

## **DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Two-day International Seminar  
Fountain House  
21 -22 January 2006

### **PRESS RELEASE**

Prof. Khalid Mufti inaugurated the seminar. Prof. Haroon Rashid Chaudhry, Honorary Executive Director of Fountain House and Head of the Psychiatry Department of the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, welcomed the guests. Mrs M M Khan, Dr. Kausar Sohail, Russel Desauza, M P Deva, Prof. Abdul Malik Achakzai, Saeed Chaudhry, Sahikh Muhammad Naeem, Prof. Khalid Muftti, Dr. Muhammad Afzal Javed, Dr. Fareeha Pracha, Dr. Saima Qurashi, Prof. Muhammad Afzal Chaudhry, Dr. Azhar Ali Rizvi and Brig. Saeed Akhtar were also present on the occasion.

Some 5,000 survivors of the 8<sup>th</sup> October earthquake are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), while around 50,000 people identified so far with mild psychological trauma in the calamity hit areas require immediate attention and proper treatment.

This was the consensus among speakers at the concluding session of the two-day international seminar on psychiatry here at the Fountain House on Sunday.

The seminar on 'disaster management and psychological rehabilitation – community education programme in psychiatry' was organized jointly by the World Psychiatric Association (zone-15) and WPA Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the South Asian Forum, the Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations, the Pakistan Psychiatric Society, the World Association of Psychological Rehabilitation and the International Bureau of Epilepsy.

Two model psycho-social rehabilitation centres would be established at Muzaffarabad and Balakot for the earthquake survivors, the WPA section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries announced on the occasion. A donation of Rs200,000 was also given for the purpose.

The objectives of setting up the two centres would be to provide mental health services to young survivors, especially girls who lost their parents, and elderly people. Services of the two part-time clinical psychiatrists and two each full-time psychologists and nurses would be hired for the centres.

Prof Dr Khalid Mufti presented a report on the performance of the psychiatry camp set up at Balakot, Prof Dr Fareed Aslam Minhas on Bagh, Prof Dr Haroon Rashid on Muzaffarabad and Prof Dr Azizur Rahman on Batgram. They also spoke about the problems and hurdles they faced while providing free psychiatric services in their respective areas.

They said the quake survivors were still having severe post trauma distress. The condition of children who lost their parents and the women who lost their families were undergoing a critical phase of their lives. They were still entangled in fear, phobic anxiety, tension, hopelessness, anger and negative thinking and immediate measures were required to improve their condition.

Plans and suggestions for addressing the post-trauma effects on survivors were discussed at length and the participants were of the view that in a country like Pakistan where there was 300 or so psychiatrists and very few psychologists, training of doctors and paramedical staff was a must to effectively cope with disasters like this.

Head of the WPA's Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries, Prof M.P Deva (Indonesia), Prof Russel D'Souza (Australia), Afzal Javed (UK), Prof Abdul Malik Achakzai (Quetta), Prof Khalid Mufti (Peshawar), Prof Farid Aslam Minhas, Prof Azizur Rehman, Dr Imtiaz Dogar, Dr Azhar Ali Rizwan, Dr Altaf Qadir, Dr Zahid Mahmood and Prof Dr Haroon Rashid Chaudhry were prominent figures who presented research papers on quake-hit areas.

Chief Minister's Adviser and the chair of the Punjab Social Welfare Services Board, Saba Sadiq, Dr I.A Tareen and his wife, Dr Khalida Tareen, also spoke on the occasion.