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| **14th Punjab Bioethics Group Meeting**Shalamar Medical & Dental College, LahoreFriday, April 7th 2023 |

# **Call to order**

The 14th meeting of **Punjab Bioethics Group** was held virtually at **Shalamar Medical & Dental College, Lahore** on Friday, 7th April 2023. The meeting was moderated by Dr. Sarosh Saleem and lasted an hour; & was attended by the following professionals from various institutes of Pakistan.

**Attendees included:**

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| Dr. Afifa Ehsan, Dr. Faiza Ahmad |
| Dr. Farkhanda Ghafoor Dr. Nuzhat I Malik |
| Dr. Gul Afshan Dr. Farah Naz |
| Dr. Iqra Aziz Dr. Sundus Iftakhar |
| Dr. Junaid Rashid Dr. Shabbir Bhatti |
| Dr. Naila Nizami Dr. Sharmeen |
| Dr. Nousheen Dr. Mumtaz Lakhani |
| Dr. Sarosh Saleem Dr. Nasim Tariq  |
| Mr. Kashif Dr. Jaweria Razzaque |

**Regrets:**

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| Dr. Saadia Shahzad |

# **call to order**

Two cases were discussed. The participants engaged in the discussion with enthusiasm.

# **old business**

**Follow Up On Incest/Abortion Case by Dr. Sharmeen**

The meeting began with a discussion on the current state of the case. Dr. Sharmeen updated the group that during the previous Whatsapp discussion, Advocate Ms. Anum had proposed the use of social media to raise awareness about the topic, as changing the law will not happen overnight.

Dr. Nuzhat provided information that she had spoken to a couple of muftis who had given their fatwas on abortion in such cases. Dr. Sarosh raised concerns about the risks of discussing this topic in the community, which Dr. Sharmeen agreed with. The group discussed the main dilemma, which was how to change the mindset of communities where such practices are considered the norm.

After a thorough discussion, the subgroup decided to meet with the advocate at the end of May to decide on a way forward. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to all attendees for their valuable contributions.

In summary, the meeting addressed important issues concerning the current state of the incest/abortion case, including the use of social media to raise awareness, obtaining fatwas from muftis, and discussing the risks of speaking about this topic in the community. The group recognized the main challenge of changing the mindset of communities where such practices are considered the norm and agreed to meet again to determine a path forward.

NEW BUSINESS

**Case Summary of a Critically Sick Referred Patient by Dr. Jaweria Razzaque, IHHN, Raiwind Campus**

Dr. Jaweria reported a tragic case involving a critically ill gynecology patient referred by THQ Kot Radha Kishan. The patient was quickly taken to the operating room for an emergency C-section after receiving consent from her mother, as the husband was absent. Unfortunately, the procedure resulted in the delivery of a stillborn baby girl weighing 1.2 kg. The patient's condition remained dire, requiring ICU care and ventilator support, leading to her referral to a tertiary care hospital. Despite efforts to revive her, the patient passed away two days later. The incident sparked a discussion within the Punjab Bioethics board, where members carefully considered the ethical and legal implications of referring critically ill patients to other facilities. They ultimately agreed that in this situation, the best course of action was to refer the patient to a facility with the necessary resources to provide safe and effective care. Some members have proposed that signing an MOU with nearby private hospitals could potentially save the lives of critically ill patients. It was highlighted that the clinicians involved did their best because they could not keep the patient at the facility without the required facilities and they transferred her after stabilizing her. However, they seem to be suffering from moral distress about the whole situation. They do have the knowledge and skills to save the patient but lack infrastructure and resources. The group acknowledged their distress and reassured them that they did the best for the patient. This reinforces the objective of PBG which is to support clinicians and colleagues when they feel distressed.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

* The abortion act sub-group will share updates with the rest of the group
* Students/Trainees support group will share planned activities and updates

**Suggestions:**

Participants were encouraged to bring ethical issues to the discussion table without any hesitation.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned by the moderator Dr. Sarosh Saleem with thanks to all attendees for their support, encouragement and valuable contributions. The date and timing of the next meeting was decided to be held on Friday, 2nd June 2023.

**Minutes recorded by:**

***Sadia Rehman Rao***