complex built a few years ago had developed cracks even before the earthquake due to sub-standard construction much before it was even formally inaugurated.

The successive governments in Pakistan have paid lip service to the cause of Kashmir and no sincere attempt has ever been made to develop and improve the social services and other infrastructure in the area. One of the main reasons is said to be that it is often ruled by Sardars who mostly reside in Islamabad. Many other Kashmiri parliamentarians and politicians visit Kashmir to get votes at the time of elections and then most of their time is spent in Pakistan. The Government of Azad Kashmir itself does not enjoy much powers which was admitted by Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan a former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir in a Television talk show on Geo TV. During the course of this live interview he also revealed that most often the government of Azad Kashmir is controlled by Core Commander Murree. Replying to a question regarding the current political situation in the area, he further disclosed that when he was forming the Government sometime ago, he was "instructed" not to include Sardar Attiqur Rehman in the Cabinet. In the last elections the "establishment" first tried to bring forward a combined group by forming the Peoples Muslim League and when the Muslim Conference leadership realized that they will be left out, they readily agreed to serve as the "most obedient servant", hence the plan it is alleged was changed and after the elections some one who at one time was not acceptable as

a Minister was put in as the Chief Executive of the territory. The situation in the area will never change until and unless the ordinary Kashmiris come forward and get rid of these Sardars and other politicians with vested interests who are more interested in petty personal gains. It is alleged that the President and the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir though enjoy all the official privileges but they do not have any powers. Last month the press reported of finding a huge consignment of relief goods in a building in Hayat Abad in Peshawar which was meant for distribution among the earthquake victims. Misuse of relief goods received from overseas and donor agencies is often reported by the media.

Sometime ago a proposal was floated to establish a medical college in Azad Kashmir but it never materialized since two important parliamentarians wanted to have it established in their constituency. Ideally there should have been nothing wrong in setting up this medical college in the Capital Muzaffar Abad but eventually the plan was shelved. What a pity. The Government of Pakistan in general and the Azad Kashmir Government in particular must show some serious concern for actual developmental activity in the area including setting up of a medical college and tertiary healthcare facilities. If the past is any guide, this dream will never be realized unless the people of Kashmir forget about the Sardars and elect sincere devoted and dedicated leadership from amongst their rank. Kashmiris must start thinking on these lines as it is never too late.

(July 1, 2007)

Short Man's Syndrome

Short Man Syndrome deals with dynamic issues. It has now become a clinical entity based on observations over the years says Dr. Russell D'Souza, an eminent mental healthcare professional from Australia who is also Chair of World Psychiatric Association's Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries. He is of the view that there is evidence which shows that some one who is in short stature physically, needs to compensate dynamically. These people have an unconscious feeling of being small, inferior, being incomplete and so on. They have unconscious needs to over compensate to make up this psychological perceived deficit. As such they sometime do things and their behaviour is such to seek attention, approval in psychological way. Sometimes they even depict more disturbing behaviour that can seriously affect their interpersonal relationship with colleagues and subordinates.

You can notice someone using language, gestures, body language and non verbal behaviour to attract attention. At times they can become more aggressive and suffer from personality disorders. Its worst form could be when they depict anti social behaviour and all this is basically done as a compensatory mechanism.

Among persons who suffer from Short Man's Syndrome, usually there is a feeling to over perform and compensate. They are fond of talking about their performances, achieve-

ments and accomplishments. At times they do not mind exaggerating their achievements. They get pleasure in celebrating even small honours and awards in a big way again and again with the sole objective of seeking public attention. They have a feeling of grandiosity and counter transference with people around them who may not find out why these people are behaving like that. They are capable of generating counter transference in their colleagues, in their teachers, friends and family members as if they are not liked.

Short Man Syndrome has many positive points as well because such people tend to work much harder. In the process they do manage tremendous achievements. Some time the major issues of concern are inter personal because it may lead to serious problems with their attitude and behaviour with their colleagues. The first indication of Short Man's Syndrome is the interpersonal effects which it has, needing to get attention and counter transference. It can be a positive till such time that it does not cross the fine limits.

All this is based on observations and over a period of time people get these feelings. All human beings, Dr. Russell D'Souza opined behave differently and one comes across different type of personalities. This is something which has been observed consistently. One must always remember that not all the people who are in short stature need to do over perform; they do not suffer from short man syndrome. But significant number of such people will portray such behaviour as compared to other people with normal physical stature.

As long as it is beneficial with positive outlook, these people with Short Man's Syndrome, do not need any

psychological treatment, psychotherapy or any other intervention. But when it starts to affect inter personal, social relationship with others, it calls for some sort of intervention. Such behaviour may bring them in clash with their bosses and they may suffer from such a situation which will warrant some intervention and understanding. It will need detailed psychoanalysis to help these individuals to correct their behaviour. In the process of trying to compensate, these people may also indulge in alcoholism or start taking drugs. Ultimately it does lead to alcoholism, drug and substance abuse and finally depression which will have adverse effects on their inter personal relations and social functions. It will also have effects on such person's emotional and social well being. As such these persons will definitely need some intervention at some stage in their life which can be either behavioral therapy or psychotherapy.

However, the most important problem is that many of these people may not easily accept that they suffer from some problem which needs interventions? The response may also vary from person to person. Half the treatment will be self awareness. Making the person to understand, watch and observe. Exploratory therapies can also be used wherein one can bring out the feelings of some inferiority, of being short in stature and if there are some unconscious feelings of being incomplete. Many people with such behaviour may not necessarily need any treatment till such time that it starts to affect their functions. For example if someone has a paranoid feelings, unless it starts affecting his functions, he may not need any treatment.

(July 15, 2007)

Good Clinical Skills and ethical medical practice offers lessons for many

Good history taking and detailed clinical examination plays an important role in making correct diagnosis. A good clinician makes probable diagnosis based on these, tests and investigations are usually done to confirm it and facilitate further management. However, these days the healthcare professionals in general and fresh medical graduates in particular have become slave of modern gadgetry. As soon as they examine a patient, a long list of tests and investigations is handed over to the patient. Teaching of Clinical Skills is not given due importance which needs to be emphasized in the training programme.

While writing a prescription, the treating physician must be fully familiar with not only the efficacy of a drug but also its side effects, the correct dosage and in case of combination therapy, he must be careful about drug interactions. A good physician always takes care of all these things and if need be, does not mind adjusting the dosage or change the drugs prescribed if those already prescribed are not proving effective. At times to find out the sensitivity, a test dosage is administered before giving a full dose

of certain medications. This is a universal approach which offers rewards and rich dividends if practiced with care in almost every field including medicine.

Just look at the recent judicial crisis that Pakistan faced. Some people feel that General Pervez Musharraf is alone responsible for this which is just half truth. In fact the public at large including politicians particularly sycophants and praise singers who surround every ruler, the lawyer's community and respectable members of the judiciary all share the blame for this crisis.

When General Pervez Musharraf in a counter coup(as he says) removed the elected Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Shareef enjoying two third majority in the parliament, there was no resistance from any quarters. Again when he removed the Chief Justice Saeeduz Zaman Siddiqui and got rid of many other distinguished respectable Judges who were not called to take a fresh oath, he faced no resistance. There was no protest from the judiciary, lawyer's community, Bar Councils and the society at large which naturally encouraged him. And then he went for the President of Pakistan sending Justice Rafique Tarrar home and himself taking over as President. These step by step measures can be considered as a test dose and when he felt that there is no worthwhile protest and resentment in the country, this convinced him that there was no resistance to the medications that he had been prescribing from time to time so he went ahead and administered the full dose when he called Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry to the Army House and along with Five other senior Generals of Pakistan Army(as reported by the CJ and the Press)

pressurized him to resign. Certain decisions of the Chief Justice and other members of Judiciary in the Supreme Court of Pakistan had not gone well with the government and it was felt that he may become a major obstacle in fulfilling government's future political agenda. They were not expecting "No" but they were mistaken. What happened later on has now become a history after the historic judgment by the 13-member Full Court headed by Mr. Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday. This judgment announced on Friday July 20th 2007 is considered a milestone in the judicial history of Pakistan which will have its effects for a long time to come. People of Pakistan are jubilant and full of praise for the Supreme Court. Judiciary is reborn and has earned some credibility. The Lordships decision in this case has helped remove lot of suffocation and people of Pakistan can breathe in fresh air. This will also go a long way in removing frustration and helplessness in the society which had crossed all limits.

Now where did General Musharraf go wrong? He and his political, military colleagues did not have a slightest idea that his move will be resisted by the society at large and the lawyer's community and leadership of the Bar Councils with such a force in particular. The unprecedented unity among the lawyers community and Bar leadership witnessed during this struggle was remarkable. All the government moves during this crisis period almost backfired and its incompetence was thoroughly exposed. They failed to handle the situation correctly and in time with the result that Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry became a very popular leader in fact the most popular personality in Pakistan these days. Had General Pervez Musharraf been a

good diagnostician, he would have realized that his moves can have serious repercussions. Withdrawal of the Reference after few days when it had become clear that the Supreme Court Bar Association and other Bar Council leadership was not prepared to accept it, would have saved him and his government from lot of embarrassment but neither he nor his advisors proved to be competent enough to have considered this option thus proving his incompetence as a good clinician. The country has suffered a lot throughout these four months. It also highlighted another important fact that we Pakistanis cannot use power properly and lack rational thinking.

Look at the case of Mian Nawaz Shareef. After having earned two third majority in the parliament, he should have moved slowly, carefully and with wisdom but what happened, power went into his head. First he did not allow any dissent within the party and whosoever disagreed was either removed or kept at a safe distance. He got rid of President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and then went for the Army Chief General Jehangir Karamat. Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah became his third victim and when he dismissed General Pervez Musharraf, he had to face the music. Though it is the constitutional right of the Prime Minister to replace the Army Chief but the way it was done did not go well with the public at large and Army high command in particular. Benazir Bhutto another Pakistani politician who served as Prime Minister twice suffers from the same problem and she too failed to provide "Good Governance".

Moral of the story is that good ethical practice of medicine offers lessons to all those in different spheres of life

to learn and benefit. If ultimate aim is to save the patient and ensure his quality of life and there is no other hidden personal agenda, the treating physician should not hesitate to change medication if need be, go for a different treatment modality which not only takes care of the symptoms but also offers cure. In Pakistan even after sixty years of independence we are still in search of our destination simply because drivers of Pakistan Train always had their own political agendas, vested interests to protect and never knew the correct destination with the result that Pakistan never became a social welfare democratic State as envisaged by founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his colleagues. Let us all hope and pray for a strong Pakistan and a Healthy Nation which is only possible when we have social justice. Recent happenings have shown that the days of real change in Pakistan may not be far off.

(August 1, 2007)

Let us pray late Prof. Najeeb Khan is proved wrong?

Late Prof. Najeeb Khan was a well known diabetologists and academician who founded Liaquat Medical College Jamshoro at Hyderabad besides having served as Principal of Nishtar Medical College Multan. He served as a consultant on Medical Education to WHO for many years. He was also affiliated with Dhaka Medical College in 50s and retired as Professor of Medicine from Dow Medical College, Karachi. He had a very strong personality with a dictatorial attitude with the result that he was not liked by many while there was no dearth of his admirers in the medical profession. He was a strict disciplinarian which he enforced on himself as well, which was considered one of his greatest weaknesses. After retirement, he with the help of his friends was instrumental in establishing the LRBT Trust and was supervising LRBT Hospital at Lahore till his death.

Somehow after initial problems, I managed to establish a good rapport with him and learnt a lot from him. To me he was very kind. Keeping up the professional ethics, I often criticized the way the affairs of Pakistan Academy of Medical Sciences (PAMS) with which he was associated, was being run and managed. While many PAMS Fellows particularly the Founder Fellows from North America felt

annoyed with me and often complained to Prof. Najeeb Khan, the latter always respected press freedom and tried to convey PAMS viewpoint whenever some reports were published. Later on the apprehensions which I used to express about PAMS became a reality so much so that Prof. Najeeb Khan left this body which is in the habit of holding its annual circus in Pakistan to promote the vested interests of a select few.

Once during the discussions, late Prof. Najeeb Khan told me that "Aga Khan University Hospital is an excellent Nursing Home for healthy people. Despite the fact that the government has gifted the Aga Khan Foundation the prize land in the heart of the city besides offering them numerous other incentives and benefits not available to any other Trust or Charitable hospital in Pakistan, this healthcare facility will not be of any benefit to the common man even during natural calamities and emergencies. Only those who can afford to pay will be able to enter its premises." I asked him why he was so much pessimistic about the role of such an institution to which Prof. Najeeb Khan remarked that remember "American University of Beirut in Lebanon did not help improve the health care in that country. On the contrary AUB campus served as a den for the CIA from where it operated through different ways. Just look at the result, as a result of the civil war, this great country of Lebanon and city of Beirut have been destroyed and there is no hope of any peace there for a long time to come."

When I reported Prof. Najeeb Khan's feelings, I received a phone call from the Public Relations Department at AKU in those days that their Dean wanted to see me. On

enquiry it was revealed that the Dean was upset about the remarks regarding the AKU. Eventually we had a meeting and I told the AKU Dean that only time will tell whether Prof. Najeeb Khan is right or wrong. However, whatever his observations are about Lebanon were correct and have proved he was right. Let us hope and pray that he is proved wrong as far as Aga Khan University Hospital and their other establishments are concerned.

It has been proved time and again that America cannot be a friend and well wisher of the Muslim World in general and Pakistan in particular. May it be the East Pakistan crisis or support for military and civil dictators in Pakistan as well as other Muslim countries? This fact is very well known to the people of Pakistan except the rulers and a select group of elite in the Society. President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have repeatedly said that they wish to change education curriculum in Pakistan thereby promoting secularism. For this purpose United States has paid millions of dollars to Aga Khan Foundation. Continued worsening of law and order situations in Karachi it is alleged is also patronized by the United States. The tragedy of May 12th Black Saturday is another indication of the days to come. The more recent outbursts of Presidential Candidate Obama who has asked for bombing the sacred places of Muslims i.e. Makkah and Medina has further inflamed and hurt the feelings of Muslims all over the world and the US leaders very innocently ask we do not know why the Muslims hate America? After occupation of Iraq, the first thing which the American administration did was to open Night Clubs in Baghdad. It is another thing that the Iraqis did not buy it and destroyed, bombed all those night clubs

which were eventually closed. We Pakistanis have to be extremely careful to safeguard our religious values, our national independence, integrity and solidarity. We must do whatever we can to foil the enemy designs which is only possible in having complete unity amongst ourselves, a democratic Pakistan functioning as a social welfare state as envisaged by the Founder of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his colleagues. Ensuring social justice should be our top priority.

When the law and order situation became worse in Karachi in the 80s, Prof. Najib Khan migrated to Lahore disgusted and frustrated saying that this city was no more worth living. In Lahore he devoted most of his time in looking after the affairs of LRBT Hospital Trust. About three months before his death, I went to see him in his GOR residence. Having lost his wife who died sometime ago after prolonged illness, he was very sad. He had no children and was a great philanthropist as well a fact which many people did not know. I came to know of it first hand when I saw him handing over a cheque worth lacs of rupees to a representative of Freedom Fighters in Kashmir during one of our meetings in Lahore as I often used to go and see him at his residence during my visits to Lahore.

(August 15, 2007)

Briefcase, Methai for children and private medical colleges

Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer, Senior Vice President of College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan was acting President of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council for quite some time before the recent elections. Non recognition of private medical and dental colleges by the Council remained in the news for over one year eventually leading to the case being taken up by the Supreme Court of Pakistan which after detailed hearings gave a historic judgment clearly defining the functioning of the PM&DC, its responsibilities and its relationship with the Federal Government. Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer was a nominee of the Federal Government, hence lot of pressure was put on him to prevail upon the PM&DC to give some concessions but he remained adamant. Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer has remained affiliated with the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council as representative for quite some time hence knows a lot of inside stories. After the CPSP elections, he was nominated by the CPSP to represent it in the PM&DC but it has not yet been notified by the authorities concerned for reasons which are not difficult to understand.

According to reports once an owner of a private medical college met him in Islamabad with a brief case. When

he enquired about this, he was told that it was his share. He not only snubbed him but also asked him to leave his office immediately. He also made it clear that we are not interested in such favours but are only interested to ensure that quality and standard of medical education is maintained. You should try to acquire faculty and have other teaching, training facilities in the affiliated hospitals as per rules and regulations of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council so that we can produce adequately trained doctors. After all they will be treating our future generations in the days to come.

Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer did not have good relations with the Federal Health Ministry officials throughout this period. Many other highly placed officials and eminent politicians also tried to convince him, pressurize him to come to terms but he refused saying that if they wish, they can terminate his nomination but he won't do any such thing for which he has to be ashamed later on. Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer who comes from Balochistan continuously refused to give in to all sort of pressures hence the authorities lost their temper on the Secretary PM&DC who had to face the music as he was sent on forced leave more than once. Even today he is on leave.

Another owner of a private medical college is reported to have traveled all the way to Balochistan to pay his respects to Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer again with a brief case. When he asked what it is, the owner replied it is nothing but '*Methai for the Children*'. Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer told him that had he not been a guest, he would have dealt with him differently. Let me serve you some food

and after that you can leave because I do not like the "*Brief Case Methai*".

When he was Principal of Bolan Medical College, one of the provincial Ministers approached him with a request to sanction couple of hundred liters of petrol every month from the college funds. When he refused saying that it was the poor students money which cannot be misused, Prof. Abdullah Jan Jaffer was told that " Don't you know I am the Provincial Minister" to which he replied Yes I know that. At the most what you can do it to replace me as Principal. I will still continue to serve as Professor of Surgery till retirement. Later the Minister asked, let it be Diesel and not Petrol to which he again refused. At this the Minister left his office saying that "We will see each other again" .

Now the new Council of PM&DC is reported to have given recognition to a large number of medical and dental colleges in the private sector. Do they all deserve recognition after having fulfilled all the requirements as laid down by PM&DC or some body has accepted "*Breif Case Methai*" is a big question mark. All sort of rumours are making rounds in the medical profession which are extremely difficult to confirm.

It will be pertinent to mention here that some medical and dental colleges in the private sector are very good, have proper teaching hospitals, faculty, teaching and training facilities which should have been granted recognition long time ago ignoring minor deficiencies if any. They should have been given time to make up those deficiencies. However, this cannot be said for all the private sector medical

institutions. Private health sector does need to be encouraged and provided incentives, facilities by the government so that they can play its role effectively but there should be no compromise as regards standards of medical education. Even some of the public sector medical and dental colleges especially the newly established ones are reported to be suffering from serious deficiencies including acute shortage of medical teachers. The Council should ensure uniform standard and make sure that all the medical and dental colleges whether in public sector or private sector fulfill the laid down criteria. It should ensure transparency so that no body can point a finger at its decisions.

(September 1, 2007)

Thank You Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry

During the last hearing of the case of flourishing trade of kidney transplants, Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry had given a one month's notice to the government of Pakistan to issue an Ordinance to check the sale and purchase of kidneys otherwise the Supreme Court will consider issuing its own directive in this regard. The authorities who had been postponing taking any decision for over ten years naturally did not like it. First an attempt was made to prolong it on one pretext or the other. Later on instead of issuing an Ordinance, it was tabled in the last session of the National Assembly on its last day knowing fully well that there are no chances of its being taken up. However, later on better sense prevailed and the President of Pakistan on the last day of this one month's notice, promulgated the Human Organs Transplantation Ordinance 2007 on September 3rd.

Supreme Court of Pakistan these days appears to be the last hope for people of Pakistan and its Honourable judges under the leadership of CJP Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry has given many decisions which offers a ray hope. Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry and other members of the Bench who were hearing this case deserve to be congratulated and it is they who should get the credit for

this Ordinance and none else. During the hearing, the Chief Justice of Pakistan had also remarked that poor people have been forced to sell their kidneys. Pakistan was getting lot of bad press all over the World as Pakistan had emerged an Organ Bazaar.

It may be mentioned here that the said Bill which was first initiated to promote cadaver donation had been lying in the Senate for almost ten years without making any headway. Even the present National Assembly has completed its five years tenure without taking up this important issue. It was only after CJP gave a month's notice to the government that the authorities woke up. The Draft of the Ordinance which was also discussed in a meeting of the National Bioethics Committee at Islamabad instead of checking this trade in human organs had certain clauses which would have eventually provided legal cover to sale and purchase of organs specially kidneys. All these lacunas were pointed out and the government was asked to get the draft ordinance revised to remove the controversial clauses. Conscious members of the medical profession lead by Prof. S.Adeebul Hassan Rizvi Executive Director of Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation, Prof. Farhat Moazzam Chairperson of Centre of Bioethics and Culture (CBEC) at SIUT and his team, members of the civil society and the media kept up their pressure which also eventually helped in the issuance of the said Ordinance. However, the life of an Ordinance is only about four months after which either it should be repromulgated or it should be passed by the National Assembly as an act of parliament. In the meantime whether it will be implemented in its letter and spirit is a big question mark. Issuance of the Ordinance is the first

step. Now various Evaluation and Monitoring Committees at the national, provincial and regional levels have to be constituted. Extra precautions need to be taken as regards membership of these committees to ensure that they themselves do not have any conflict of interest.

As a matter of fact the performance of the Federal Health Ministry throughout these years has remained below average. Whether it was the menace of sale and purchase of kidneys, functioning of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, recognition of private medical and dental colleges or supply of sub-standard drugs to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences under the very nose of the Federal Government in Islamabad, all the issues were first taken by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. It was on its directives that the Federal Health Ministry was forced to act and follow instead of taking up these issues itself and providing a leadership role. If every thing has to be taken note of by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, one fails to understand the logic of the very existence of the Federal Health Ministry? When this issue was raised at the press conference addressed by the Federal Health Minister Mr. Naseer Mohammad Khan at the NICVD, he failed to give any satisfactory reply. When further questioned why they cannot see and take action against the healthcare professionals engaged in such unethical medical practices and the pharmaceutical companies involved in unethical marketing practices, his reply was that "unfortunately these very people who are involved in these unethical practices have very strong political backing and it is extremely difficult to take any action against them." Earlier the Director General Health Major Gen. Shahida Malik when asked the same question in a workshop on ethical marketing practices organized by Pharma

Bureau at Karachi had stated that “there are certain things which are beyond their control, hence no action could be taken against these companies involved in unethical marketing practices.” The Drugs Controller responding to a question at the same workshop had said that “the objective of issuing notices to some of the companies was to give them a warning”. All this is enough to show how helpless the officials in the Federal Health Ministry are.

When a suggestion was put forward that all the pharmaceutical companies should be asked to issue a comprehensive list of all the doctors they have sponsored to visit overseas as well as within the country along with details of the event for which they were sponsored, it was rejected by the leadership of the pharma industry simply because it would have exposed many. It appears that eventually some one will have to go to the Supreme Court of Pakistan to settle this issue of unethical medical practice and unethical marketing practices by the pharma industry as this menace has now crossed all limits. And it is the poor people of Pakistan who eventually have to foot the bill in the shape of expensive drugs which are beyond the reach of common man.

Coming to the kidney transplants, while the SIUT at Karachi has all along been practicing live related donors for kidney transplants, many kidney transplant centers had come up in Lahore and Islamabad in the private sector which were actively involved in this trade. The poor donors eventually got very little while the middle men and hospitals involved in this unethical business were making money. Most of their clients were rich Arabs coming from Sheikhdoms and Kingdoms from the Gulf States. The

embassies of these respective countries have been facilitating this and they had agreements with some of these private kidney transplant centers. Is it not ironic that these Arabs using the money had been buying the kidneys from the poor people of Pakistan . The donors were later left at their own and no body took the responsibility of their health care which is indeed unfortunate. Removal of kidneys from some of the patients hospitalized for certain other surgical procedures were also reported and all this could never take place without the active connivance of the hospital administration. Had this practice not been checked, after a couple of years we might have seen procession of these donors marching on the roads? Still there is time that the authorities should collect all the data about the donors and make some arrangements to look after them as kidney donation is associated with some morbidity as well.

If the Federal Health Ministry has finally woke up, it has many other important issues to tackle and one of them is the fleecing of infertile couples by the various Infertility Centers which have come up all over Pakistan. It must register all these centers; ensure that they have requisite facilities, qualified and competent staff. Functioning of these centers should be carefully monitored. All the information regarding these Infertility Centers, the number of patients registered at each center, their success rate should be compiled in a central registry with arrangements to update this on regular basis. This is how the functioning of such centers is monitored in all the civilized counties of the world. It appears we have not become so civilized as yet. Quackery in laboratory services, diagnostic imaging also needs to be checked to ensure that these pathological laboratories and X-Ray Clinics function under the supervision of quali-

fied pathologists and Radiologists. Keeping an eye on the private healthcare facilities can also ensure that they are not given an absolutely free hand to fleece the public. All this is no doubt an uphill task but then that is what the health officials are supposed to do with the support and co-operation of respective professional specialty organizations and other government agencies. Every thing should not be left at the courts. But if the past is any guide, one is not so much optimistic.

Tail-Piece: Every patriotic Pakistani is worried about the country in view of the currently prevailing political situation in Pakistan. Talking at an informal get together of physicians at a healthcare facility, a senior professor who has retired recently remarked that late Col. Abdul Raheem Khan was a distinguished bureaucrat and a career diplomat. He, it is said, was the father of the mother of former President of Pakistan Mr. Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari. Once in 1956 he went to see Badshah Sahib Bamkhel in NWFP who was a very pious and religious man, a kind hearted God fearing practical Muslim. Col. Rahim is reported to have told Badshah Sahib Bamkhel that the British did give independence to India but not to Pakistan. While India is progressing by establishing a democratic set up, for Pakistan the former colonial rulers have decided to rule it through the army and elite. If one looks at the way things have been happening in Pakistan since 1956, it shows his assessment was absolutely correct. For us Pakistanis functioning democracy is still a dream.

(September 15, 2007)

Good Doctoring is a total package

"How Doctors Think"³ by Jerome Groopman a noted oncologist from United States is an excellent book which should be an essential reading for every healthcare professional.³ Published by Hughton Mifflin Company, Boston, USA in 2007, it is such a unique, important and wonderful book that after going through it, you will never look at your own physician in the same way again. Dr. Groopman talks about his personal experiences starting from his days at the medical school progressing to the internship, the problems he had to face while making diagnosis in the wards, and managing patients in the emergency. Also included in the book is interaction with a large number of eminent medical personalities, how the diagnosis was missed at first and how later on they succeeded. It will teach you a lot which is so important for clinical practice that you never had a chance to learn during your undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Internship is considered just like play acting as a doctor but a good clinician is supposed to be a storehouse of knowledge with excellent judgment. In the introduction of the book, Jerome Groopman quotes Sir William Osler who says that "If you listen to patient, he is talking to you the diagnosis" but do the doctors today have time to listen to the patients complaints patiently. It is said that "at an

average the doctors interrupt patient within eighteen seconds of when they begin telling their story." If you are not sure of your diagnosis, you should engage the patient with open ended questions rather than resorting to close ended questions. How doctors think, how he listens and how he speaks to ensure patient's activation and engagement is all very important because "Good doctoring is supposed to be a total package". The tragedy is that "Time is the greatest luxury in today's medical care". But once the doctors remove themselves from the patient's story, they cease to be a true doctor and unfortunately technology, Myron Falchuk believes, has taken doctors away from the patients.

Abdominal pain and chest pain are the two most common reasons for the patients coming to the emergency room. The most common technical errors include wrong dose of a drug, transfusing unrelated unit of blood and mislabeling an X-ray as right sided to left and so on. But it accounts for small fraction of incorrect diagnosis and treatment. Most mistakes are attributed to errors in thinking.

According to Dr. Francis Weld Peabody the secret of care of the patient is caring for the patient. One always learns from one's mistakes. Always remember that perfect is the enemy of the good and nothing one does in surgery is perfect. Healthcare professionals should be mindful of the fact that some patients shop for the doctors. On the other hand some doctors are also too keen to market themselves.

How to read X-Ray, Ultrasound and CT, MRI Films and how to report is an art which one has to learn and this is something which one can only master over a period of years through experience. In one of the studies quoted in

the book, out of one hundred radiologists who were asked to read Chest X-Ray, 20% of times there was incorrect reading among themselves and this is known as "inter observer variety" while "intra observer variety" same X-rays read by the same radiologist for the second time, is reported to be 5-10%. Even 60% of the radiologists while reading an X-ray film missed and failed to identify the missing clavicle. Even then some doctors are not prepared to readily admit their ignorance. Despite all these innovations and developments in modern gadgetry, the fact remains that "machinery cannot replace doctor's mind".

Unethical medical practices in some of the countries including Pakistan which lack an effective monitoring system have crossed all limits. It is an open secret these days that surgical procedures and invasive tests are often influenced by economics. It is not the impressive buildings and state of the art equipment and instruments at these so called Five Star Hospitals which matter but it is the doctors who matter the most at any healthcare facility.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book which has enormous pearls of wisdom. You will also enjoy but above all it will help you improve the way you have been practicing medicine all these years. I also had a chance to read a detailed review on this book. The review was given a title "What is Wrong with the Doctors" which itself conveys a lot. Hence, do not miss reading this master piece.

(October 1, 2007)

Nazrana for PM&DC team of Inspectors

A team of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council headed by Prof. M. Akbar Chaudhry the then Principal of Fatima Jinnah Medical College Lahore was sent to inspect a medical college in UAE for recognition of their degree. As soon as they reached there, a representative of the administration handed over some envelopes to Prof. Akbar Chaudhry for distribution among the members of the inspection team. He was further told that one of the envelopes which was a bit heavy and had some identification mark was meant for him as leader of the inspection team. Prof. Akbar Chaudhry showed the envelopes to the members of the inspection team but did not pass on to them. He enquired from the gentleman what was it meant for and why this favour? At this he was told that this is a tradition with the college and they offer this to all the inspection teams visiting the college for recognition of their degrees just to cover some of their expenditures while in UAE. Prof. Akbar Chaudhry was quite surprised. Despite his refusal, the gentleman insisted and said that he had clear instruction to pass on these envelopes to you and if he had some reservations, he may talk to the administration.

Prof. Akbar Chaudhry took one of the team members Prof. Arbab Ghulam Rasool from Quetta along with him and went to see the chairman of the college. There again he was told that there was nothing wrong with it and it was just a token money to cover some of their expenditures during their stay for inspection of this institution. Prof. Akbar Chaudhry took out the US dollars provided to him by the PM&DC and said that all members of the inspection have been provided TA and DA and their visit was fully sponsored by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council. All what they expect from the hosts was to look after their food and nothing else. The discussions went on for quite sometime and eventually Prof. Akbar Chaudhry returned all the envelopes to the college administration and thanked them for looking after them.

Prof. Akbar Chaudhry is known for going by the book during such inspections. The college had a very beautiful campus with impressive buildings spread over a very large area running into acres. However, it had no proper teaching hospital. They had also shown some other hospitals located over one hundred seventy kilometers away which the college administration said were used for teaching and training but they failed to provide any written contract and proper documentation. Not only that there were serious deficiencies in teaching staff. As such the PM&DC team headed by Prof. Akbar Chaudhry did not recognize that institution. At this they had to face lot of pressure from the federal government, politicians and bureaucrats who opined that this college was already provisionally recognized and the team was supposed to recognize it on permanent basis but Prof. Akbar Chaudhry refused to give in

and stood by their decision of refusing recognition. Had they accepted the *Nazrana*, it would have been difficult for them to give such a report.

It may be mentioned here that this college was earlier inspected twice by the PM&DC and was provisionally recognized. Not only that the college administration had been clever enough to have included a senior professor who also happened to be an official of PM&DC as one of their advisors who used to frequently visit this institution. One wishes and prays that we have more and more people like Prof. Akbar Chaudhry amongst our healthcare professionals.

Interestingly when the recent elections of the PM&DC were being held, some one just spread the news that Prof. Akbar Chaudhry was also thinking to contest for the post of President which upset many. He was approached through numerous sources with a request not to contest the elections. Despite the facts that he made it clear that since he was going to retire in a couple of months, he was not at all interested to contest for this post, some people were not still convinced. And when the elections were held, some one proposed his name for Executive Committee membership. This again upset many and he was persuaded to withdraw. It is alleged that in the past "angels" used to manage national elections only but now they have assumed additional duties of managing elections of various professional bodies as well. So far they have had no luck with the lawyers community but as regards the medical profession, they have no problem.

Prof. Akbar Chaudhry never asked for any extension in service. However, Board of Management of FJMC and Ganga

Ram Hospital prevailed upon the provincial government to give him one year's extension so that some of the ongoing development projects could be completed. Few days before his retirement Prof. Akbar Chaudhry went to USA so that in his absence all the contenders for this coveted post could try their luck. Couple of weeks before his extension was to expire, he told the provincial government that since he was not interested in any further extension, they may appoint some one as his replacement so that he can handover the charge after properly briefing him in time. Eventually he retired honourably on April 3rd, 2007. Convinced of his administrative capabilities, the provincial government appointed him the Project Director for FJMC and Ganga Ram Hospital after his retirement but he refused to accept the offer. In appreciation of his devoted and dedicated services for the development of the FJMC and Ganga Ram Hospital, the Board of Management hosted a farewell reception in his honour which was very well attended by members of the board besides some faculty members and his family members.

A soft spoken, very humble and an upright man, Prof. Akbar Chaudhry did a lot for the development of the institution. His keen interests in academics were the motivating force for various academic activities including workshops, seminar, and symposia besides conferences. FJMC under his leadership also had the unique honour to host the first Regional Conference of Royal College of Physicians London. He along with his other colleagues, Fellows of Royal Colleges of Physicians UK played a vital role to bring the MRCP Exam in Pakistan thereby fulfilling the desire of those who wished to acquire the prestigious degree of the Royal

Colleges of Physicians of UK without having to go overseas thus further cementing the relationship of Pakistani healthcare professionals with the Royal Colleges. Again it was Prof. Akbar Chaudhry who stood up and challenged the then dictatorial administration of College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan. He refused many inducements from CPSP administration including award of honorary Fellowship by the CPSP. Instead with the full support of the Academic Council of FJMC, he fought for the genuine grievances of the postgraduate trainees as well as the supervisors and trainers. Various vindictive measures by CPSP against the FJMC and its faculty members did not deter them to speak for the rights of the trainees and supervisors. The issue went to the Punjab Health Department and later to the Federal Health Ministry. In fact this heroic struggle of FJMC proved to be the beginning of the downfall of CPSP tin gods who were completely routed in the elections. However, the tragedy is that as one of the senior physicians remarked such *"fools like Prof. Akbar Chaudhry"* who stand for principles, honesty and ethical practices are misfit in our society today because *"Yeh naa khood khatay hain na dossoron ko khaney detay hain"*. In today's corrupt Pakistan, it is the dishonest and intellectually corrupt who get promoted, protected and patronized. However, People like Prof. Akbar Chaudhry is no doubt an asset and represent the true conscience of the medical profession. May God help increase this tribe?

(October 15, 2007)

An unpleasant decision

For the last many years we have been impressing upon the members of the medical profession to go back from the Banquet Halls of Five Star Hotels to the auditoriums and lecture halls of medical institutions to reduce the cost of holding seminars, symposia and medical conferences but without much success. Some of the cities and institutions may not have enough facilities to host such academic activities where they can be provided in a phased programme but even in those cities and institutions which have all these facilities, it has become a fashion to select Five Star hotels as venue for such academic activities. Most of these conferences are sponsored by the pharma industry which eventually passes on this cost to the patients in the form of high cost of drugs. The government has all along remained as a silent spectator least interested to intervene. Now it looks as if the medical profession and the pharmaceutical trade and industry have joined hands to rob the poor patients.

Rationale prescribing is a concept neither taught in our medical colleges nor known to the healthcare professionals whose prescribing practices are influenced more by the marketing tactics by the industry than the safety, efficacy, tolerability of the drug and financial position of the

patient. The result is non-compliance with drug therapy by the patient, and development of resistance to commonly prescribed drugs. If a family has just two patients, i.e. a diabetic and another hypertensive, both these being very faithful diseases, the budget of the family is upset and only they know how they manage these diseases which require life long treatment.

While attending a conference at these Five Star Hotels, whenever it comes to one's mind as to who is actually paying for the Lunch, Tea and the Dinners not to mention the music and variety programmes, at times it becomes extremely difficult to swallow the food. As a professional one cannot remain away from these academic activities either since professional duty demands that they may be covered but at the same time it becomes a dilemma. Our repeated attempts to highlight these issues has also annoyed certain pharmaceutical companies involved in unethical marketing practices who have thus unofficially black listed our publications, hence we no more get their business. With ever increasing cost of paper, printing, films, production and advertising being the only source of revenue, it has become difficult to survive in these circumstances. However, there are a few people in the pharmaceutical trade and industry that recognize, appreciate and patronize merit. They not only believe but also practice ethical marketing. It is because of these people that we continue to survive honourably till today.

Most accurate and comprehensive coverage of all such academic activities has earned us a distinction among the medical publications that is why most of the organizers of

these conferences are too keen to ensure our presence at such meetings. Until 2002, we somehow managed to create a balance between the resources available and the demands from the conference organizers but it became difficult with the every passing day for various reasons. It forced us much against our wishes to take some unpleasant decisions. Hence it was decided that the organizers of all those seminars, symposia and medical conferences which are held at the medical institutions, will get our full support and we will go an extra mile to give comprehensive coverage by ensuring our presence if we get an official invitation. However, as regards academic activities held at Five Star hotels, if the organizers wish and send an invitation, they will be given the option either to provide us with a detailed press release and photographs which will be published to cover all such events. However, if they are keen to see our presence and wish that we should cover these events ourselves, they will be asked to sponsor visit of our editorial staff covering travel and accommodation. It is up to the organizers whether they sponsor from their own budget or get this sponsorship from some pharmaceutical company or others connected with the healthcare industry. All those doing so will be obliging the conference organizers and not us and we won't directly communicate with any of these companies for sponsorship under any circumstances. On the contrary, this will be a communication between the conference organizers and the sponsors. This arrangement has been working quite satisfactory for the last four years and the organizers who are too keen to see our presence in such meetings make the arrangements at their own. This is not at all an ideal arrangement and as

stated earlier until 2002 we never accepted any sponsorships like that as we thought it can affect one's professional working. However, in the present circumstances it is some sort of a compromise in the sense that we do not think it is ideal and ethical but even then we always make it known to the conference organizers who make arrangements for such sponsorships that while covering these events, we will uphold the professional ethics at all cost and they should not expect any undue favours. In the meantime we will continue our efforts to convince the conference organizers to move back to the auditoriums and lecture halls of medical institutions thereby reducing the cost of organizing the conference to a great extent which will also come as a great relief to the pharma industry since they are the one who actually foot the bill. Frequency of holding these conferences also needs to be looked into as in most cases annual conferences turn out to be a mere social get-togethers with very little scientific value.

One may ask why the need arose to put all this in print? Answer to this question is that firstly we want to make it clear to all those concerned among the medical profession as well as the pharmaceutical trade and industry and secondly to dispel any apprehensions which some people may have. We have always had a transparent policy and tried to uphold professional ethics, hence these few lines to put everything on record.

(November 1, 2007)

On the sidelines of World Congress of Asian Psychiatry

India which is proud of being the largest democracy in the world has made tremendous progress in every field, mental health being no exception. Hence when I received an invitation from the organizers of the First World Congress of Asian Psychiatry being organized at Goa from August 2-5th 2007; I thought it was a good opportunity to meet the leaders of Psychiatry and Mental Health in Asia. Over the years, I have met and interviewed a large number of eminent medical personalities from India which has convinced me that we can learn a lot from each other in the field of medicine rather than looking towards the West all the time.

Though the relations between India and Pakistan have improved a lot as compared to the past but still getting Indian Visa is not so easy. A little relaxation in visa from both sides and frequent meetings between healthcare professionals of India and Pakistan can go a long way in improving the health scene in the sub-continent. I eventually got the Visa just a day before I had planned to fly to Mumbai on way to Goa. However, I was surprised to note that my Visa was to expire on August 5th while I had booked my return flight on August 6th. I immediately rang up the in

charge Visa section in Indian Embassy at Islamabad. I was told that the consulate had issued the VIP visa in my name which meant that while in India, I will not have to report my arrival and departure to the police a routine for visitors from both India and Pakistan respectively. I was further informed that if I could come to Islamabad, they will be too glad to extend the Visa for another day but that was just not possible as there was no time. The other alternative I was given was that on arrival at Mumbai Airport, I should contact the FFA representative. I was also given the address of FFA website and told to download the Visa extension Form and fill it before hand. I was assured that the FFA representative will be helpful and do the needful. Although I did think of canceling the visit to avoid any unpleasant incident, but eventually I decided to take chance.

This was my second visit to India. Earlier I had visited in 1987 to attend the Asia-Oceania Congress of Head and Neck Surgery held at New Delhi in 1987. There were about a dozen Pakistani psychiatrists on this PIA flight. When we landed at Mumbai, the first thing I noticed was that all the Pakistani Passport holders were asked to come to one side, the immigration staff checked their passports, visa and visa forms before giving them necessary immigration clearance Forms to fill in. Soon after getting through the immigration counter, I asked for FFA office from one of the immigration staff member. I also noticed a Pakistani psychiatrist, one of the delegates to the conference sitting there with his wife. On enquiry I came to know that since they had left the Visa Forms issued from the Indian Consulate Islamabad in Pakistan, they could not be allowed entry. I told my story and showed them the filled in Visa

Extension Form and the Fax which I had received from Indian Consulate in Islamabad. This modestly dressed immigration staffer told us that "This was India and not Pakistan. They have rule of law which prevails under all circumstances." Having heard these few words, for a while I felt as if some one had pushed some sharp edged weapon into my body and it was extremely painful. After few seconds when I recovered and composed myself, I could see sparking light in the eyes of this Indian immigration staffer. Though not so fair colour, but he was looking very handsome with his head high depicting nationalist spirit. He was proud of the fact that their country had rule of law which prevails. I thought he had every right to be proud of and what he did was right. For a while, I also for the first time, felt ashamed of being a Pakistani as we have lost respect in the comity of civilized Nations around the world. Thanks to our rulers. The couple who had forgot their Visa forms in Pakistan were told that they will be deported in the same PIA flight under security as they cannot be allowed entry without those Forms and inspite of having valid Visa stamped on their passports. The security staff was called in to escort them. Their repeated requests that they had come to attend a conference for a few days and they have already visited India a number of times, they also showed the earlier Visas on their passports and this time too they had the Visa stamped on their passports but all this failed to convince the Indians. The PIA staff were contacted to delay the flight for few minutes with similar instructions to the Flight Control Tower. After completing necessary formalities, retrieving their luggage from the baggage claim section, the Pakistani Psychiatrist and

his wife were deported in the same flight back to Pakistan. I was told that I was free to go but must leave India by August 5th. In case I wanted extension for a day or two, I would have to go to the FFA office in the city to seek extension. My connecting flight to Goa was after two and a half hours, so it was not possible. Hence, I decided to rush to PIA office at the Airport to get my return flight confirmed by August 5th positively. There was no PIA flight to Karachi on August 5th. The Manager and other staff members in PIA were extremely kind and helpful. They not only booked my return flight on August 4th on PIA but also helped book my Air India Flight from Goa to Bombay on August 4th early in the morning so that I can reach Mumbai in time to get this PIA flight to Karachi.

I reached Goa by Air India flight in the evening. It was raining heavily but some how the flight did land safely. Other delegates from Pakistan were traveling on Indian Airlines flight which left for Goa about half an hour ago. However, we reached the hotel together after covering an hour's drive through thick jungles.

Scientific programme of the conference was quite interesting and the organizers had succeeded in attracting a large number of participants from many Asian countries besides delegates from UK, USA, Europe, Far East and even up to Australia. The sessions were quite lively and the conference did provide an opportunity to talk to leaders of Asian Psychiatry, what is the current situation as regards mental health services and psychiatry in different countries in Asia and what are their plans for the future. The simplicity and cost effective arrangements with major

emphasis on academics rather than social events was another striking difference from conferences held in Pakistan. Again unlike in Pakistan where we usually have the politicians as the chief guests at such occasions, Vice Chancellor of Goa University Prof. Deelip Deobagkar a distinguished scientist was honoured by the organizers by inviting him to grace the occasion with his presence in the inaugural session. An accomplished research scientist in the field of basic sciences, molecular biology, it was a treat to listen to him. His extempore speech which lasted for about forty five minutes was listened to by the audience in pin drop silence and as soon as he finished, he was greeted with thunderous applause by clapping by the participants which lasted for couple of minutes.⁴

Throughout the conference, the weather in Goa was not kind as it was constantly raining, sometime light drizzle but at times heavy torrential rains. Often I got worried and prayed that we return to Pakistan safely. And it all depended first on getting the flight from Goa to Mumbai in time on August 4th which was at 6.30 AM early in the morning which meant I had to check out from hotel at 3.30 or 4.00 AM and then drive to the Airport which takes about one hour to be safe. When I asked the organizers why they selected this timing for the conference keeping in view the weather conditions, I was told that they wished to host the meeting in Goa which is a famous historic tourist attraction. During season days, the hotels are very expensive and holding a conference is very costly. Hence, they decided to have the meeting during this time so that they could afford it.

Current India and Pakistan relations were also being discussed on the sidelines of the congress among the Indian and Pakistani delegates. One of the senior professors from Chandigarh informed me that when the Supreme Court of Pakistan full court headed by Mr. Justice Khalil Ramadai announced its verdict in the Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry case reinstating him, many Indians could not believe it. This news was splashed on all the Indian newspapers on front page and the electronic media also gave it prominent coverage for a number of days. Indians never expected Pakistani judiciary to be so bold and independent and give such a verdict as they have a history of supporting the military rulers. My reaction was that Pakistanis do feel that Judiciary was reborn in Pakistan and now all of us can breathe in fresh air though it was still too early to come to the final conclusions. The coming few months are very crucial which will determine which way we the Pakistanis and Pakistan are going.

Talking to another Indian psychiatrist friend, I asked him how many Defense Housing Societies they had in India to which he replied rather in a taunting way that if they had that, how they will export onion, potatoes, sugar, other eatables to Pakistan. I reminded him that don't forget there was serious shortage of onions in New Delhi during the BJP government to which he replied in affirmative but hastened to add that when people got an opportunity in elections, they taught the BJP a lesson but you may not get this opportunity of free and fair elections.

I had a different impression about Goa. I thought being a tourist attraction it will have lot of fanfare with all its

essential necessities, but it was not to be. May be it was off-season. Majority of the Goa population is conservative Christians and one could see many temples, some newly renovated. One did get the impression that on the whole Goa is a peace loving conservative population. During the three days stay we did manage to visit some beaches, Islands to have the feel of the towns. The night before we had to leave, my friend and a member of the organizing committee Dr. Afzal Javed from Pakistan currently settled in UK, an important pillar of South Asian Forum on Mental Health and Psychiatry which was one of the co-host organizations took me and Prof. Khalid Mufti from Peshawar to another town in the evening. It was about ninety minutes drive and throughout the journey it was raining heavily. The purpose was to see an Indian movie "*Gandhi- my Father*" on its Premier show. We returned to hotel after midnight at about 1.00 AM. Driving through thick trees which often gave the impression of moving in a Jungle and at times in plains while it was constantly raining, was an adventurous journey. There was not much time to sleep. At 3.30 AM I left the hotel and reached the Goa Airport at 4.30 AM. Again it started raining heavily and I got worried whether the flight would land here or not. As the luck would have it, the earliest flight from Goa to Mumbai which I had booked to be safe and be in Mumbai in time, got delayed. First the delay was for half an hour and then they started announcing further delay after every twenty minutes. I got panicked, asked the Air India staff to shift me on some other flight which was leaving for Mumbai. They were kind enough and finally I did reach Mumbai Airport at about 11.30 AM.

When I reached the PIA counter to check in, the staff told me that I had no confirmed booking which came as a shock. I showed them the PIA ticket with proper entries made by the PIA staff and signed by the Manager but they insisted that the computer does not show it. Later I learnt that the proper entries on the computer could only be made from the City office of PIA and not by the PIA staff at the Airport. However, since I was assured by the PIA Manager and his other senior staff that if I had any problem; they will be at the Airport to help me. I contacted them and they spoke to the concerned staff and I was issued the boarding card which came as a great relief. These three and a half days stay in India was thus memorable and eventful in many respects.

While going through all this ordeal, I recalled that when the Punjab Health Secretary Mr. Raees Abbas Zaidi addressing at the Banquet of Psychiatry Update symposium organized by King Edward Medical University at Lahore in June 2007 had remarked that we in Pakistan are "a Nation of one hundred sixty million mentally sick people"⁵ I was taken by surprise. Now in November 2007, I do realize that he was absolutely right in his assessment. We are not a Nation but 160 million mentally sick people or "*walking dead bodies with no soul.*" We have lost all our self respect. We are ashamed of frequent military interventions. There is no rule of law and Constitution is never upheld. Thanks to our corrupt politicians and successive equally corrupt rulers. This Great Nation whom the God Almighty has blessed with tremendous human and material resources, even after sixty years of independence, still does not know its destination and we do not know where we are heading. On the other

hand India which also got independence at the same time, is moving forward at a much faster pace, thanks to the democratic set up which they have. It is the people of India who have the right to change the Government with their vote which is not the case with Pakistan. Hated PCO remains the supreme law and murder of merit continues unchecked. Fed up, disgusted and frustrated many talented people are leaving the country, the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing to alarming proportions. We have the resources and capabilities to do much better provided all of us forget about our personal interests and do whatever we can to strengthen Pakistan.

(November 15, 2007)

میرا حسین ابھی کربلا نہیں پہنچا
میں حُر ہوں اور ابھی لشکرِ یزید میں ہوں

Professor Emeritus-ship

It seems well wishers of Pakistan overseas in general and the Muslim World in particular is more worried about Islamic Republic of Pakistan than Pakistanis themselves and its politicians. Last week I had two telephone calls, one from a friend from Islamic Republic of Iran and the other from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and both of them asked the same question "What we intend to do with our country. Will it become another Iraq"? My response was "You have dialed a wrong number". I wish I could answer that but cannot. However, I have always believed that God Almighty has blessed this country with tremendous human and material resources. It was never a poor country but it has been robbed through different ways of its resources by successive corrupt, inefficient, incompetent, self centered rulers with vested interests having narrow vision with short sighted policies. When there is no rule of law and might becomes right, it has very serious repercussions for the society and the country in the long run.

Corruption has increased manifold and in fact it has become order of the day in every sphere. Intellectual corruption which was unheard off in Pakistan ten years ago, is now rampant in our medical and academic institutions. Murder of merit goes on un-checked forcing talent to fly out of Pakistan. This is one of the reasons why we have not been able to make much headway in academics. The topic on which I wanted to write since long has been offering Professor Emeritus-ship to outstanding medical personalities in recognition of their dedicated and devoted services.

To be appointed as Professor Emeritus in any institution is an honour which is bestowed upon outstanding medical personalities in recognition of their services to their respective institutions though in some cases this honour is also awarded by certain institutions to those who have never served there but it is very rare. This award of professor emeritus-ship is by invitation as is the common practice in all civilized countries in the West. The proposal to award professor emeritus ship is moved by the respective department in which those being honoured have served and then it goes to the academic council of the respective institution where it is discussed in detail. It is important that the healthcare professional who is being proposed for this honour, must have contributed to the development, up gradation of the department, have positive contributions in the field of academics, teaching, training, patient care and research, is willing to contribute further to the uplift of the department concerned and the respective institution through different ways. They must have established their credibility and their intellectual integrity must not be questionable. After considering all these aspects,

the academic council takes a decision and it is also conveyed to the higher authorities which is just a formality. This is an honour which is for life time and once a positive decision has been taken to honour some one, it has no time bar and cannot be reversed. On the other hand, those honoured have to prove their worth and try to come up to the expectations of their colleagues in the institution doing whatever they can to further improve the image, credibility, services being provided by the institution. This honour certainly should go to those who deserve it and they should earn it. No body should ever attempt to land in an institution through Para shoot with a recommendation from the rulers as this is and should remain the prerogative of the academic councils of the institutions concerned.

There are people in the medical profession who enjoy tremendous respect and even after they leave or retire, are always welcomed by their departments, institutions. However, there are others who do not enjoy this respect for various reasons. Once the Federal Health Ministry sent a communication to the JPMC appointing some one as Professor Emeritus. Prof. I. H. Bhatti was the Director in those days. This hot headed eminent neurosurgeon is a man of principles who has never learnt to compromise though he often had to pay a heavy price for that. He wrote back to the Federal Health Ministry that it was none of their business to appoint anyone as Professor Emeritus which was the prerogative of the Academic Council. He further asked the Federal Health Ministry to cancel the notification issued in that regard and that is how this matter was closed. Prof. I. H. Bhatti served as a government official and not

like a government servant and people like Prof. Bhatti are never born every day. It was indeed a rare honour that even after having retired a couple of years ago as Director JPMC, he was invited as a chief guest to perform the opening ceremony of Medical Unit-II Ward-6 at JPMC which was rebuilt through donations with the assistance of philanthropists. Only a few among the healthcare professionals can earn such rare honours even after retirement.

Tail-Piece: During the Korean War, an American General was visiting Korea. He also went to address the Korean Troops. One of the Korean Generals acted as the translator. At the end of his address the American General also narrated a joke which took couple of minutes. The Korean General just took few seconds to translate it which sent the Korean troops present laughing. The American General was surprised and he asked his Korean counterpart how did he translate the joke in just few seconds and what did he say? The Korean General is reported to have replied, I said to the troops, the American General has narrated a joke and you are all supposed, ordered to laugh.

(December 1, 2007)

Ethical Pharmaceutical Marketing

These days a cut throat competition is visible between the different pharmaceutical companies to increase their share of market by promoting their sales. To achieve this many of these companies are adopting different tactics to influence the doctor's prescription practices by offering them different inducements. Such tactics might work in the short run but in the long term it never pays and does not help to improve the image of such companies as ethical pharmaceutical concerns. They do not realize that one can still make a reasonable profit by adopting ethical marketing practices.

According to Mr. Douglas Watson who retired as President and Chief Executive Officer of Novartis Pharma in USA after serving the pharmaceutical industry for thirty three years, an ethical company with good products should be primarily trying to teach the physicians how to use these products.⁶ The primary aim of marketing, he opines, is the accurate education of the physicians in the side effects and potential benefits of a drug.

A good sales representative, he believes "should focus on physician's attention on what are the critical issues around the drug and then the doctor hopefully take time to read the package insert and other materials that the drug

representative leaves behind again on focusing what is the Key". Instead of simple selling, the pharmaceutical industry should help in physician education.

It is important that the Pharma industry representatives try to create a friendship and cordial relations with the members of the medical profession rather attempting to buy the loyalties of doctors to promote the sale of their company drugs. They must remember that those who are a purchasable commodity will work for them today and switch on to another company whenever some other company offers much better inducements and incentives. In the end such companies also lose respect in the eyes of those who are "bought over" and their representatives will never get any respect. On the other hand, those companies who believe and practice ethical marketing, they enjoy good image in the long run. It has also been observed that those pharmaceutical companies who support Continuing Medical Education programmes particularly those which are organized within the medical institutions has much better impact. The quality and standard of such academic activities is also much better and is also cost effective than those which are organized at hotels. Let the conscious healthcare professionals and those in the pharmaceutical industry whose conscious is still alive, join hand and promote academic activities in the institutions and strengthen their networking helping each other.

(December 15, 2007)