**Peshawar: January, 08 2019**

**Press Release:**

**MoU for Clinical Trial on Mental Health (STOPS PLUS) Signed Between Faculty of Public Health KMU, LRH, Prime Institute and Keele university, UK**

MoU signatures took place at KMU on 7th January 2019 in the presence of Khyber Medical University (KMU) VC Prof Arshad Javaid, Registrar Prof Saleem, Dean Public Health Prof Zia Ul Haq, Medical Director LRH Dr Mukhtar, Prime Institute Dr Saeed Anwar, HSRU KP and Public health faculty from KMU.

The project was successfully launched to kick start with the activities to achieve the milestone within predefined timeline. VC KMU appreciate the efforts made by the Prof Saeed Farooq from Keele University UK and Prof Zia Ul Haq from Public Health KMU for developing the idea of Supervised Treatment in Out-Patients for Schizophrenia (STOPS+) which was originally adapted from TB DOTS. The idea is based on mental health patients who usually have multiple needs which require long-term care, supervision of medication and follow-up for future treatment care. STOPS+ is an initiative that involves support from the family, the care givers in providing facilitation to the mentally unstable patient, keeping a record of the patient’s medication and supervising the patient’s general life activities. The STOPS+ project has been reviewed, accepted and funded by the Medical Research Council United Kingdom with a handsome amount of money.

Prof Zia Ul Haq briefed that STOPS + is a community based clinical trial to see its feasibility and effectiveness in the treatment adherence and reduction in the treatment gap in the chronic mental health disease of schizophrenia. He elaborated that this is a unique project where the experience of an infectious disease will be applied to the non-communicable diseases (NCD) and if successful may be replicated for the management of other NCDs such as Diabetes, COPD, and hypertension. This trial will involve three phases; pre-implementation phase, implementation of STOPS+ in primary care settings using a cluster Randomized Control Trial and the post-implementation. Currently the qualitative research is under process which is lead by Dr Maria Ishaq Khattak from KMU and Dr Lisa Dikomitis from Keel UK.

The project main office will be at the institute of public health KMU and trial will be run in the 24 randomly selected health facilities of district Peshawar. Total of 526 Schizophrenic patients will be followed for the period of one year. PRIME will help in the community engagement and LRH psychiatry ward will provide the clinical specialty.

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