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TRANSFUSION MEDICINE; DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL CURRICULUM OF TRANSFUSION MEDICINE

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The transfusion of blood and blood products is the commonest medical procedure performed in the health care setting. Education and training in transfusion medicine is therefore indispensable for blood safety. However deficiency in medical knowledge in this field is very common.¹ Capacity building of personnel involved in vein-to-vein chain is of prime importance for quality assured patient care. As in the rest of the world, Transfusion Medicine has emerged as a new specialty in Pakistan and many medical institutes have introduced courses with focus on blood transfusion. However, these programmes are not standardized or uniform.

The need for a general and standardized curriculum was recognized across the sector, as current training courses cater for specific audience with insufficient training and according to the specific academic environment through inadequately trained instructors. Training contents are not uniform, which contribute to sector 'fragmentation' at the academic level and produce a cadre with an inadequate diversity of knowledge and skills. A universal gap in all existing training curricula are lectures on governance and institutional architecture of the

transfusion system and the key policy, regulatory and operational tools and guidelines which give substance to directives and instructions to be followed at operational level.

The development of the new Training Curriculum for Blood Transfusion Services, which has been supported by so many excellent professionals from all provinces and regions, has been mandated by the National Blood Policy and Strategic Framework 2014-20,² which formulates the objective 'to strengthen the human resource of the Blood Transfusion Services', among others through 'develop[ing] standardised and uniform curricula/training materials for teaching and training of the human resource at all levels [...]'. The Strategy also instructs to carry out a situation analysis of existing capacity development and academic programmes.

When addressing the community of scholars, teachers and practitioners, the Safe Blood Transfusion Programme (SBTP) received an overwhelming response. A national Working Group was formed with more than 160 members who supported the design work with feedback based on ground realities and needs. The Group

provided recommendations for the structure, contents, target groups and academic pathway to be followed. SBTP contributed through a small team of international and national experts, who were developing the structure and writing up the curriculum.

Concomitantly with the development of the properly structured, well organized and uniform curriculum, the Programme collected data and curricula for an “Inventory of Institutes, Programmes and Curricula in Pakistan”, which is published as a separate document.³ The modular structure would allow the curriculum to be used in different learning environments and to be taught either as a complete training programme on its own or as part of or in complementation for other existing curricula.

Unlike other existing curricula, the new National Curriculum⁴ is comprised of two Regulatory Modules, six Technical Modules and two Managerial Modules. The regulatory section provides an introduction to the concept of blood safety, policy and regulatory issues and an overview of blood transfusion services and their organization. The technical section follows the vein-to-vein transfusion chain, from Donor Management to Patient Management. The managerial section provides the facility managers with an introduction to Quality Management and

Service Organization. The reading materials referenced in the curricula are made available on the SBTP website.

The Programme was able to interact both electronically and through workshops with the most intellectual and experienced community of stakeholders, an exercise which has helped to build a national consensus and commitment for the further development of the transfusion sector.

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AUTHORSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION DECLARATION

Sr. #	Author-s Full Name	Contribution to the paper	Author=s Signature
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