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# 29<sup>th</sup> Punjab Bioethics Group Meeting

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SHALAMAR MEDICAL & DENTAL COLLEGE, LAHORE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 07, 2025

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## CALL TO ORDER:

The 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Punjab Bioethics Group** was held virtually on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025 moderated by Ms. Amna Farooq. The meeting lasted two hours. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the members. The meeting involved discussion of two cases and attended by professionals from various institutes in Pakistan.

## ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Dr. Hafeeza Naz, Abdul Razaque Sheikh, Ms. Amna Farooq, Farman Ali, Dr. Sarosh Saleem, Dr. Marzia, Dr. Annum Ishtiaq, Dr. Midhat Zahra, Mr. Aamir, Dr. Farkhanda, Dr. Raja Sajjad Asghar, Unaisa Qzai, Ms Sana, Ms Rabiya, Muhammad Atif, Dr. Saadia Shehzad, Dr. Zahid Bashir, Ali Mansoor, Dr. Jamshed Akhtar, Dr. Asma Akhtar, Dr. Nasim Rafiq, Ms. Mehtab Sikander Khan.

## AGENDA:

1. Dr. Hafeeza Naz, Assistant Professor Endocrinology and HOD SiDer, Shalamar Hospital, Lahore, discussed " **Harm by Hesitation: Ethical Reflections on Delayed Clinical Action**"
2. Dr. Annum Ishtiaq, Consultant Family Medicine & Palliative Medicine, discussed " **Between Hype and Health: Ethical Reflection on Pakistan's HPV Vaccine**"

## DISCUSSION & SUGGESTIONS:

**Case 1:** The first presentation involved a case of a 65-year-old man with poorly controlled diabetes who developed a severe diabetic foot infection leading to sepsis and multiple surgeries. Despite worsening fever, rising CRP, and family requests, amputation was delayed by a second surgeon, and the patient later required a below-knee amputation followed by ARDS, ICU care, and no improvement until the family chose home-based end-of-life care. It explains that he did not recover because of delayed source control, MDR pathogens, poor glycemic control, sepsis complications, and limited physiological reserve. The takeaways highlight the need for multidisciplinary action, responsibility for timely decisions, valuing family insight, and institutional systems that prevent harmful delays.

The discussion raised questions about the patient's delayed admission to the surgical unit and the absence of proper multidisciplinary involvement. Participants noted issues of poor communication. It was agreed that all units share responsibility and the case should have gone to the hospital ethics committee.

**Case 2:** The presentation titled “**Between Hype and Health: Ethical Reflection on Pakistan's HPV Vaccine**” described Pakistan's first HPV vaccination campaign for girls aged 9–14, focusing on whether the country was fully prepared for such a program. It highlighted confusion in public about what the vaccine prevents, along with public hesitation, misinformation, gender-based views, and religious concerns. Ethical issues such as, cultural sensitivity, informed consent, and the continued importance of cervical cancer screening were emphasized.

The discussion also raised concerns about promoting the vaccine as “anti-cancer,” limiting vaccination to girls.

The discussion emphasized the importance of including boys, addressing trust issues within society, and recognizing that people hesitate to make decisions independently. It was also suggested that policy makers focused on cancer while avoiding open discussion about HPV as a sexually transmitted infection.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Case 1:** This case shows how delayed decisions, fragmented care, and poor communication can turn a manageable condition into a severe and harmful outcome. It stresses that timely multidisciplinary involvement, transparent leadership, and respecting family concerns are crucial in preventing such situations. It also highlights the need for institutional systems that ensure early escalation and shared responsibility across all units.

**Case 2:** It is recommended that Pakistan's HPV vaccination campaign be carried out with cultural sensitivity, and clear communication to reduce hesitation, misinformation, and public confusion. Inclusive strategies should address gender equity, consider children's assent, and extend beyond girls to include boys. Cervical cancer screening and strengthening societal trust should remain core components, while all efforts uphold justice, respect, informed consent, and public confidence through culturally relevant approaches.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned by the moderator Dr. Sarosh Saleem with thanks to all attendees for their support, encouragement, and valuable contributions. The next meeting is scheduled for January 02, 2026, at 09:30 AM.

*Minutes Recorded by*

*Ms. Huda Behzad*