Editorial

SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES AT AL NAFFEES MEDICAL HOSPITAL, ISRA UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

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Isra Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences (IIRS), Isra University is an integral part of Al Nafees Medical College Hospital. Al Nafees Hospital is an allied teaching hospital having clinical departments including Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, Urology, Neurosurgery, Radiology, Clinical Laboratory, and Operation theatres located within the premises of the main campus at Farash Town, Islamabad. Farash Town is a congested area of 1000 to 1200 households. As per a survey conducted by Sustainable Development Institute of Pakistan in 2011 Farash Town comprises of mostly lower to middle income strata.

Speech and language therapy (SLT) department was established in November 2013 in Al Nafees medical hospital. The speech and language pathologists work in the SLT department in collaboration with pediatricians, ENT specialists, psychologists and physical therapists. IIRS offers the disciplines of SLT at the B Sc as well as M Phil level and has launched a pioneer discipline of Doctorate (PhD) of Rehabilitation Sciences with the first batch course work being completed in July 2015.

SLT clinic at its inception had an Out Patient department (OPD) of 20 patients per month which by May 2015 rose to 140 per month. Being an integral part of a teaching hospital the rehabilitation session fee has been capped at Rs 50 per visit therefore making it accessible for the low socio economic population in the surrounding areas. IIRS presently caters to the suburb area of Islamabad the capital of Pakistan.

SLPs address typical and atypical communication and swallowing disorders in the areas of stammering, speech sound production and articulation disorders, apraxia of speech, dysarthria. Developmental disabilities with specific language impairment, autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia , learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, auditory deficits ,resonance & voice disorders, language (comprehension & expression), feeding and swallowing deficits arising due to oral anomalies such as cleft lip/palate , cerebral palsy, dementia and Parkinson's disease ,genetic disorders like Down Syndrome and others presenting with features of communication and feeding disorders are provided with treatment as well.

SLT department has modern observation rooms and therapy rooms where speech therapists treat patients. Internees from the relevant faculties of the University are also trained as observers. The department has a liaison with the ENT, pediatrics, and psychology department of the hospital and caters to referrals as well as walk in patients. Modern teaching aids and tools are used by the speech therapists as per the treatment plan. Home plans are advised for patients coming from far flung areas.

With improved health care services the issues of old age related burden of disability is arising as the direct result of increased life expectancy/ longevity and has thrown geriatric rehabilitation into the spot light. Geriatric health care is an advanced form of rehabilitation. After having established itself IIRS is exploring venturing into geriatric care as the proportion of elderly in Pakistan and its diaspora who can afford geriatric care is increasing partly due to health awareness, as well as the ways and means to access geriatric health care becoming available at IIRS, Isra university Islamabad.

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