

UNANI MEDICINE: “FROM WELLNESS TO WELLBEING” IN PAKISTAN

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Pakistan is the 2nd largest country with an active education, clinical practice programs in alternative medicine along with product manufacturing establishments since decades. This is controlled by **Unani, Ayurvedic and Homeopathy Practitioners Act, 1965**. Under this act National Council for Tibb (NCT) was formulated responsible for: 1) Education, 2) Registration, 3) Monitoring of educational institutions and 4) its Practice.

The Unani /Eastern Medicine Education is well established and offered in both public and private Universities. The Hamdard University, being a pioneering Degree Awarding Institution, of Eastern Medicine established in 1995. A 5-year degree course approved by Higher Education Commission, Islamabad Pakistan, in 2004. It also includes one year of house job clinical training at a 50-bedded, Shifa ul Mulk Memorial Hospital Hamdard University requirement for clinical practice. There are ~60,000 registered Hakims in Pakistan holding either diploma in Tibb-e-Unani or a Bachelor degree in Eastern/Unani medicine.

The guidelines for WHO’s bench mark released on February 11, 2022 pertaining to the principles of Unani medicine has been incorporated in the revised Curriculum (Teaching and Practice), laboratory work with more emphasis on interactive sessions which will be submitted for further action to the regulatory bodies prior to its implementation. This is accompanied by post-graduate (M.Phil and PhD) research collaborations with the other universities emphasizing evidence-based and statistically proven studies.

Most recently, the potential of the evidence-based traditional, complementary and integrative medicine (TCIM) for the health and well-being of people and the planet was held in August 2023 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Unfortunately, we were unable to attend physically but attended on-line. It provided a successful platform for all stakeholders to share their unique experiences, best practices and ideas for collaboration.

In Eastern Mediterranean member states the popularity of the traditional medicine among end user ranges between 60-70% for treatment, prevention and management of noncommunicable diseases. However, lapses exist regarding efficacy, safety and quality of traditional and complementary medicines which cannot be ignored.

In this context Hamdard Foundation Pakistan will organize an international conference in which the practitioners, scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders can share their knowledge, experiences including evidence-based studies (pre-clinical and clinical) limitations and success stories. This will enable us to identify the scientific strength of each member State leading to pooling of resources, exchange of expertise in the field of education and curriculum development, research collaborations and publications. By addressing the prevalent diseases and health issues of the region and their traditional remedies will bring people closer through scientific diplomacy.

Dr Shyama Kuruvilla, Senior Strategic Adviser and lead for the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Centre expressed that a WHO priority—to enable countries to develop appropriate regulations and policies around traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine ensuring their effectiveness, safety and quality for human use **“to improve people’s health and well-being in harmony with the planet that sustains us”** is indeed an important statement to be addressed.

Hence, motto of Hamdard Pakistan, “From Wellness to Wellbeing”, covering core principles of wellness. Hamdard Pakistan is committed to global health, as an active player contributing to health progress in the region with active participation in WHO initiatives.