

# CONTNEWS

THE QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER OF THE  
CONTROL RESEARCH  
PROGRAMME



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# Pilot Trial Updates

# PILOT TRIAL PROGRESS

The CONTROL pilot trial commenced on January 22, 2024, across two sites: District Haripur and District Peshawar. The initial data collection started at two centers, with the expansion of data collection to three more sites in Peshawar, as the trial progressed. Recruitment of the first participant occurred in Peshawar on the same day.

The target sample size of 80 patients was attained within three months. Of these, 79 participants completed baseline assessment and were successfully randomized to the two trial arms. A notable 85% completion rate (n=68) was achieved for the initial follow-up, conducted 8 weeks post-baseline. The second follow-up, scheduled for 24 weeks post-baseline, is currently in progress and is anticipated to conclude by mid-October 2024.

Clinical research fellows involved in the CONTROL project oversaw various aspects of the trial, including eligibility assessments conducted by psychologists, data collection performed by assessors, and intervention delivery managed by TBHWs (TB health workers). Throughout the trial, master trainers (MTs) facilitated weekly debriefing sessions with the TBHWs to address any issues related to intervention delivery.

To reinforce the trial team's understanding of adverse events and their reporting, a refresher training workshop on Serious Adverse Events (SAE) and Adverse Events was conducted for the entire trial team on June 12, 2024 facilitated by Prof. Akhtar Sherin, Director Clinical Trials Unit KMU and Dr. Abdul Jalil Khan, HoD Family Medicine, KMU.

# PROF SAEED'S VISIT TO KHYBER TEACHING HOSPITAL

On May 14, 2024, Prof. Saeed Farooq and Dr. Zohaib Khan visited Khyber Teaching Hospital (CONTROL study site) and a meeting was held with Dr. Sadia Ashraf (Head of Pulmonology Dept, KTH).

The agenda of the meeting was to discuss issues related to the conduct of the pilot trial and plans for the definitive trial. The training of DOTs facilitators, recruitment strategies, and operational aspects of the study were discussed at length.

Additionally, the inclusion of a Public-private TB facility was also discussed. This meeting aimed to ensure a thorough and comprehensive approach, laying a solid foundation for the successful execution and integrity of the trial.

Additionally, the enhancement of infrastructure to improve privacy during screening and to ensure better blinding in the definitive trial was discussed.







# **CONTROL's HIGH ACHIEVERS**

## CONTROL TEAM NIHR SPARC AWARDEE

The NIHR SPARC (Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration) is an initiative by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) designed to support early-career researchers. The award facilitates short placements in different research environments, allowing awardees to gain new skills, develop professional networks, and enhance their research capabilities. The aim is to support collaboration, encourage cross-disciplinary learning, and accelerate the professional development of researchers within the health and care research community.

This year, from the CONTROL study, a research assistant Bushra Shah , and qualitative interviewer Mariyam Rahim , have been selected for the prestigious SPARC program.



**BUSHRA SHAH,  
RESEARCH ASSISTANT**



**MARIYAM RAHIM  
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWER**

Mariyam's placement will be in the Clinical Trials Unit at Keele University UK and Bushra will join University of Central Lancashire, Department of RFDU (Research Facilitation and Delivery Unit). Their achievement is truly attributed to CONTROL study leads for their guidance and giving equal opportunities to the research team for academic and career progression.



# Capacity Development

# MASTERS IN HEALTH RESEARCH ORIENTATION SESSION

An orientation session was organized for the newly inducted MHR students on May 14, 2024 under the CONTROL programme. The session was held to familiarize the new students to the structure of the MHR programme, and introducing them to the CONTROL programme and its team.. The session, facilitated by Dr. Fayaz Ahmad (CONTROL Post-Doc Fellow) and coordinated by Nauman Arif (Lecturer Public Health), commenced with an introduction of the participants and an overview of the MHR program provided by Dr. Khalid Rehman (Director, IPHSS KMU). He emphasized the importance of time management, the academic environment at KMU, and the opportunities for participation in conferences and workshops.

*Dr. Zohaib Khan, Introducing CONTROL Study during the MHR orientation session.*



*Dr. Fayaz Ahmad introducing the capacity development program under CONTROL study*



*Dr. Nauman Arif discussing the MHR program structure and schedule.*



Principal Investigators Prof. Saeed Farooq and Dr. Zohaib Khan detailed the CONTROL program's objectives, stressing the importance of dedication and quality research. They outlined efforts to develop capacity of three post-doctoral fellows, five Ph.D. students, and fifty research assistants, highlighting the reciprocal nature of the program.

Dr. Nauman Arif elaborated on the MHR program's schedule, evaluation methods, and attendance requirements, stressing adherence to the schedule and a 75% attendance rate. He explained the assignment submission process, the role of supervisors, and the steps for research proposal approval.

Ph.D. students from the CONTROL program welcomed the new fellows and offered academic support. The session concluded with a Q&A segment addressing research proposals and supervisor assignments, ensuring students felt confident and prepared for their academic journey. The orientation ended positively, leaving students empowered and reassured about their future studies.

*New MHR batch in the orientation session at Khyber Medical University.*



*Dr. Khalid Rehman Welcome address at the MHR orientation session.*



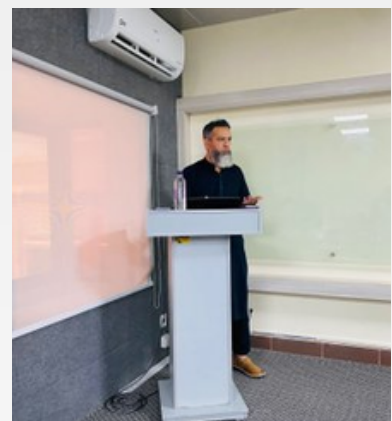


# LAUNCH OF MHR MODULE 1

On 10th June 2024, the CONTROL study achieved yet another milestone with the launch of Module 1 for the MHR students representing the inaugural step in a comprehensive curriculum designed to equip students with advanced research skills in the health sciences.

Dr. Fayaz Ahmad facilitated the opening session for the MHR program, "Introduction to Health Research" focusing on the essential elements to lay a strong foundation in health research methodologies. It included topics like the principles of research design, qualitative and quantitative research methods, data collection techniques, and basic statistical analysis.

*Dr. Fayaz Ahmad facilitating the opening session for the MHR program, marking the start of an enriching academic journey.*



## MHR MODOLE 1 DAY 2: RESEARCH STUDY DESIGNS

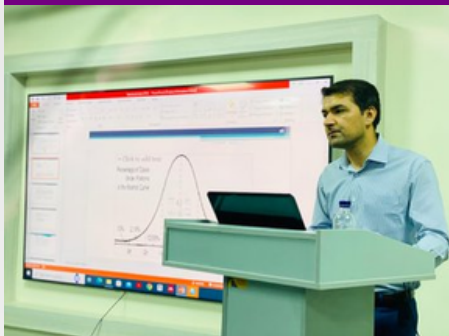
The day 2 was facilitated by Dr. Shaista Rasool, focusing on an overview of research study designs and their types. Engaging group activities enhanced the students' learning experience, boosting their understanding and application of key concepts.



## MHR MODULE 1 DAY 3: EXPLORING DATA ANALYSIS AND SPSS

Day 3 of MHR class was marked by excitement as students delved into the world of data analysis and SPSS. The session, facilitated by Mr. Nauman Arif, offered hands-on experience and valuable insights into data handling, variables type and SPSS. The practical approach of the session significantly enhanced the students' understanding and application of data analysis techniques.

*Mr. Nauman Arif guiding MHR students through data analysis and SPSS*



## MODULE 1 DAY 4 : INDICES OF HEALTH & DISEASES AND MEASURES OF RISK

On day 4, facilitated by Dr. Saima Aleem, students explored the indices of health and diseases and measures of risk. It covered essential topics including morbidity and mortality rates, prevalence and incidence measures, and the calculation of risk ratios and odds ratios.

Interactive lecture and practical exercises, helped students learn to measure and interpret health data accurately.

*Dr. Saima Aleem discussing indices of health and measures of risk with MHR students*



## MODULE 1 DAY 5 : SAMPLE SIZE ESTIMATION AND SAMPLING METHODS

Day 5 was facilitated by Dr. Zeeshan Kibria. The aim was to equip student with the knowledge and skills needed to accurately estimate sample sizes and apply appropriate sampling techniques in their studies.





# WORKSHOP ON IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING ADVERSE EVENTS IN CLINICAL TRIALS

On June 12, 2024, the CONTROL study team at Khyber Medical University hosted a comprehensive training session on identifying, recording, and reporting Adverse Events (AEs) and Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) in clinical trials. The training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of adverse events, regulatory requirements, best practices, and ethical considerations in clinical trial conduct. The training was facilitated by Prof. Akhtar Sherin, Dr. Abdul Jalil Khan, Dr. Zohaib Khan and Dr. Firaz Khan and was attended by the research teams of the CONTROL and THE HOPE projects. Training was attended by research teams of the CONTROL and THE HOPE study.

*Prof. Akhtar Shireen, Director of Clinical Trials Unit at KMU, leading session on AE reporting in clinical trials*



*Dr. Abdul Jalil, Head of Family Medicines at IPHSS-KMU, sharing insights on informed consent and clinical trials*



*Group Photo*





# Spotlight on Excellence

**CONTNEWS New Section to  
Showcase One Post Doc Fellow &  
Ph.D. Scholar Quarterly**

# CONTROL POST-DOC FELLOW

**Dr. Fayaz Ahmad** started his research journey in 2016 as a lecturer at Khyber Medical University while pursuing a PhD in Public Health there. The initial coursework established a solid foundation for his future academic and research work.

In 2018, Dr. Ahmad secured a PhD research studentship funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). His doctoral research centered on the supply chain of smokeless tobacco (ST) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The primary objective was to identify critical enablers and barriers to the development, implementation, and compliance of ST control policies in the region. His PhD comprised four research studies published in leading international tobacco journals. As a mixed-methods researcher, Dr. Ahmad contributes to an international research collaborative funded by the NIHR, focusing on ST control policies. He also leads the qualitative working group in a project on Social Health Protection Initiative (SHPI), funded by the German Development Bank (KFW), involving KMU, two German universities, and international health consultants.

In his role as a postdoctoral fellow in CONTROL, Dr. Ahmad oversees qualitative research components across all study work packages. This includes developing and conducting qualitative studies for intervention development, conducting process evaluations for pilot and definitive trials, and formulating implementation plans for future scale-up. Concurrently, as coordinator of the PhD program at KMU, he leads capacity development activities within CONTROL. This encompasses leading the Keele-KMU collaborative PhD program, coordinating collaborative Master studentships, and organizing regular training sessions for project staff and health department cadres.





In addition to his teaching and postdoctoral research activities, Dr. Ahmad supervises 12 master's students and 2 PhD students, with co-supervision of 2 additional PhD students. His long-term research agenda focuses on enhancing community mental health through substance abuse prevention via structured implementation research. With nearly three years of post-PhD experience and advanced expertise, Dr. Ahmad aims to drive significant improvements in public health outcomes in Pakistan and beyond.



# CONTROL PHD SCHOLAR

Safat Ullah is a distinguished professional holding a Master's in Public Health from Khyber Medical University. His extensive experience includes roles in global health research projects funded by NIHR, GIZ, and KfW, with a focus on addiction, social health protection, and mental health research. He has also served as the Coordinator of the Clinical Trials Unit at Khyber Medical University and was a recipient of the NIHR GHR-SPARC pilot award, receiving training in mixed-methods research from University of York UK. Safat is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Health at Keele University's School of Medicine under CONTROL research study.

## **Ph.D. Research Project:**

His Ph.D. research addresses cannabis use and associated disorders in Pakistan, where despite its prohibition, cannabis is still prevalent. With a focus on Low and Middle-Income Countries, the study unfolds in three stages: a systematic review and meta-analysis, cultural adaptation of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and a feasibility trial. The systematic review aims to explore the effectiveness of psychological treatments for cannabis use disorder (CUD). The cultural adaptation of CBT involves engaging stakeholders to tailor the therapy for CUD patients. The feasibility trial, conducted through a randomized controlled design, assesses the viability of delivering CBT in tertiary care hospitals. The study, involving patients with CUD in Peshawar, aims to evaluate acceptability, adherence, and patient satisfaction, providing insights for implementing CBT in the treatment of substance use disorders. Patient and provider engagement ensures a patient-centered approach throughout the research process.



# MEET AND GREET THE CONTROL MHR STUDENTS

## MOHAMMAD HANIF RASHIDI

Mohammad Hanif Rashidi, a Pharm-D graduate from Comsats University Islamabad, Abbottabad campus (2023), and IMSciences University Peshawar, excels in Quality Assurance at Alliance Pharmaceuticals Pvt. with business incubation training from NUST University. His blend of academic and professional achievements drives quality and innovation in his role.



## EMAN ISMAIL

Eman Ismail, a mental health professional with a Post Graduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology and a Bachelor's in Psychology from the University of Peshawar, has interned at Lady Reading Hospital and Northwest General Hospital & Research Centre. She holds certifications in PM+, Positive Psychology, and Psychological First Aid, actively promoting mental health through awareness programs and free mental health camps.

## DR. MOHAMMAD JAVED

Dr. Mohammad Javed, from Jalalabad, Afghanistan, graduated from Nangarhar Medical College in 2019 and served at the COVID-19 and Infection Diseases Hospitals in Nangarhar. He has expertise in epidemiology, public health, and healthcare management. Dr. Javed is dedicated to advancing medical research and improving public health.



## DR. WAQAS AHMAD

Waqas Ahmad, hailing from district Karak, completed his MBBS from Khyber Medical College in 2017, followed by a house job at Hayatabad Medical Complex. He pursued FCPS Ophthalmology training, finishing his residency in December 2022. Currently, he is a registrar at Al Shifa Trust Eye Hospital in Kohat, demonstrating his commitment to advancing eye care.



### **DR. MUHAMMAD ADNAN**

Dr. Muhammad Adnan from Swabi, with an FCPS residency from Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar, served as Chief Resident for two years, demonstrating leadership in pediatrics. He is a dedicated advocate for continuous learning and pediatric research, contributing to immunization studies through the Pakistan Paediatric Association



### **HAFIZA ZUMAR MALIK**

Hafiza Zumar Malik, currently pursuing a Master's in Health Research at Khyber Medical University, has a strong background with an MSc in Psychology, PG Diplomas in Clinical Psychology and CBT, and a PG Certificate in Forensic Psychiatry. As a Clinical Psychologist and CBT therapist at Bashir Psychiatric Hospital, she significantly contributed to the CONTROL project as a CBT master trainer.

### **SAMINA IHSAN**

Samina Ihsan, a Bachelor's degree holder in Doctor of Physical Therapy from Khyber Medical University (2021), is a Research Assistant in the CONTROL project, focusing on Cognitive Therapy for depression in tuberculosis treatment. With roles in various international projects and a fully funded Master's scholarship in Health Research, she actively enhances her research skills and professional journey.



### **DR. SAYED SABIT SHAH**

Dr. Sayed Sabit Shah, from Afghanistan, completed his MBBS at Ayub Medical College and is now enrolled in the Master in Health Research program to advance his research skills and improve healthcare outcomes. With a strong academic background and deep interest in health research, he aims to make meaningful contributions to the field

### **DR. SADIQA NAZ**

Dr. Sadiqa Naz, a doctor from Afghanistan with an MBBS from Kabir Medical College, completed her house job at Naseer Teaching Hospital in July 2022 and served as a Medical Officer in the Gynae/Obs department until July 2023. Fluent in multiple languages, she has recently been selected for the MHR Control session, showcasing her commitment to advancing her medical expertise and research skills.



### **DR. SHAHBAZ KHAN**

Dr. Shahbaz Khan, from Bajaur, completed his MBBS at Ayub Medical College and is pursuing GMC registration. With a keen interest in cardiothoracic surgery and research, he aims to enhance patient care through evidence-based medicine and is leveraging the MHR program funded by Keele University to advance his research skills.

### **DR. MAHDIA**

Dr. Mahdia, is a distinguished dental professional with a BDS from Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences, Jamshoro, where she earned a gold medal in Periodontology, also holds a Master's in Oral Pathology. She is currently a Research Assessor in the CONTROL project, reflecting her dedication to advancing health research and improving patient outcomes.



### **MUHAMMAD ULLAH**

Muhammad Ullah, an Afghan pharmacist residing in Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has a Pharm-D from COMSATS University Islamabad and extensive experience in retail and hospital pharmacy. He also honed his entrepreneurial skills with business incubation training at NUST University Islamabad.

### **DR. ISRAR UDDIN**

Dr. Israr Uddin, born in District Buner, KPK, earned his MBBS in 2012 and served as a medical officer in KPK before becoming a Consultant Psychiatrist in 2023. He is currently pursuing a Master's in Health Research at Khyber Medical University, focusing on mental health research.



### **DR. ABID USMAN**

Dr. Abid Usman completed his MBBS at Khyber Medical College in 2014 and is now a Psychiatrist at MTI, District Headquarter Hospital Bannu. He finished a 4-year FCPS Psychiatry training in June 2022 and a 6-month CBT Certificate Course from Khyber Medical University in 2020.

### **DR. MASIHA SHAFEEH**

Dr. Masiha Shafeeh, from Kabul, Afghanistan, completed her MBBS at Baqai Medical University in 2018 and her house job at Hayatabad Medical Complex in 2020, specializing in General and Emergency Medicine. With three years of experience as a medical officer in Kabul and Peshawar, she is now enrolled in the MHR CONTROL Program at IPHSS to enhance her research skills for advancing healthcare delivery and policy.



### **DR. AMIR WAHAB**

Dr. Amir Wahab, completed his MBBS from Al Nafees Medical College in 2016 and FCPS Psychiatry training at Lady Reading Hospital. Since 2022, he has been a Clinical Research Fellow in the CONTROL project and is pursuing a Master's in Health Research at Khyber Medical University.



# Community Engagement



# PPIE ADVISORY GROUP FEEDBACK ON PROCESS EVALUATION TOPIC GUIDES

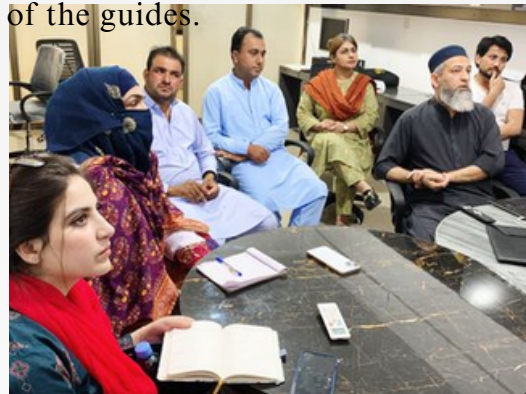
The CONTROL study Community Advisory Group (CAG), convened on May 7, 2024, at Khyber Medical University for the study updates and to deliberate on the Process Evaluation Topic Guides.

Facilitated by Dr. Saima Aleem & Dr. Fayaz Ahmad, with participation from CONTROL team members and social mobilizers, the session aimed to elicit comprehensive feedback on the structure and content of the process evaluation topic guides.

Key topics of discussion included methodologies for data collection, scheduling of interviews and focus groups, and the provision of participant incentives. Advisory group members Dr. Ghazala, Mr. Asadullah and Mr. Farman , spearheaded the feedback process, underscoring the importance of conducting interviews in local languages and compensating participants for their time and transportation.

The session underscored the necessity of process evaluations in identifying and addressing any deficiencies in the intervention before definitive trial. The advisory group proposed rearrangements of certain questions and the inclusion of more detailed probes within the topic guides.

Three days subsequent to the session, the advisory group members, provided additional feedback which facilitated further refinement of the guides.



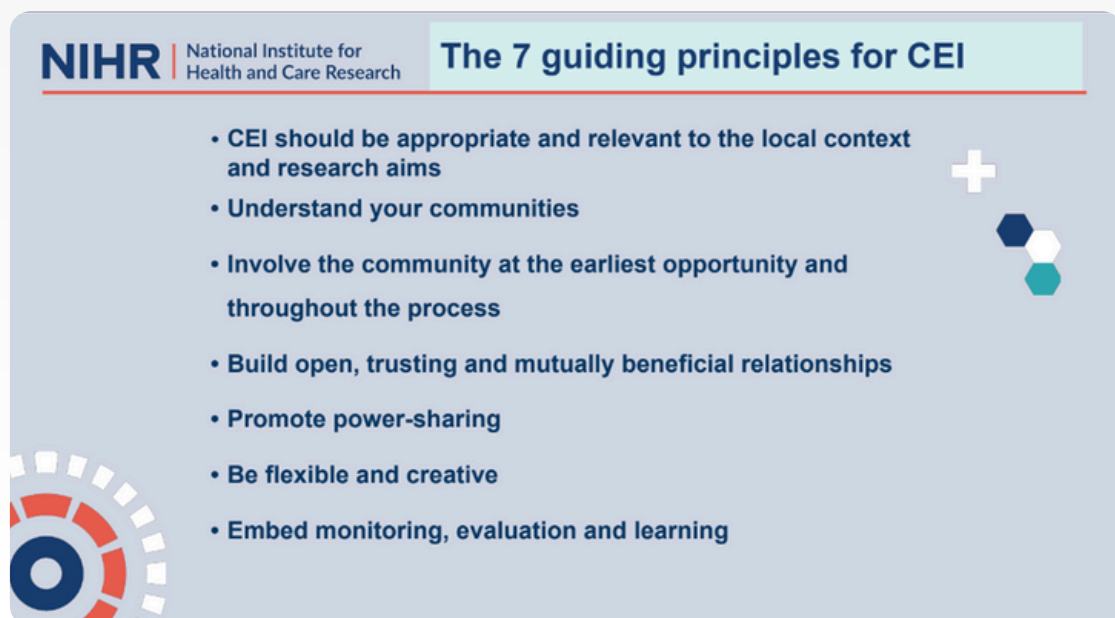
# AWARD OF SMALL GRANT TO PILOT NIHR CEI PRINCIPLES

CONTROL's VoICE (Value of Integrated Community Engagement), focuses on establishing strong connections with community and patient groups in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan to ensure that community insights drive decision-making throughout the research process.

CONTROL's VoICE team had submitted an Expression of Interest for piloting NIHR CEI Guiding Principles which had been successful. NIHR Global CEI group had received an overwhelming 37 expressions of interest, and they have selected projects taking into account the types of awards, levels of experience, geographical spread, and types of people and communities.

The NIHR CEI Pilot Project, under CONTROL's VoICE, proposes to create, implement, and evaluate art-based community engagement activities. These activities aim to *involve the community at the earliest opportunity and throughout the process to build open, trusting, and mutually beneficial relationships, facilitate power-sharing, be creative, and embed monitoring, evaluation, and learning, focusing of CEI guiding principles.*

The pilot project will be implemented in three phases over six months to understand community perspectives, co-create and finalize art genres, develop dissemination strategies and measure impact through quantitative indicators such as reach, relevance, usefulness, collaboration, and process evaluation. Art genres such as visual, performing, and digital arts will be used to engage communities and spread awareness about TB and mental health.





# PPIE TRAINING TO CONTROL PH.D. SCHOLARS

Under the CONTROL's VoICE (Value of Integrated Community Engagement) Initiative "PPIE Training to CONTROL Ph.D. Scholars", was conducted on June 27, 2024, to equip CONTROL Ph.D. students with essential skills for involving and engaging the public and patients in their research projects. The session, led by Dr. Saima Aleem and co-facilitated by Mr. Ishfaq Azeemi, Manager of THE HOPE study, aimed to enhance the students' understanding of Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) principles and their practical application.

Key topics covered included:

- Concept of PPIE
- PPIE Protocol development
- Stakeholder identification and establishment of the advisory group for PPIE
- Sessions designed as per the research outcome
- Ethical issues in the PPIE and how to address them
- Reporting of PPIE sessions
- The impact of PPIE on the research project

Additionally, the emphasis was given to the significance of PPIE in aligning research with community needs, enhancing relevance, and ensuring impactful outcomes.

The training included lived experience sharing by Mr. Ishfaq Azeemi, who highlighted the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives from spiritual healers and psychosis patients. The session also provided guidance on establishing and retaining a PPIE advisory group, addressing ethical issues, and developing effective communication and engagement strategies to develop long-term stakeholder relationships and ensure the sustainability and continuity of PPIE efforts.

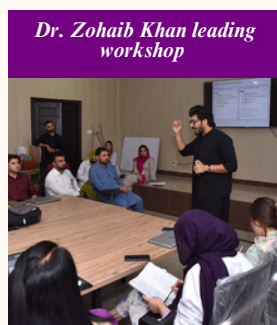


# 4TH INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONFERENCE

Dr. Zohaib Khan conducted a workshop on Systematic Reviews during the 4th International Public Health Conference at Khyber Medical University on April 28, 2024. The workshop provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of systematic review methodologies, emphasizing their importance for evidence-based practice in public health. Dr. Khan covered the fundamentals of systematic reviews, from formulating research questions to developing search strategies, selecting studies, and assessing study quality. The interactive workshop equipped attendees with essential skills for conducting rigorous systematic reviews to enhance public health research and practice.



*Secretary of Higher Education visited the Systematic Review workshop at the 4th International Public Health Conference.*



*Dr. Zohaib Khan leading workshop*



*Participants at the Systematic Review workshop, 4th International Public Health Conference.*

Dr. Saima Aleem, Communication Manager and CEI Lead for CONTROL study, was invited to the 4th International Public Health Conference at Khyber Medical University to conduct a workshop on Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement in Research. Held on April 27, 2024, at Khyber Medical University, the workshop offered valuable insights and strategies for enhancing the role of patients and the public in health research. It emphasized the importance of inclusive and participatory research practices, underscoring the critical need for patient and public engagement in the research process.



*Dr. Saima Aleem leading workshop on PPIE*

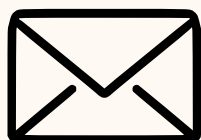
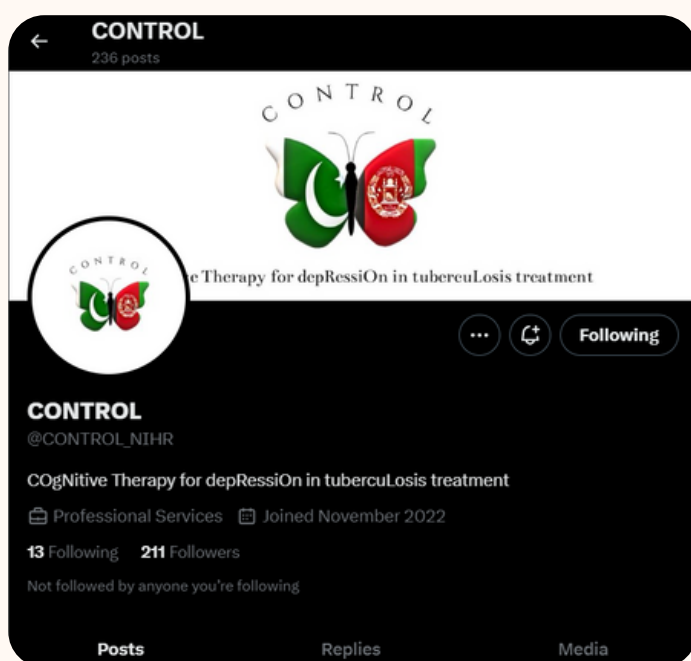


*Certificates Distributed among the attendees*

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