

Life of medical professionals in Pakistan

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Madam, "The one who saves a life, saves humanity", Ironically in current scenario of Pakistan the one who saves the life is in danger of losing his own life. According to report released by Pakistan Medical Association, 17 doctors were targeted in Karachi during 2014, while fifty four had been killed in 4 years duration of 2010 to 2014.¹ Health sector in Pakistan is also referred to as a sinking ship and under such deadly circumstances it will only get worse by brutal killing of doctors and ancillary hospital staff including nurses, lady health workers, midwives and professionals associated with immunization campaigns. According to economic survey, there are only 127,859 physicians to cater 180 million populations; however the worst situation is prevailing in rural areas due to poor incentives and lack of security for physicians.² Everyday couple of members from medical fraternity receive extortion threats, failure to fulfill such demands results in loss of precious lives of physicians. For physician's life protection guns are now as important part of their amenities as stethoscopes are, they need security guards at their homes as well since they are not safe at any place any more.

Physicians are easy target for terrorists and other groups involved in criminal activities since they work in hospitals which are devoid of any effective security measures and influential support. According to one representative of

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provincial doctors' association, nearly 90% of senior physicians receive extortion threats.³ Apart from being unable to pay extortion, doctors are also killed on sectarian grounds. Immunization staff is under threat as well because of myths cultivated in far flung population by terrorism proactive groups, these medical professionals are first line of defense against preventable disabling and deadly diseases and as a result the incidence of such diseases is rising consistently over 2 to 3 years. The need of time is to take steps against such brutal killing of doctors and other medical professionals because they are the sole sailors of the sinking ship. Increment in death toll due to assassination of doctors should be stopped as soon as possible since many physicians are moving to other countries for life protection and better future. Government and law enforcement authorities have to intervene and implement security measures which are effective to save lives of medical professionals because it is difficult for a society to flourish and survive without health professionals.

References

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