

**MINUTES OF 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTELY NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE (NBC)  
MEETING  
Sep 8, 2018; Muzaffarabad Medical College  
AJK**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly National Bioethics Committee (NBC) meeting was held on Sep 8, 2018; in Muzaffarabad Medical College AJK at 10:00 am. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr Aasim Ahmad, Chairperson Research Ethics Committee as the Secretary Mo NHR&C could not attend the meeting.

Following members attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Muhammad Ali Shahzada, Member Secretary/Executive Director, Pakistan Health Research Council/Member Secretary NBC
2. Prof. Dr. Farhat Moazam, Center of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, Karachi
3. Prof. Dr. Aasim Ahmad, Dean and Chief Nephrologist, The Kidney Centre, Karachi
4. Maj. Gen. Salman Ali, Nominee President CPSP, Islamabad
5. Maj. Gen. Imran Fazal, Nominee Surgeon General Pakistan Army, Rawalpindi
6. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology, Islamabad
7. Prof. Dr. Jamshed Akhtar, professor and Head of the Department of pediatric Surgery, NICH, Karachi
8. Dr. Saima Pervez Iqbal, Associate Professor, Shifa College of Medicine, Islamabad
9. Dr. Aftab Ahmed Qazi, Focal Person, Directorate General Health Services (DGHS) Office, Hyderabad Sindh
10. Dr. Aamir Mustafa Jafarey, Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Culture, Karachi
11. Dr. Lamia Mahmoud, Representative WHO, Islamabad
12. Prof. Dr. Munir A. Saleemi, University of Lahore
13. Dr. Khawaja Tahir Aziz, Assistant Professor Dept of Paeds AJ&K Medical College Muzaffarabad, AJK
14. Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, DGH Services, Muzaffarabad AJK
15. Dr. Tahir Bashir-ud-Din Khilji, Additional Director DGHS Office, Focal Person, DGHS Peshawar
16. Dr. Ambreen Munir, LUMHS, Jamshoro
17. Dr. Salman Ahmed Tipu, Vice Dean, Isra University, Islamabad
18. Dr. Shoukat Ali Qureshi, Representative, President Pakistan Association of Family Physician
19. Dr. Farah Zaidi, Assistant Registrar/Nominee PM&DC, Islamabad
20. Dr. Farkhanda Ghafoor, Ex-Principle Research Officer, PHRC
21. Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Mustafa, Focal Person NBC, Pakistan Health Research Council, Islamabad
22. Dr. Faiza Bashir, Coordinator NBC, Pakistan Health Research Council, Islamabad

**Members who sent their regrets to the NBC Secretariat prior to meeting:**

1. Dr. Inayatullah Memon, Incharge Department of Bioethics and Medical Education, Indus Medical College, Tando Jam
2. Mr. Abdul Ghani Sasoli, Institute of Public Health (IPH), Quetta

**Members who were absent:**

1. Dr. Manzar Anwar Khan, Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar
2. Dr. Muhammad Hayat Ronjho, Representative Director General Health, Baluchistan
3. Dr. Sheikh Akhtar Hussain, CEO DRAP, Islamabad

4. Dr. Amjad Hussain, Representative HEC, Islamabad
5. Dr. Jawad Habib Khan, Director Health Services, FATA Secretariat, Peshawar
6. Representative President, Supreme Court Bar Association, Islamabad
7. Registrar, Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Islamabad
8. Director General Health, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
9. Chairman PPMA, Islamabad

Mr Muhammad Ali Shahzada, Member Secretary NBC; welcomed the Members which was followed by the introduction of the Members.

**Agenda Item-1: Approval of the minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly NBC Meeting held on May 11, 2018:**

The Focal Person Dr Ayaz Mustufa informed that the minutes of the last NBC meeting held in Lahore were circulated to all attending members and after incorporating their comments, the draft minutes were finalized and approved by the Chair and circulated to all NBC members.

**Decision:** The house unanimously approved the minutes of last NBC meeting.

**Agenda Item-2: Briefing on the actions taken on the decisions of the last NBC Meeting.**

The Focal Person briefed the house about the NBC activities during the last quarter along with the status of the actions taken on decisions of last NBC meeting.

**2.1: Endorsement of “Handbook for Introducing Bioethics to Medical and Dental Students”**

Focal person informed the committee that PMDC’s Medical Education Committee has been formulated and the document is to be presented to it and then to the Council for endorsement as informed in the last communication with PMDC representatives.

Dr. Farah Zaidi, Assistant Registrar from PMDC also updated the NBC that PM&DC’s disciplinary committee is relooking into the “Code of Ethics” which she personally feels that should be inline with the Handbook and in principal PM&DC agrees that Ethics should be a part of curriculum, but she is not aware of this document and its endorsement.

Dr Moazam suggested that this relooking into the Code of Ethics is the need of the hour and is appreciated. She further reiterated that this is the best time that NBC shall also meet their Committee/ Disciplinary cell and present this document for endorsement.

**2.2: Formalization of NBC**

It was decided in last meeting that Secretariat drafted the TORs for NBC and its subcommittees for gazette notification and shared with the Chairpersons for review. They have submitted their comments which after incorporation had been sent to the Ministry for approval. Once we hear from Ministry NBC will be notified.

**Decision:**

1. Secretariat will follow up and update the Committee with regard to the progress on revised NBC TORs.

**2.3: PBC Sindh:**

It was informed that the pending workshop of PBC Sindh was to be organized upon the feasibility and request from PBC Sindh. However, no request was received.

To this issue Dr Moazam again suggested that the regular activity of training the PBC members with each meeting shall be discontinued and shall only be held upon request as not much

response and willingness is there from Provinces themselves. She also expressed her dissatisfaction on no progress from the trained human resource as PBCs are still not active despite sensitization of the Secretaries and DG Health which was done by Secretariat. Dr Amir Jafaery seconded this opinion and added that now NBC shall be more responsive to the requests from institutes as well, this will not only build the institutional capacity but also increase the prominence and visibility of NBC.

#### **2.4: PBC Baluchistan:**

It was decided in the last meeting of NBC that the Secretariat will forward a copy of the Baluchistan PBC bioethics curriculum for nurses and paramedics to Dr. Aamir Jafaery for review along with Mr. Abdul Ghani Sassoli who is a Member NBC from Baluchistan. However, despite repeated reminders PBC Baluchistan could not submit the final document. Once received it will be shared with both.

#### **2.5: All PBCs:**

In last NBC a thorough deliberation was made among NBC members and PBC representatives upon PBCs functioning and strengthening after which it was recommended that PBCs shall work towards strengthening of their HCECs, shall start trainings and develop guidance documents for themselves. Their RECs shall define their TORs along with their processes for review and fee structure and they should devise ways and criterion to Co-opt the members who shall be trained in Bioethics. This was communicated to all PBCs for compliance but unfortunately none of the PBC has reported any progress.

#### **2.6: Code of ethics for interaction on social media:**

It was decided in the last meeting that a draft will be prepared by the subcommittee which has submitted to the Secretariat and was deliberated upon as a separate agenda in this meeting.

#### **2.7: EMRO Summit**

Consequent upon the decision of the last NBC meeting a subcommittee comprising of NBC Members needed to be formulated to work on the drafting the agenda for the Summit which was to be presented in this meeting by Prof Dr Aasim Ahmad. However, despite the two reminders Secretariat did not receive any progress.

Keeping in view the sensitivity and scope of work for Summit and the busy schedule of NBC Members as a result of which they could not manage time in last three months for Summit related activities; the Secretariat has contacted with certain trained and experienced people outside NBC who are willing to serve as Coopted Members of Technical Subcommittee along with Members of NBC for the “Technical Subcommittee NBC for Summit”. The proposed names were

- 1. Prof. Dr. Murad Moosa**  
Professor of Psychiatry, The Aga Khan University, **Karachi**.
- 2. Prof. Dr. Sohail Asif Qureshi**, Institute of Integrative Biosciences, CECOS, University, **Peshawar**.
- 3. Dr. Arshi Farooqui**, Chief Executive Officer, Health Care Innovation, **Karachi**.
- 4. Dr. Asma Humayoon**, Consultant Psychiatrist. Islamabad

To this Dr Aasim stated that he was not aware of this task. Responding to this the Member Secretary stated that he is disappointed on the way the issue is being handled within NBC. For Summit Secretariat has sensitized the Ministry and an “Administrative Committee” has been formulated at Ministry to work on agenda which was to be provided by the NBC Technical Subcommittee. For this he mentioned that he wrote to Chairpersons and made a visit to see them in person in Karachi wherein he thanked Dr Aasim who managed time to see him but other

members could not make it to the meeting. There is very little time for arrangements and NBC is not prepared for such a mega event which is worrisome. Responding to this Dr Moazam stated that she and Dr Aamir could not make it to meeting as it was module time at CBEC where it is very difficult to take anytime out. Further she informed that they had met in Karachi and deliberated upon the issue and have something in draft form which they need to discuss with Member Secretary in person. The details will be shared once finalized with all NBC Members.

**Decision:**

The draft agenda after discussion with Member Secretary will be shared with members for suggestion

**2.8: Election process**

Election process was decided to be withheld till the formalization of NBC.

**2.9: Annual Work Plan:**

A draft plan was prepared by Secretariat and shared with Chairpersons.

**Agenda Item-3: Update on activity of REC:**

Prof Dr. Aasim Ahmed, Chairperson REC, briefed the members on REC working and status since January 2018. REC received 42 new projects for review. Of those 24 were approved already, 14 including 04 with PBC Punjab were in the process. He appreciated the REC Members for their voluntary efforts in reviewing the increasing number of proposals.

**Agenda Item: 4**

**Progress on Provincial / Regional Bioethics Committees:**

**4.1: RBC AJK:**

The Director General Health welcomed the members of NBC to their region and lauded their efforts for making Bioethics a prominent matter in the country. The Focal person of AJK Director General Dr Khawaja Tahir Aziz also welcomed the participants of the meeting. He mentioned that their RBC which was initially functional is facing the issue of finances and budgeting as no separate budget is allocated to them which is a major issue in convening the regular meetings. Further the sensitivity level is also very low about the importance of the subject.

Responding to this Member Secretary stated that the PBC/ RBCs themselves have to make voluntary efforts to raise their sensitivity levels. Funding though is important but the will to make it functional is much more important to vitalize the Committee. He stated that for arranging this meeting Secretariat felt little interest of DG Office and it was least responsive initially to our calls and emails.

**4.2: PBC Sindh:**

Dr Aftab Qazi represented PBC Sindh as Dr Ghulam Murtaza has been posted out. He stated that he is not well aware of the Committee and its progress as he couldnot establish contact with the previous focal person. There was also no record available in the office to update himself.

**4.3: PBC Punjab:**

The permanent focal person Dr Haroon Jehangir Khan could not attend the meeting and PBC was represented by Dr Farkhanda Ghafoor Member NBC and Member PBC Punjab. She stated that she was informed to represent the PBC at the last moment and was not given any details from their Secretariat. However as per her recall their PBC had 11 meetings and two training workshops. Their last meeting was chaired by the Director General himself. They have revisited their REC Application form and fee structure has been put in place which is 5000 for nationally funded projects and 10,000 for internationally funded studies.

**4.4: PBC KPK:**

Dr Tahir Khilji represented PBC KP on behalf of their DG; wherein he stated the there is no record no PBC meeting so no progress to report. Member Secretary responded to this by expressing his extreme disappointment that he has tried to contact the Provincial Secretary and

wrote to Chief Secretary but even then there is no progress. The PBC has not even met once in KP.

**Agenda item: 5- Code of ethics for interaction on social media**

Focal person briefed the house that the draft of guidelines was received in Secretariat from Subcommittee. However, there were certain issues with the first draft which needed discussion before presenting to house. It was therefore decided that the draft will be discussed in detail and then circulated to NBC Members.

**Decision:**

1. Penultimate draft will be shared in 6 weeks-time till Oct 21, 2018 by subcommittee.

**Agenda Item:6- EMRO Regional Summit:**

As desired by the Chairpersons of the subcommittees of NBC the Separate meeting was held to discuss the draft agenda for the upcoming Regional Summit to be held in Pakistan in 2019. Dr Moazam, Dr Aamir and Dr Aasim Ahmed along with the Member Secretary Focal Person and Coordinator attended the meeting. Dr Jafaery briefed about the proposed plan. It will be a day and a half long activity, with around 25 Delegates from Member states.

According to the usual format an opening ceremony will be followed by case studies invited from member states. The host is also expected to set a theme for summit to be discussed in plenary sessions. It will be a best platform to showcase the activities of NBC internationally.

There can be academic sessions like workshops for Research and clinical ethics focusing the regional issues open for anyone interested in Bioethics.

The plan was appreciated by all and it was suggested that detailed deliberations are required. It was further suggested that as committee members are based in Karachi, they can have one on one meetings along with skype meetings with rest of the members.

Further it was reiterated that an urgent meeting with administrative subcommittee is required to be arranged by Secretariat after a draft is received from Dr Jafaery.

**Decision:**

1. Draft plan will be prepared and shared by Dr Jafaery with Secretariat for communication with Ministry and WHO Country office.
2. A formal meeting with all stakeholders needs to be arranged.
3. A meeting of technical subcommittee with administrative subcommittee will be arranged.

**Agenda item 7: Next NBC Meeting:**

Next NBC meeting is proposed in Lahore in the next Quarter. The dates will be circulated by Secretariat and communicated to all.

**Prof Dr Aasim Ahmad**

Chairperson REC

Member NBC