

# Conference proceedings of the first international conference on mental health, March 2012

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There has been an alarming increase in mental illness reflected in a persistent wave of violence, suicide, deliberate self-harm, and disruption in the social fabric worldwide, and particularly in Pakistan, a developing country and now the ninth most populous in the world.

Keeping in view the abovementioned mental health issues, the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University, organized the first international conference on mental health, held on March 29–30, 2012, with the theme “Violence, psychological trauma, and possible acute and post-traumatic interventions in general and particularly in Pakistani society”, to enable intellectual and academic circles to acquire a profound understanding of mental health issues and develop evidence-based strategies for the amelioration of psychological ailments.

The chief invited guest at this inaugural conference was Sohail Naqvi, executive director of the Higher Education Commission, accompanied by Dr Mumtaz Ahmed, president of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Nabi Bux Jumani, dean of the Faculty of Social Science, Muhammad Tahir Khalily, chairman and principal conference organizer, from the Department of Psychology, and Seema Gul, the coprincipal conference organizer. Tahir Khalily, the principal organizer, gave the welcome address, highlighting the prevalence of mental health problems in Pakistan as a consequence of violence. In addition, he lauded the support of the International Islamic University and Higher Education Commission in organizing this auspicious event.

Sohail Naqvi, the principal invited guest speaker, highlighted the pioneering work of the Department of Psychology, International Islamic University, for launching a BS program in psychology and promoting mental health. He also referred to the dire need to address addiction as one of our social problems, and how women can play a significant role in the resolution of these problems, including addiction.

The conference program was divided into three sessions, and each session was subdivided into presentations held in three separate rooms. Each session started with a keynote lecture from national (Murad Musa Khan, Aga Khan Medical University) and international clinical opinion leaders and academics (Inam-ul-Haq, Ireland; Grace Clark, US; Ashiq Ali Shah, Canada). Delegates were clinicians, academics, and students at the graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels, including professionals and scholars from different disciplines. Musa Mura Khan addressed the topic of “Challenges of suicide prevention in Pakistan”.

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**Table 1** List of presented papers

Speaker	Presenter	Topic
1	Zainab et al	Vicarious traumatization in adolescents
2	Noor et al	Anxiety and psychological adjustment in parents of mentally retarded children
3	Fatima et al	Assessing the effect of mental health on the performance of learners
4	Fatima et al	Effect of life orientation (optimism/pessimism) on mental health after controlling the covariance of age, gender, and education
5	Bajwa et al	Sleep patterns among medical and nonmedical students at the University of Lahore
6	Naz et al	Impact of media violence exposure on aggression among adolescents
7	Saleem et al	Relationship of cumulative college grade point average and career related activities with career decision making self-efficacy among female university students
8	Riaz et al	Effect of economic instability on psychological health
9	Bano et al	Impact of meaning in life on stress and psychological well-being
10	Raza et al	Postpartum depression in primigravida women in Rawalpindi, Northern Punjab, Pakistan
11	Shahzad et al	Understanding emotions in adolescents: linkage of trait emotional intelligence with aggression
12	Zafar et al	Emotional intelligence and mental well-being in adolescents
13	Islam et al	Effect of socioeconomic factors on mental health of women in Pakistan
14	Riaz et al	Group cognitive behavioral therapy for anger management in incarcerated women
15	Ambreen et al	Age and personality as moderating the relationship between social support and mental health
16	Khan et al	Impression management at work place
17	Wajahat, A	Childhood public masturbation in females
18	Haider et al	Comparative study of different birth orders and shyness among siblings
19	Riaz et al	Emotional intelligence and self esteem as determinant of subjective well-being in women
20	Irum et al	Relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among teachers of special education
21	Kalsoon et al	Familial social support and psychological well-being in patients with hepatitis C
22	Mushtaq	Relationship between playing violent video games and aggression among children
23	Hussain et al	Appalling situation of mental illness due to devastating calamities in Pakistani society
24	Jahangir et al	Impact of self acceptance on life satisfaction among breast cancer women
25	Hayat, I	Stressful life events, depression, and coping strategies
26	Anjum et al	Neuropsychiatric sequel following traumatic brain injury: a systematic review
27	Aslam, Z	Effect of Internet usage on social involvement and psychological well-being
28	Awan, S	Trauma theory and post-9/11 literature: the case of Pakistani and US fiction writers
29	Ahmad et al	Feeling of loneliness among male and female students living in hostels

In total, 110 papers were presented during the conference, which was chaired by members of the scientific committee and assisted by faculty members and students of the Department of Psychology, International Islamic University. The presentations included a range of psychological/psychiatric issues, including depression, stress, personality disorder, issues of young individuals, parenting styles, learning disabilities, emotional intelligence, violence, suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, and adjustment problems.

The chief invited guest at the concluding ceremony, Riaz Fityana, president of the Pakistan Psychological Association and chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights, mentioned mental health issues in his address on the current violent situation in Pakistani society. He also expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the Department of

Psychology, International Islamic University, in organizing this event and also thanked Muhammad Tahir Khalily for his kind support of the 13th National Conference of the Pakistan Psychological Association, held on November 25–26, 2011, Peshawar, Pakistan. In concluding, the principal invited guest presented shields as a token of appreciation to the organizers of the conference.

The participants and speakers appreciate the efforts of the organizing committee in promoting mental health in Pakistan. The scientific committee carefully reviewed all papers presented in the conference, and selected 29 papers (Table 1) for publication in the conference proceedings.

## Disclosure

The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.

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