

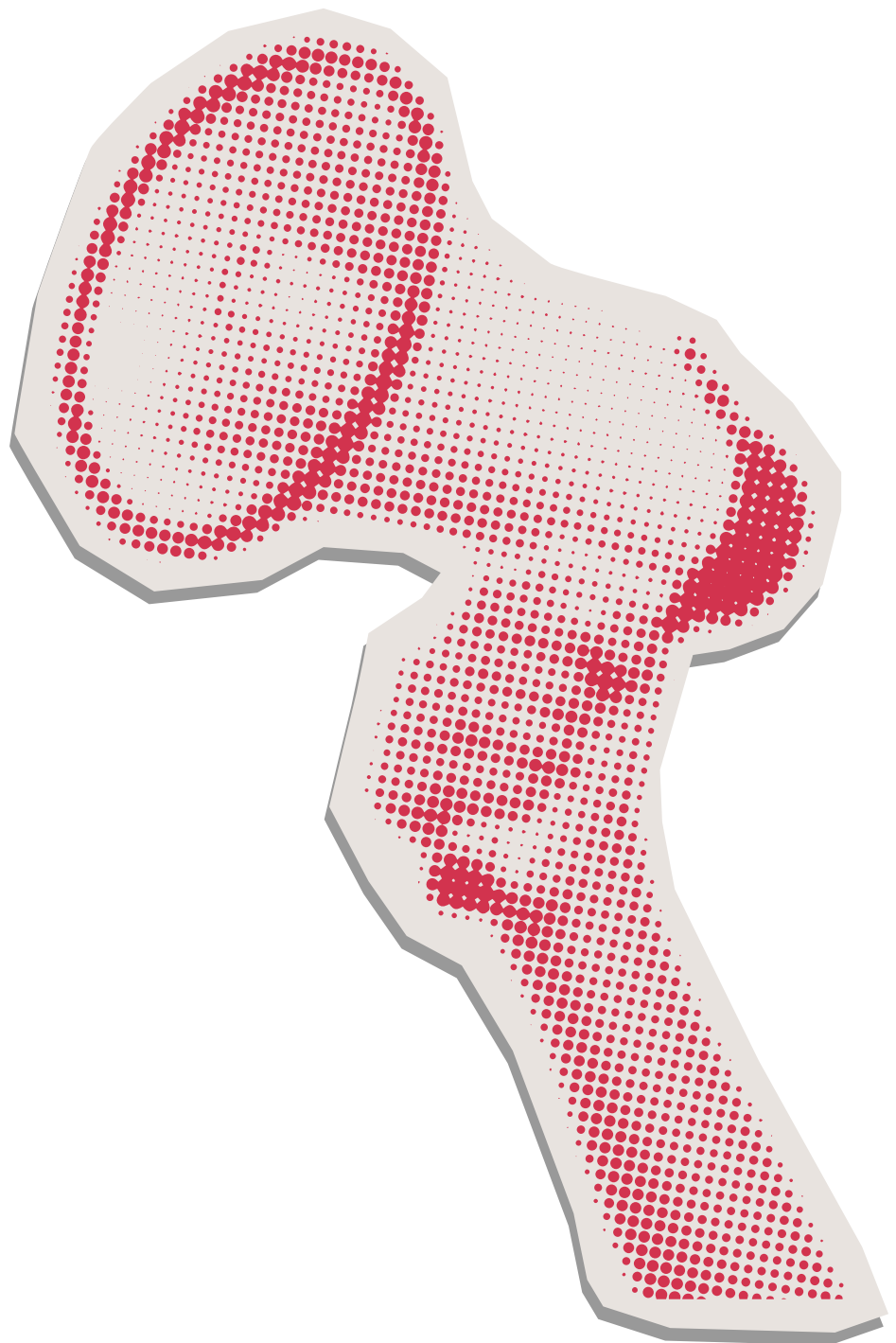


Vol 4 Issue 4 OCT - DEC 2025

CONTNEWS

The Quarterly
Newsletter of the
CONTROL Research
Programme

TRIAL UPDATES



The CONTROL trial made strong progress in the fourth quarter of 2025, with steady recruitment follow up, and monitoring across all sites.

RECRUITMENT AND FOLLOW-UP STATUS

Recruitment was completed on 18 November 2025 upon achievement of the target sample size. By this date, the trial had successfully enrolled 496 participants, with recruitment evenly distributed across both study arms.



Follow-up activities continued as planned. As of 30 December 2025, follow-up progress remained on track, with 412 participants completing the 8-week assessment, 214 participants reaching the 24-week milestone, and 168 participants successfully completing the 32-week follow-up.

These milestones highlight the team's dedication to sustaining the trial's progress while ensuring high-quality data collection.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL MONITORING VISITS UPDATE

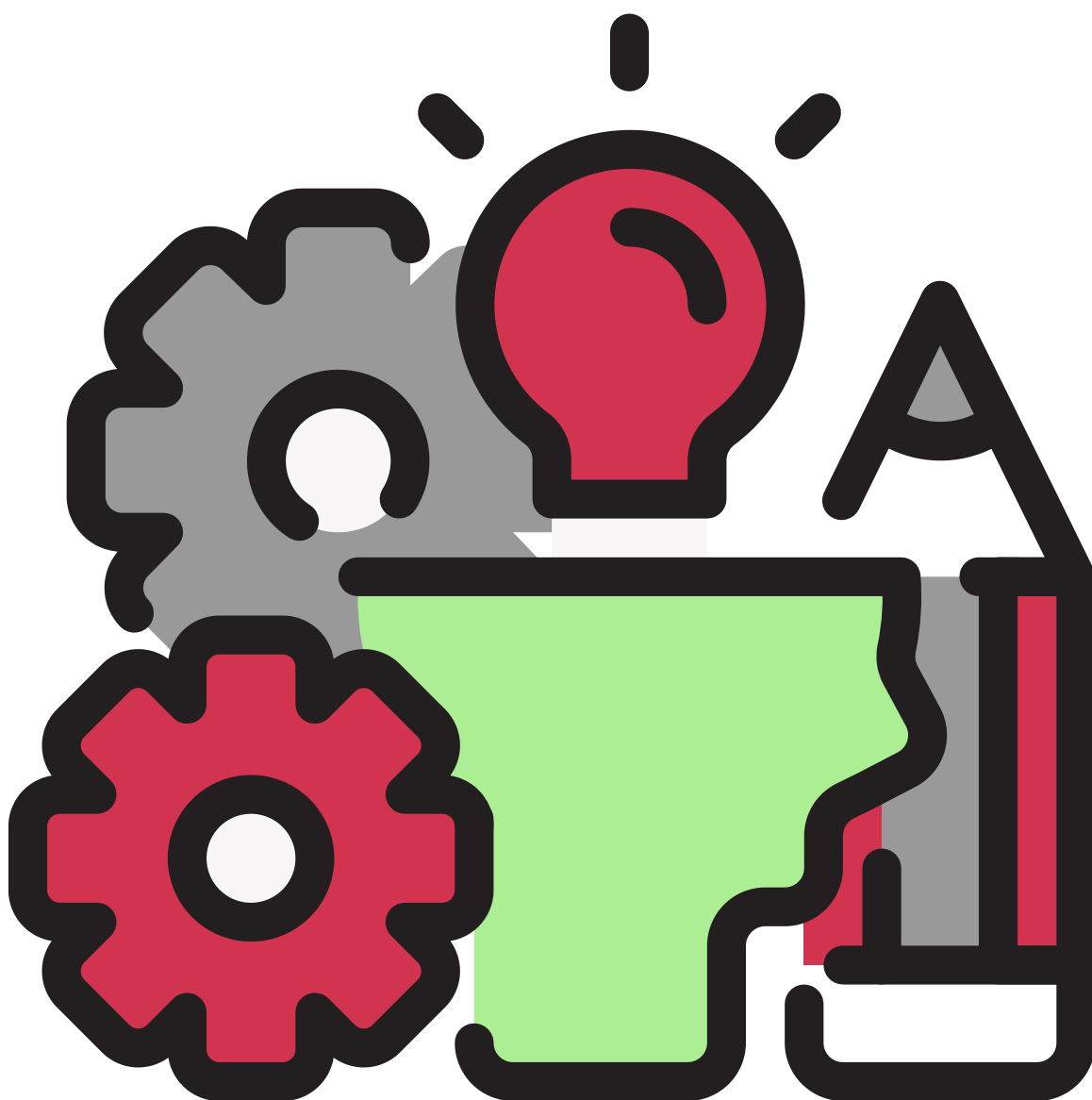
Regular internal and external monitoring visits were carried out as part of the trial's stringent oversight processes, focusing on maintaining protocol compliance and reinforcing quality standards across all sites.

On 6 October 2025, a monitoring visit was conducted at Civil Hospital Khalabat, Rafique Tanoli Private Clinic, and TBC Kangra by Dr. Naveed Afzal, accompanied by Dr. Rubab Farooqi and Zarmina Fahim. On 25 November 2025, an external monitoring visit was conducted at KTH Kuwait Teaching Hospital, RHC Nahaqi, and DHQ Haripur by Dr. Imran Gillani, accompanied by Dr. Shaista Rasool and Zarmina Fahim.



These visits confirmed the satisfactory progress of the trial and consistent adherence to study protocols across all KMU-affiliated centers. The commitment of site teams and monitoring staff has been instrumental in ensuring high-quality trial conduct and preserving the integrity of the research.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



The CONTROL Dissemination event was held on 4th December 2025 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, providing a significant opportunity to showcase project progress and achievements. It brought together principal investigators, postdoctoral researchers, clinical research fellows, PhD scholars, and research assistants from both Khyber Medical University and Keele University, further strengthening ongoing research collaborations.

Session 4 of the CONTROL Dissemination Event, which focused on Capacity Development in Global Health Research, featured a presentation by Prof. Hajo Zeeb from the Department of Prevention and Evaluation at the Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research and Epidemiology (BIPS), highlighting the critical need for capacity building in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). This was followed by a presentation from Dr. Zohaib Khan, co-lead of the CONTROL programme, showcasing the programme's initiatives to strengthen capacity among early-career researchers, including the collaborative PhD programme, clinical fellowships, and training for mental health professionals.

The CONTROL PhD scholars also presented their research findings and progress at the CONTROL dissemination event, receiving constructive feedback and insights from participants. Furthermore, the CONTROL team participated in the TRANSLATE Symposium on 5th December 2025 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, enhancing their knowledge and strengthening connections within the research community.

PhD scholar Aliya Durrani delivered an oral presentation at the Pakistan Psychiatry Society Conference in November 2025, where she shared findings from Work Package 2 of her PhD research. She also launched the Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Postnatal Depression in LMICs at the same conference, showcasing her contribution to improving mental health care practices. Dr. Aliya showcased her research through poster presentations at the Keele Postgraduate Research Symposium in December 2025. She also published her systematic review in the Global Mental Health Journal.

PROCESS EVALUATION



DATA COLLECTION IN PROGRESS

The data collection for process evaluation has been in progress since July 2025. For quantitative data collection, coordination was established with the data manager, and a 10% random sample was selected, totalling 31 survey participants. All 31 survey questionnaires have been completed by patients in the intervention arm after the eighth week post- randomisation. For the qualitative part, patient IDs were intentionally selected from the sample to conduct semi-structured interviews (SSIs). To date, we have conducted 13 SSIs with patients in the intervention arm who completed five or six CBT sessions and three SSIs from those who couldn't complete the intervention (attended 1-4 sessions), after the eighth week post-randomisation. Seven SSIs were with control arm patients after the 24th week post randomisation. One focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with DOTS facilitators, and one with medical officers. We conducted the initial analysis of the focus group discussion with DOTS facilitators and patients from the intervention arm, and the preliminary findings were extracted and presented at the Sri Lanka dissemination ceremony. The CBT fidelity audio recorded sessions were evaluated by independent CBT expert evaluators using the CTS-R scale and the CBT delivery assessment scale. To date, 84 sessions have been assessed.

The newly hired Independent Evaluators had a hands-on practice session on CBT assessment tools, including the CBT Delivery Scale and the CTS-R scale, facilitated by Saara Khan, communication officer and intervention development coordinator, CONTROL.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE



PUBLICATION UPDATE: CEI REFLECTIVE CASE STUDY

The CONTROL study Community and Public Engagement and Involvement reflective case study was published in Research Involvement and Engagement Journal in October 2025. The publication documented the public partnership in CONTROL study, its methods, community perceptions and micro, meso and macro level impact of CONTROL study public partnership.

Aleem et al. *Research Involvement and Engagement* (2025) 11:12
https://doi.org/10.1186/s40900-025-00787-z

Research Involvement
and Engagement

COMMENT

Open Access

Amplifying every echo; public partnerships in ongoing CONTROL (COgnitive Therapy for depReSSIOn in tubercuLosis treatment) research study

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Abstract

With the health and social care research trends shifting towards conception, development, delivery, and implementation of more evidence-based interventions, public partnerships have emerged as key foundational moral components to tailor best practices to conduct research with the patient, public, and community. This paper reflects on how public partnerships were established in the ongoing CONTROL research study to open, trustworthy, and mutually beneficial relationships with public partners. This paper presents a reflective case study that exemplifies collaborative research in action using the Public Involvement Impact Assessment Framework and the UK standard of Public Involvement. We reflected on our approaches to public involvement and engagement, establishing a public advisory group, its capacity development, and contribution to the main study and multilevel impact of relational community engagement. Our strategies can inform future public partnerships in funded projects, especially in lower- and middle-income countries.

Plain English Summary

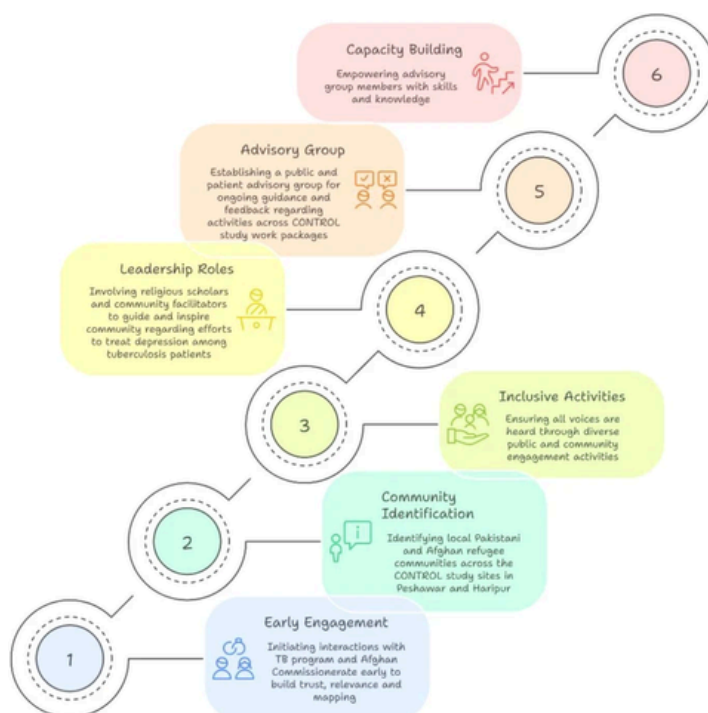
People affected by Tuberculosis and depression face stigma, poor treatment outcomes, and lack of access to healthcare, especially in low-income communities and refugee groups. The VOICE of CONTROL initiative was launched as part of the CONTROL research program to establish and strengthen the public partnership regarding tuberculosis and depression and shape the research from the start. We held community engagement sessions to learn about people's experiences with TB, stigma, myths, mental health, and challenges they face in accessing health care. From these sessions, we invited individuals to join the advisory group and contribute regularly to the CONTROL study's design, intervention development and refinement, materials, and outreach activities. To enhance capacity development, training sessions were arranged for team and advisory group members regarding

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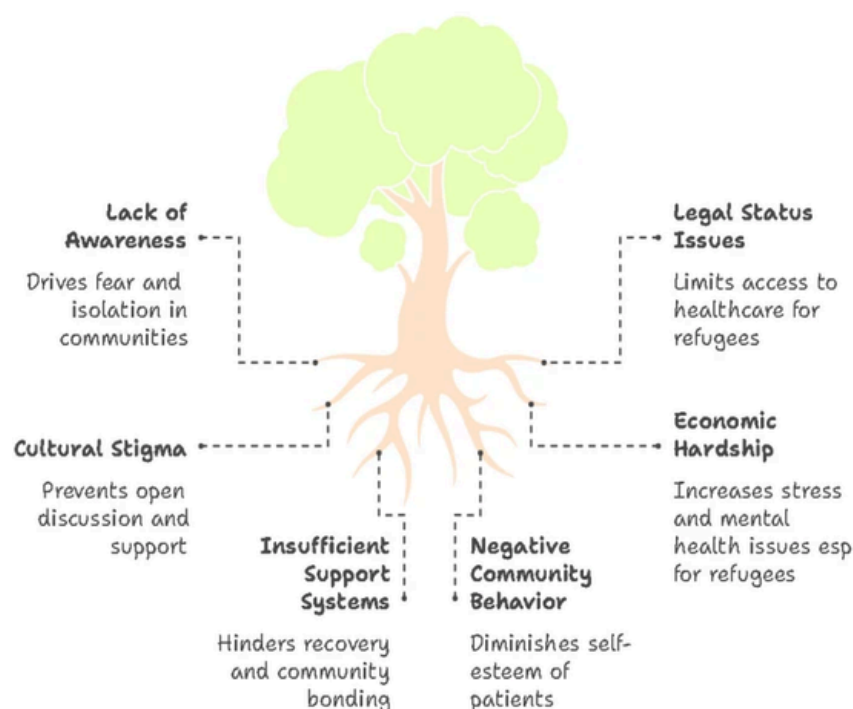
Full list of author information is available at the end of the article



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Community Perspective of Stigmatization and Barriers to TB and Mental Health Care



NIHR CEI IMPACT SHOWCASE - 25 NOVEMBER 2025

The CONTROL study community engagement and involvement project “Artfor Impact: Community-Driven Creations for Tuberculosis and Mental Health Awareness” was selected to be showcased at the NIHR CEI Impact showcase event held on 25th November 2025 virtually.

Dr. Saima Aleem, CONTROL study CEI lead presented the project. The project received tremendous appreciation from the organizers and participants as it contributed to demonstrate the breadth of CEI activities that are taking place across the Global Health Research portfolio.

Art for Impact Contributors



Art for Impact Project Team

CONTROL PPIE Advisory Group

Impact

Lady & community health workers star in the co-created awareness video, which is also used in their training, boosting their confidence, ownership, and visibility.

Communities are owning the fight by mobilizing people for TB and mental health screening.



CONTROL PROGRAM DISSEMINATION EVENT



CONTROL DISSEMINATION EVENT 2025, SRILANKA COLOMBO

The CONTROL Program Dissemination Event commenced in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 4th Dec 2025, with its inaugural session marking the beginning of an important dissemination phase. The session was chaired by Dr. Sunil De Alwis, former Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Health, and moderated by Dr. Zohaib Khan, Co-Principal Investigator of the CONTROL-NIHR program. The opening session brought together researchers and stakeholders to reflect on progress and outline the direction for the days ahead.



KEELE UNIVERSITY'S GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS HIGHLIGHTED AT CONTROL-NIHR EVENT

Prof. Antonius Raghbansie, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) at Keele University, introduced the university's international collaborations and emphasized the importance of global academic partnerships. This was followed by an insightful presentation by Prof. Saeed Farooq, Co-Lead of the CONTROL Program and Global Research Professor at NIHR, highlighting Keele University's contributions to global health research collaborations.



SESSION 2 – PROGRAM DISSEMINATION EVENT

Session 2 featured an engaging presentation by Dr. Nieranjan Dissanayake, Consultant Respiratory Physician from Sri Lanka. The session was moderated by Dr. Zeeshan Kibria, Additional Director ORIC at Khyber Medical University and Program Manager of CONTROL NIHR Program. The discussion offered practical insights from clinical and programmatic perspectives, setting a strong tone for the day's conversations on respiratory health and research collaboration.



RESEARCH UPDATE: CONTROL TRIAL PROGRESS

Prof. Martyn Lewis, Co-Applicant of the CONTROL NIHR Program from Keele University, presented key findings from the CONTROL pilot trial. He also shared important updates on the progress and direction of the definitive trial, outlining the next steps and implications for future research



SYSTEMATIC REVIEW PRESENTATION

Dr. Saima Aleem, Communication Manager and CEI Lead of the CONTROL-NIHR Program, presented CONTROL study systematic review examining the content, effectiveness, and implementation of psychosocial interventions for the treatment of common mental disorders associated with chronic infectious diseases. The presentation contributed to discussions on evidence-based mental health interventions within chronic disease contexts.



PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

Process evaluation findings from the pilot and definitive trial were presented by Dr. Fayaz Ahmad, Associate Professor of Public Health at Khyber Medical University and Post-Doctoral Fellow with the CONTROL-NIHR. The presentation shared key insights from the evaluation phase, contributing to ongoing discussions on implementation and program outcomes.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT



An insightful presentation on the Community Engagement and Involvement (CEI) and its impact within the CONTROL-NIHR was delivered by Dr. Saima Aleem, Communication Manager and CEI Lead. The presentation shared reflections on CEI-related work, its global achievement and highlights from the CEI project showcase on NIHR CEI web page.



PANEL DISCUSSION ON TB CONTROL AND IMPLEMENTATION

A panel discussion moderated by Dr. Shaista Rasool brought together Dr. Kaleem, Prof. Saadia Ashraf, Dr. Razia Fatima, Dr. Pramitha Shanthilatha, and Dr. M. Alfah Sakikeen. The panelists shared insights on tuberculosis control and implementation, contributing to focused discussions during the CONTROL-NIHR Program Dissemination Event.



SESSION 4: CONTROL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Session 4 showcased the Capacity Development Initiative of the CONTROL NIHR Program. The session was chaired by Dr. Mizaya Cader from the National TB Control Programme. Co-chair responsibilities were undertaken by Prof. Dr. Sahibzada Mehmood, Dean of Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar Pakistan.



The session was moderated by Dr. Nishani Fonseka, Postdoctoral Research Fellow with CONTROL. Discussions focused on structured approaches to capacity strengthening, workforce development, and institutional collaboration within the program framework.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Prof. Hajo Zeeb from the Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research and Epidemiology (BIPS) delivered a focused presentation on capacity development within global health research programs.

The talk emphasized the importance of strengthening research systems, institutional frameworks, and human capacity to ensure sustainable global health impact. Key points highlighted how long-term investment in research capacity supports evidence generation, policy relevance, and effective translation of research into practice.



ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Dr. Zohaib Khan, Director ORIC at Khyber Medical University and Co-Lead of the CONTROL NIHR Program, presented an overview of the Master's and PhD programs linked to the initiative.



The presentation also outlined ongoing and planned capacity development initiatives for research staff at Khyber Medical University and Keele University, with a focus on strengthening research skills, academic pathways, and institutional collaboration.

CONTROL PHD RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

PhD scholars under the CONTROL NIHR Program presented their ongoing doctoral research, reflecting the program's strong focus on mental health, implementation research, and health systems strengthening in LMIC contexts.

Aliya Durrani presented her PhD research titled "Adaptation of Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Postnatal Depression in LMICs Using the ADAPTE Framework." Her work focuses on context-sensitive guideline adaptation to improve maternal mental health care.



Abdul Latif presented his research titled "Availability and Readiness of Mental Health Services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Assessment of Health Facilities and Stakeholder Perspectives." The study integrates facility-level assessments with stakeholder insights to evaluate service readiness.

Huma Mughal presented her PhD research titled “Effectiveness of a Cognitive Behavioural Intervention for Depression and Anxiety among People Living with HIV (The CHERISH Study: Pilot Feasibility Trial).” Her work examines the feasibility and potential impact of a psychological intervention in a vulnerable population.



Muhammad Sohaib presented a systematic review and meta-analysis titled “Tuberculosis Stigma: Prevalence, Demographic Correlates, and Relationship with Health-Related Outcomes among TB Patients in LMICs.” The research synthesizes evidence on stigma and its implications for TB-related health outcomes.



Safat Ullah presented his doctoral research titled “Feasibility and Acceptability of Culturally Adapted Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Patients with Cannabis Use Disorder in a Tertiary Care Hospital, Peshawar.” The study explores culturally tailored psychological interventions within a clinical setting.



CLINICAL RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING IN PAKISTAN

Dr. Ali Taha Khalil, Associate Dean of Research at Lady Reading Hospital, delivered a presentation titled “Building Capacity for Clinical Research in Pakistan: Role of Healthcare Institutions.”



The talk examined the role of tertiary healthcare institutions in strengthening clinical research capacity, with a focus on governance structures, research infrastructure, and workforce development. Emphasis was placed on how institutional leadership and coordinated research systems can support high-quality clinical research and contribute to improved healthcare outcomes in Pakistan.

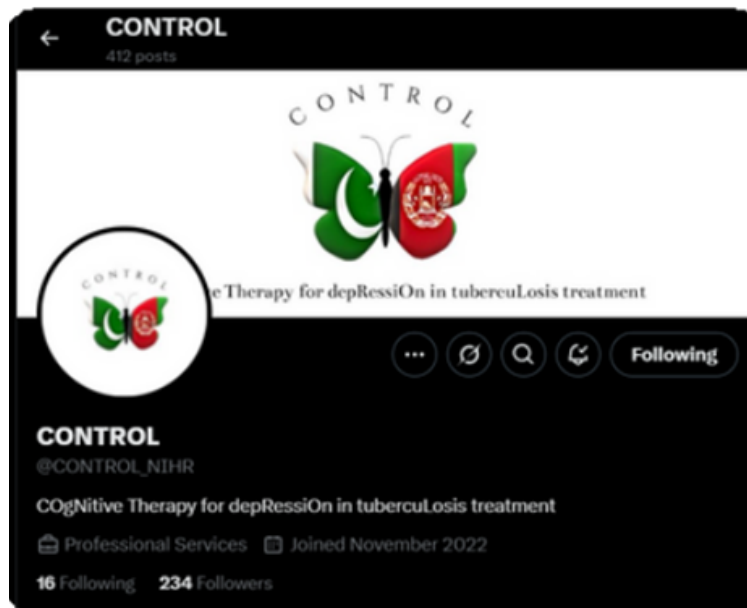
CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND COLLABORATION

Event concluded with a presentation by Prof. Monica Magadi, Professor of Epidemiology and Global Health Research at Keele University, titled “Capacity Strengthening in LMICs: South–South Collaboration.”

The presentation highlighted the value of South–South partnerships in strengthening research capacity across low- and middle-income countries, emphasizing shared learning, institutional collaboration, and sustainable approaches to addressing global health challenges.



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