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National Research Agenda for Mental Health

The Mental Health Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit has identified research gaps in mental health as a key thematic area that needs attention. To address this, the Ministry has established a Technical Working Group as a dedicated advisory body. The TWG will provide expert guidance on strengthening the national mental health research ecosystem by defining key strategies for the next five years.

A key focus of this process will be to strengthen pathways between research and decision-making. Priority research areas will be linked to service delivery needs and planning processes, enabling research findings to be translated into evidence briefs and used to inform mental health policy, programming, and resource allocation.

Following members have been notified as part of the Technical Working Group:

1. Dr Asma Humayun

National Technical Advisor
Mental Health Strategic Planning & Coordination Unit
Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

2. Prof Murad Moosa Khan

Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry
The Aga Khan University, Karachi

3. Prof Atif Rahman

Professor of Child Psychiatry and Global Mental Health
University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

4. Prof Muhammad Irfan

Professor of Psychiatry and Public Health
Peshawar Medical College, Peshawar

The National Research Agenda for Mental Health will be structured around four interconnected strategic areas, which provide a comprehensive framework to support coordinated evidence generation, translation, and use across the mental health system:

1. Research priorities

Identify a focused set of nationally relevant mental health research themes by systematically mapping gaps across populations, regions, and levels of care to provide a shared reference point to reduce duplication and coordinate action across institutions and provinces.

2. Research capacity

Strengthen the skills, supervision structures, and institutional pathways required to produce high-quality mental health research to generate rigorous and sustainable evidence aligned with national needs.

3. Knowledge transfer

Improve how mental health research outputs are organized, synthesized, and communicated to ensure evidence is accessible and interpretable for planners, implementers, and decision-makers.

4. Information systems

Improve the availability and integration of mental health data across existing reporting and digital platforms and support timely analysis of data to inform planning, and system monitoring.



The development of the National Research Agenda for Mental Health will be supported through engagement with academic institutions, provincial departments, and other stakeholders, ensuring that the agenda reflects diverse perspectives and remains responsive to national and provincial mental health priorities.

A proposed draft of the National Research Agenda for Mental Health will be available for consultation with all stakeholders soon.

Mental Health Strategic Planning & Coordination Unit