

Fifty Years of Psychiatry in Pakistan.

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At the time of independence the Mental Health Care Services in the country were confined within the walls of three Mental Hospitals situated in Lahore, Hyderabad and Peshawar. During the last fifty years great development has taken place not only in the provision of Mental Health Care Services through the establishment of Psychiatric Departments in the teaching hospitals and at District Headquarters Hospitals level but a lot of research work has been carried out by professionals in the field and psychiatric services have been taken to the door steps of people in rural areas through satellite clinics and out reach programmes. This paper reviews the progress of psychiatry from Mental Hospitals to the establishment of Academic Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences.

Key Words: Psychiatry , Behavioural Sciences.

On the threshold of the 3rd millenium we find ourselves faced with a multitude of problems in the area of health care and one of them is the increasing morbidity in the population because of unidentified and undiagnosed psychiatric illnesses. Reviewing the undergraduate teaching curriculum in medical education, one finds that psychiatry has always been considered as a low priority subject and the allocation of teaching time has been very limited. On the other hand surveys carried out show that after respiratory diseases, psychiatric illnesses comprise a major load of consultation in general medical practice¹. This article reviews the psychiatric services which existed at the time of independence 50 years ago and the development of mental health care services in the country as well as the inclusion of psychiatry as a speciality in the medical curriculum over the years.

Discussion

When people talk of developments in the ara of mental health care they mostly refer to the research and development which has taken place in the West as a result of increasing awareness about mental illness and amore humanitarian attitude towards the mentally ill. But if we trace the history and look at the physicians of the East² we come across the works of physicians like Ibne Sina who once observed that "this is the great error of our day that physicians separate the soul from the body", and the unfortunate thing is that this observation is still as true as it was in the times of Ibne Sina³.

At the time of independence, the land we so lovingly call Pakistan had very few amenities in the area of health care and mental health care was limited to three mental hospitals. The Government Mental Hospital, lahore was established in 1840. The Mental Hospital in Hyderabad was established in 1865 as a small institution through the courtesy of a Parsi philanthropist of Karachi named Sir Cawasjee who built it in Hyderabad. There was also a very small unit in Peshawar built on the premissis of a prison and the care was more custodial rather than medical. Over a period of time these hospitals have seen considerable expansion and improvement in the provision of services and in 1964 another 80 bedded hospital was established in Dhudial which is in Mansehra District. There was an increasing dissatisfaction with the services being offered by the mental hospital with their locked rooms, the

backyard wards and the cruel handling of mentally ill patients by the para medical staff. Till the seventies unmodified electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) was being used. There was ECT drill in Mental Hospitals. A hundred patients or so were made to lie in the hall and given unmodified ECT. This inhuman treatment was also demonstrated to the medical students which disgusted and repelled the majority and tarnished the image of psychiatry as a speciality⁴.

As far as the teaching of psychiatry in medical colleges goes we find King Edward Medical College taking the lead. As far back as in the 1920's psychiatry was being taught at King Edward Medical College by Lt. Col. Dr. Lodge Patch who was at that time looking after the affairs of Government Mental Hospital as well as being a lecturer at King Edward Medical College, Lahore⁵. We have ahistorical document in the form of a letter by Emil Kraeplin who proposed to visit Lahore in 1926 and was interested in studying the prevalence and pattern of medical illnesses in the asylum population in this part of the world. This letter was given to the Department of Psychiatry, King Edward Medical College by Dr.Ian Lodge Patch the son of Late Col. Lodge Patch.

Although the first 25 years of independence were a great challenge for the government in all sectors of administration, however, mental health care was given some attention and the decision was taken to open psychiatric units in all teaching hospitals. Pakistan Medical and Dental Council recognized Psychiatry as a compulsory subject and it was included in the undergraduate medical curriculum. As a result of this, small psychiatric units were established initially on an outpatient basis in a couple of teaching hospitals in the country.

It was in the late seventies that the scene began to change and an increasing number of patients presenting to the medical profession with psychiatric illnesses necessitated the provision of more services and an increasing number of trained mental health professionals returning to their country made efforts to modernise the psychiatric care, remove the stigma of mental illness and bring psychiatry at par with other medical specialities in the teaching institutions.

The last two decades have seen rapid changes in the delivery of services in the area of mental health care in Pakistan. The influx of freshly trained psychiatrists in the

country brought with it fresh ideas and commitment to practice psychiatry with a more scientific approach.

The present status of psychiatric services in the country is something that we may well be proud of. There are independent professorial units in the majority of the teaching hospitals in the country and a number of the departments have the services of allied professionals i.e. psychologists and in some cases social workers as well. There are teaching hours assigned to psychiatry in the curriculum of undergraduate medical students, although they are totally insufficient in comparison to the number of patients that they will come across.

We can note with satisfaction that the scene is changing in the rural areas also. Not so long ago burr holing and blood letting were being practiced even 40 miles from Lahore. Because of lack of legislative control, quacks still about and the stories of exploitation are horrifying. For the last few years efforts have been made to bring psychiatric services to the door step of the rural population and we are seeing the development of community psychiatric services in different parts of the country. A number of out reach programmes are under way in different cities with the collaboration of various agencies with the objective of reaching that section of population which is not able to find its way to the big hospitals. A significant development has taken place in the private sector. In all big cities good quality private inpatient services are available.

Presently psychiatric units exist at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi, Dow Medical College, Karachi, Sindh Medical College, Karachi, Liaquat Medical College, Hyderabad, Nawab Shah Medical College, Nawab Shah, Chandka Medical College, Larkana, in Baluchistan Bolan Medical College, Quetta has a fully developed department of psychiatry, in Punjab besides the King Edward Medical College there are well organized departments at Allama Iqbal Medical College, Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Postgraduate Medical Institute, Lahore. Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Medical College, Rawalpindi, Nishtar Medical College, Multan Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur, Punjab Medical College, Faisalabad and in N.W.F.P. there are units at Khyber Medical College and Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar, which is now a postgraduate teaching institute and at Ayub Medical College, Abbotabad. Besides these, the Armed Forces have also their Medical College and Postgraduate Medical Institutes which have well staffed psychiatric units. Besides the development in the government sector there has also been a considerable development in the private sector as well, a psychiatry department at Agha Khan Medical College and the Baqai Medical College, Karachi, are good examples.

The development of services has not remained confined to general psychiatry in some departments in the area of psychogeriatrics⁵, adolescent psychiatry^{6,7}, Community psychiatry^{8,9} and drug addiction^{10,11}. Another significant development that has taken place is in the area of rehabilitation¹² especially for chronic schizophrenics

and for children with learning disabilities. Fountain House Lahore has been providing rehabilitation to chronic schizophrenics since the late 1970's and similarly over the last two decades a number of services have been developed for the rehabilitation of children with learning disabilities especially a special education and training centre at Johar Town, Lahore.

Another landmark in the history of development of Psychiatry in Pakistan is the establishment of the Department of Child and Family Psychiatry at King Edward Medical College¹³, Lahore, which is the only department of its kind in the country. This department provides services to children with psychiatric disorders, neurological deficits, developmental delays, behaviour disorders and speech disorders, besides carrying out more than two dozen research projects in the last 20 years. This department has a unique feature of having established a Lekotek (Toy Lending Library) in collaboration with its counterpart in Stockholm, Sweden, where parents are trained to provide stimulation to children with developmental delays^{14,15,16,17,18}.

Another achievement has been the establishment of the unit of geriatric psychiatry for senior citizens at the department of psychiatry, King Edward Medical College. These psychiatric services were developed with the help of Late Prof. A.R. Siddiqui of Canada under the auspices of United Nations Development Programme. No review of the development of psychiatry in Pakistan can be complete without the mention of two very important achievements. One of them is the initiation of publication of two scientific journals - The Pakistan Journal of Clinical Psychiatry and The Pakistan Journal of Child Mental Health published by the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, King Edward Medical College. The second and very significant achievement has been the organization of the Regional Meeting of World Psychiatric Association in March, 1996 in Lahore. The theme of the meeting was "Freedom from Depression in the 3rd Millennium" and this was the first time that the world psychiatric association held its meetings in Asia. The second meeting has been held in Beijing, China in October, 1997 and the 3rd one is due to be held in India in 1998. The organization of this regional meeting of World Psychiatric Association has gone a long way towards the establishment of international links and the recognition of the fact that our country remains fully involved in the development of mental health care services to its people and is keeping up with the most recent advances that are taking place in the management of the mentally ill.

Research

Another very important development has been in the area of research. Links with the Royal College of Psychiatrists¹⁹ and the W.H.O.²⁰ have certainly helped in promoting research for which there is great potential in the various departments where top quality research is taking place because better trained people are available and motivated

to do research. In the 1980's and 1990's psychiatrists in a number of medical colleges got involved in a number of research projects and have produced work of a standard which is recognized internationally. A large number of original papers have been written and published and Pakistan has found a place for itself on the world map of psychiatry.

With specific reference to King Edward Medical College the Department of Psychiatry and Department of Child and Family Psychiatry have carried out a large number of research projects, some locally and some with international collaboration e.g. with the University of Leeds, with Karolinska Institute, Sweden, with Surgevisky Centre, New York, Bishop Bekker Institute, Netherland and more specifically with the World Health Organization. Both the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Child and Family Psychiatry have participated in the W.H.O. field trial of international classification of diseases I.C.D.¹⁰ alongwith two other centres in Pakistan one at Karachi and the other at Rawalpindi. The departments of Psychiatry and Child & Family Psychaitry at King Edward Medical College have translated, modified and validated a number of investigative tools according to our cultural norms, for use in the assessment of our patients^{21,22}. The Department of Psychiatry working in collaboration with the University of Leeds has developed Lahore Somatic Inventory - an instrument designed to identify psychologically distressed patients presenting with physical symptoms^{23,24,25}.

Conclusion

On the eve of Golden Jubilee Celebrations of independence one finds that considerable progress has been made in the area of mental health care and young bright medical graduates are taking up psychiatry recognizing the fact that this is a speciality for the future with numerous avenues open for research. One also finds that there is a lot to be achieved and medical students need more teaching hours of training in behavioural sciences and psychological medicine.

In keeping with this modern concept we have started teaching behavioural sciences to the first year MBBS Class as a formal subject since last academic year. From this year an examination has also been started in the subject of behavioural sciences and the first examination was held in August, 1997. Behavioural Sciences and Psychological Medicine have now become an integral part of undergraduate medical curriculum and the department has been developed into an Academic Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences.

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