
 EDITORIAL

Desperate times, desperate measures

Death, destruction and devastation, in the past few weeks we all have been listening to the news of destruction done by floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh and indeed the entire nation is grieving over it. Lot of efforts have been put into relief work and government, NGOs and individual social workers are working day and night to help our fellow countrymen to face their losses. But still a lot is needed in order to rehabilitate this huge number of flood victims. In addition to providing the food, water and shelter, health care status should also be improved because in this era of modern sciences, listening to news about people dying from a simple gastroenteritis gives you heartache. Things just don't stop here. In fact, dermatological diseases, infections like hepatitis are on the rise in these camps; reason mostly being substandard living conditions, lack of clean water and living in close proximity to animals which flood victims have brought along with them and due to lack of security most people are refusing to remain away from their livestock. Although few medical camps have been setup but they lack man power and proper medicines. The solution to this problem lies not only in increased efforts and funds put into it by government but also by voluntary work from our health care providers to overcome manpower deficiency. Different NGOs are working in this regard. There has been lot of effort done by several NGOs and social organizations. In order to get maximum benefit, there need to be effective coordination amongst these key players.

Government needs to establish emergency centres in the flood affected area where emergency management can be given and these centre should facilitate in shifting of the severely ill patients for example orthopedic emergencies to established centres in the nearby town for definitive management. In this way, we may save hundreds of lives.

Specially I would like to mention teams from Pakistan Medical Association, Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Liaquat University of Health Science, Aga Khan University Hospital, teams from various other universities of Pakistan which are working in collaboration with various NGOs. There are several international teams who have come from abroad specially teams from Saudia Arabia and other brotherly Muslim countries. Teams from Europe and USA have also contributed a lot in ameliorating the situation.

In the future, we need to have long term planning for rehabilitation when the flood recedes.

Once the flood recede and people return home, it will take time to normalize the situation. People have lost almost everything; their homes, their prized possessions of animals and cattle, and all their belongings. They will need economic and moral help for their rehabilitation. Provision of food and hygienic water will go a long way in quick rehabilitation.

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