

PAKISTAN MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
National Bioethics Committee Secretariat

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE (NBC)
06 SEPTEMBER 2012

A meeting of the National Bioethics Committee (NBC) was held on 06 Sept 2012 in the Committee Room of the Cabinet Division, Cabinet Secretariat, Islamabad. The Secretary Cabinet Division/Chairperson NBC chaired the meeting. List of NBC Members who attended the meeting is annexed as **Annexure-I**.

The meeting started with recitation from the Holy Quran. The Chair welcomed the participants of the meeting and said that bodies like NBC should meet more frequently and PMRC being a research organization can play a vital role in making the NBC more effective.

After the introduction of the members, the Chair asked the Member/Secretary NBC to start the proceedings of the meeting.

Agenda item 1: Approval of minutes of the last NBC meeting held on 20th February 2012.

Dr Huma Qureshi, Member/Secretary NBC informed the Chair that the minutes were circulated to all members and minor corrections suggested by one member were incorporated. The NBC was requested to approve the minutes.

Decision: Minutes were approved.

Agenda item 2: Progress of NBC

Presentation on progress of NBC was made. Members were informed that there was no progress on the news letter, while the website and NBC logo has been developed. All material related to NBC has been posted on the website with the address www.nbcPakistan.org.pk. Members were informed that Research Ethics Committee was functioning well, while the report on functioning of Medical Ethics Committee of NBC,

which is to be headed by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, Islamabad is still awaited. The Chairperson asked the representative of the PM&DC, Dr Ahmad Nadeem Akbar, to explain as to why there is this delay. In response Dr Nadeem said that the roles and input from the PM&DC are not clearly defined and once there is clarity, action can be contemplated expeditiously. He informed the house that PM&DC has approved the Secretariat of this subcommittee at the PM&DC with the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee of the PM&DC as its head and the other members will include the Chairman of the Curriculum Committee. The Chairperson showed her concern over this statement and said that after almost 8 years the PM&DC is not clear on its role in the establishment of Medical Ethics Sub Committee. She advised the NBC to bridge the communication gap between the PM&DC and the NBC so that both can work together in harmony and cohesion.

Regarding the actions to be taken by the PM&DC, the members expressed that they expected the PM&DC to compose a Medical Ethics Committee to do the following

1. Strict implementation of the Physicians Pharma guidelines of NBC by all the registered medical Practitioners and punitive action by PM&DC against them on any violation.
2. Implementation of code of ethics and ensuring ethical practice by all the registered medical Practitioners and punitive action by PM&DC against them on any violation.
3. Process and disposal of complaints against medical practitioners guilty of professional negligence and breach of code of ethics for practice and punitive action by PM&DC against them on any violation.
4. Laying down of standards for small clinics and hospitals in the public and private sector.
5. Emphasis on ethical practice in the curriculum.

The nominee of PM&DC, Dr Ahmad Nadeem Akbar (Registrar PM&DC), said that the tasks on serial no 1 to 3 being expected by the NBC are already being performed by the Disciplinary Committee of the Council and tasks 4 and 5 are being carried out by the

Curriculum Committee of the Council and these committees are fully representative and functional.

The NBC requested that a member of the NBC may be co-opted in the relevant committee when any case relating to ethics and physician pharma relationship comes up in the relevant committee and the NBC suggested the name of Mr Shaukat Ali Javaid. The Registrar PM&DC promised to convey this to the President PM&DC for approval.

Member Secretary informed the Chairperson that NBC wants to have a separate budget for its activities. The Chairperson categorically said that NBC should not have a separate budget as it requires major reshuffling and creation of posts to handle the budget and accounts. She said that she would request finance division to allocate extra budget for NBC through PMRC's regular budget under a separate head.

The Chairperson was apprised about the high cost of human resource in the budget proposals submitted by Research and Advocacy Fund (RAF) a project of DFID. They were informed that the personnel cost varied between 35-40% of the total budget, while generally it should not exceed 20-25%. In this regard meetings were held with RAF and letters were written to RAF and British Council with a copy to the Cabinet Division for information. A letter has been received from British Council where they have apologized for the delayed reply and have informed that they are looking into the matter of high cost and shall report back soon.

Due to busy schedule of the Chair, it was suggested that in her absence someone should be designated to chair the meeting so that work continues smoothly.

The Chairperson said that she would like to have another NBC meeting in next few weeks in which she would like to be informed in detail on the functions and working of NBC and what has been achieved so far and there is a need to fast track the matter. She said that once briefed she would be able to give further directions to NBC.

Decisions:

1. Next meeting of the NBC should be planned after 10-12 weeks and the Secretary Cabinet would chair the meeting and have detailed discussions with the members about issues and their solutions.
2. An Additional Secretary will be nominated who will have a meeting with the NBC members, prior to the meeting with the Secretary Cabinet Division
3. NBC should not have a separate budget as it requires major reshuffling and creation of a post to handle the budget and accounts. The Chairperson would request finance division to allocate extra budget for NBC through PMRC's regular budget under a separate head.

In the end the Secretary Cabinet Division/Chairperson NBC, thanked the members of the NBC for sparing time to attend the meeting.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Dr. Huma Qureshi, Executive Director, Member/ Secretary NBC, Pakistan Medical Research Council (PMRC) Shahrah-e-Jamhuriat, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad.
2. Prof. Dr. Aasim Ahmad, Professor / Chief Nephrologist, The Kidney Centre, Karachi.
3. Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid, Editor In chief, Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences & Pulse International, Karachi.
4. Dr. Asmatullah, Assistant Professor, Islamic Research Institute, Islamic University, Faisal Mosque Campus, Islamabad.
5. Dr Anwar Aziz, Principal (Retd.), State School of Nursing, Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Mirpur.
6. Dr. Farah Sabih, Nominee WHO Representative, Islamabad.
7. Dr Sharif Ahmed khan, Director General Health Services, Health Department, Government of KPK, Peshawar.
8. Dr Masood Ahmed Solangi, Nominee, Director General Health Services, Health Department, Government of Sind, Karachi
9. Dr Shoaib Shafi, Nominee President CPSP, Islamabad.
10. Dr Qurban Mir, Director General Health Services, Government of AJK, Muzaffarabad.
11. Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq Naveed, Nominee, Surgeon General, Pakistan Army, Rawalpindi.
12. Dr Farid Khan, Nominee of Pharma industry, Karachi.
13. Prof. Muhammad M. Amin, Dean, Shifa College of Medicine, Islamabad.
14. Dr Ahmed Nadeem Akbar, Registrar and Nominee Pakistan Medical & Dental Council, Islamabad
15. Prof. Dr Anwar Nasim, Visiting Professor KIBGE, University Karachi.