

Experts say Pakistan spending lowest on health

Dr Odho calls Balochistan better than Sindh in child nourishment

IoBM Faculty Parvez Jamil said print and electronic media could enhance free medical and health consultancy by doctors and specialists



KARACHI: Pakistan spends 0.8 per cent of its GDP on public expenditure on health which is least in the Southeast Asian region, according to health experts on Saturday.

On performance of provinces, Sindh only spent 31 per cent on population out of health budget during the last year. During the ongoing month, the Sindh chief minister declared health emergency in the province, they expressed their views during **an interactive session on healthcare for the less-privileged held at IoBM.**

It was attended by corporate professionals, multinational companies, pharmaceutical industry, medical experts, doctors, surgeons, physicians, and specialists. The event was organized by IoBM students of the Public Relations and Corporate Communication.

Speaking on the occasion, renowned physician Dr Anwar Naqvi from the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) said that it seems the government has other priorities when it comes spending to health. For instance, the government spends less as compare to debt servicing, defence, non-development, development and education, he said.

"As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), Pakistan spends 0.8 per cent of its GDP on public expenditure on health which is least in the Southeast Asian region. Whereas India spends 1.2 per cent, Bangladesh 1.2 per cent, Nepal 1.8 percent and Sri Lanka 1.3 percent," he told the audience. "Health is not a privilege but it is a basic human right," Dr Naqvi said.

Dr Suleman Odho - a public health physician - said that Sindh could not be able to spend, even though whatever it had to spend. Sharing the example, he said that the province spent only 31 per cent on 'out of pocket' population. "These are the official figures," he said. "Whereas if we compare Sindh's (last year) performance with other provinces, we see that Punjab spent 80 per cent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) 85 to 90 per cent and Balochistan 35 per cent of their respective budgets," he stated. Accordingly, "Sindh is far behind is spending less on nourishment, even available of sources," he said.

"Apart from it, 49 per cent of children in Sindh are under nourished. Even Balochistan is better," he added. IoBM Faculty Adviser Parvez Jamil said that the print and the electronic media could further play instrumental role towards free medical and health consultancy by doctors and specialists.

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