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CONTNEWS

THE QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER OF THE
CONTROL RESEARCH
PROGRAMME



Keele
UNIVERSITY



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TRIAL UPDATES



CONTROL TRIAL UPDATES

The CONTROL definitive trial continued to make steady and promising progress throughout the second quarter of 2025, maintaining consistent recruitment, follow-up, and monitoring activities across all participating sites. A notable milestone during this period was the addition of a new recruitment center, Dr. Rafiq Tanoli Clinic in Haripur, which commenced operations on April 16, 2025, further strengthening the network of participating Basic Management Units (BMUs).

By June 30, 2025, the trial had successfully recruited a total of 244 participants, with recruitment balanced across both trial arms. Progress through follow-up phases also remained on track, with 164 participants completing their 8-week follow-up assessments, and 42 participants reaching the 24-week follow-up milestone.



These achievements reflect the team's commitment to maintaining trial momentum and ensuring robust data collection. Routine internal and external monitoring visits were conducted as part of the trial's rigorous oversight mechanisms, aimed at safeguarding protocol adherence and supporting quality trial implementation at all sites.

MONITORING VISITS

External monitoring visits were carried out at key centers, including Prime Hospital (April 22), RHC Nahaqi and Khyber Teaching Hospital (May 13), DHQ Haripur (May 15), KMU (June 19), and multiple facilities in Haripur and Peshawar (June 26). These visits involved monitors Dr. Syed Imran Gillani and Dr. Naveed Afzal, accompanied by dedicated trial team members including Dr. Shaista Rasool, Dr. Asma Habib, Dr. Rubab Farooqi, Zarmina Fahim, Dr. Aiman Niaz, and Anika Saleem. Additionally, internal monitoring visits were conducted at Rafiq Tanoli Clinic (May 15), MDR LRH (June 4),



and Kuwait Teaching Hospital (June 13) by Dr. Rubab Farooqi and Zarmina Fahim. These visits reaffirmed the satisfactory progress of the trial and confirmed compliance with study protocols across all KMU-affiliated recruitment centers. The consistent and meticulous efforts of all site teams and monitors have been instrumental in sustaining high-quality trial operations and ensuring the integrity of the research across this critical phase.

CONTROL INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT TEAM ACTIVITIES

15TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

The Intervention Development Team, comprising the Clinical Research Fellow, Intervention .Development Coordinator, and CBT Master Trainers, actively participated in the 15th International Conference on CBT from April 28 to May 3, 2025. The team attended a specialized three-day pre-conference short course on CBT for Psychosis.

This training expanded their competencies beyond depression, equipping them with the knowledge and practical skills to address psychosis within the CONTROL project framework

Participation in this international event significantly enhanced the capacity of the team, reinforcing their commitment to delivering culturally adapted and evidence-based CBT interventions.

Already trained and certified in CBT for depression, the team's skills were broadened to include psychosis management. This positions them to contribute more effectively to intervention manual development, address psychosis-related cases, and support future mental health projects



SEMINAR ON COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION

A seminar on CBT and its cultural adaptation was organized on May 5, 2025, at Khyber Medical University, led by Prof. Farooq Naeem and Dr. Mirrat Gul. The seminar aimed to emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation in mental health interventions, especially within low- and middle-income countries, and shared the development process of the CONTROL intervention.

The seminar strengthened awareness around the need for culturally sensitive approaches in CBT, fostering a deeper understanding among participants. It provided an avenue for knowledge exchange and highlighted the collaborative development process of the CONTROL intervention, reinforcing the importance of cultural grounding in effective mental health practices



CBT TRAINING FOR DOTS FACILITATOR FROM PRIVATE TB CENTER

A focused CBT training was conducted on May 23rd, 24th, 29th, and 30th, 2025, for a newly recruited DOTS facilitator from a Dr. Asif Safi's private TB center. This program covered all six CBT sessions within the CONTROL intervention and provided an overview of CBT principles, ensuring comprehensive exposure to the intervention components.

This targeted training enhanced the DOTS facilitator's capability to understand and implement CBT techniques for TB patients with depression. By equipping the facilitator with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, the training ensured readiness to deliver effective, patient-centered mental health support in TB care settings.



REFRESHER TRAINING ON CBT FOR DOTS FACILITATORS/TB HEALTH

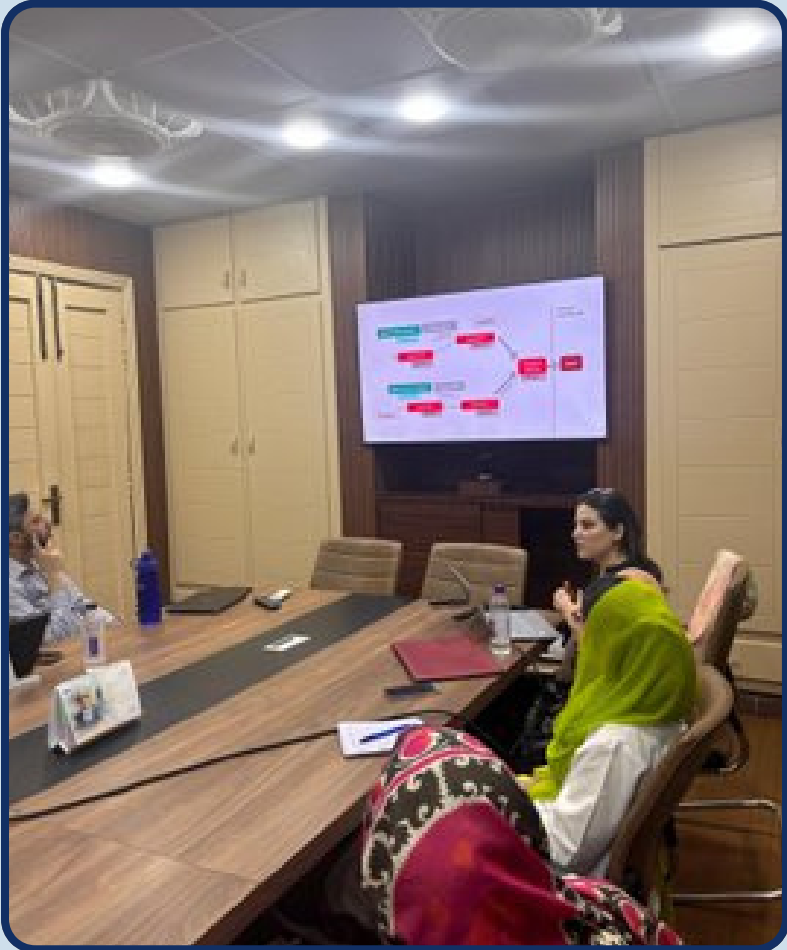
A three-day refresher training on CBT was conducted in two phases, Group 1 from June 12-14, 2025, and Group 2 from June 19-21, 2025, targeting DOTS facilitators/TBHWs. The training focused on improving the understanding and delivery of the CONTROL intervention, particularly the General Information Sheet, PHQ-2 screening, and CBT sessions 1 to 6. Interactive roleplays, quizzes, and simulations were incorporated to enhance practical application and engagement.



The refresher training significantly improved participant's knowledge, confidence, and therapeutic skills, especially in administering PHQ-2 and delivering CBT sessions in a structured, patient-centered way. The inclusion of local languages (Urdu, Pashto, Hindko) ensured cultural relevance. Simulations helped DOTS facilitators manage real-life scenarios effectively, and roleplays provided opportunities for continuous learning and peer feedback. The "Therapist of the Day" activity was a key motivator, fostering enthusiasm and skill enhancement among participants.

THEORY OF CHANGE

DEVELOPMENT OF THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC) FOR INTEGRATION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN TB CARE



As WP3 (the definitive trial) nears completion of its recruitment phase, activities under Work Package 4 (WP4) have commenced in parallel.

WP4 is structured into three key stages. Stage 1 involves the co-development of a Theory of Change (ToC) through participatory workshops with stakeholders, aiming to create a strategic and contextually grounded roadmap for embedding mental health care within TB programs. Below is a summary of the key activities undertaken in this quarter.

1st Team Meeting – 28 April 2025

The first formal WP4 team meeting was held on 28th April 2025 to initiate planning for the integration of mental health into TB care through Theory of Change (ToC) development. The meeting was led by Maryiam Rahim and Dr. Shaista Rasool, who outlined the objectives and three-stage structure of WP4 as set out in the CONTROL protocol.

Capacity Building Workshop – Introduction to Theory of Change (ToC)

Prior to the first ToC workshop, a dedicated capacity building session was conducted on 8th May 2025 to familiarise the WP4 team with the Theory of Change (ToC) approach. Led by Maryiam Rahim, the workshop aimed to build foundational understanding among team members about the principles, purpose, and practical application of ToC in implementation research. The session covered key concepts such as causal pathways, assumptions, preconditions, and outcomes, using real-world examples and interactive discussions. This preparatory workshop ensured that all WP4 team members were equipped with the necessary knowledge and shared language to meaningfully contribute to the subsequent co-development of the ToC map in Workshop I.

TOC WORKSHOP WITH CONTROL RESEARCH TEAM

The Theory of Change (ToC) workshop I was held on 2nd June 2025 with members of the CONTROL research team. The session was facilitated by Maryiam Rahim (MR) and served as a foundational exercise to initiate the planning process for integrating mental health services into routine TB care.



The primary objective of the workshop was to develop an initial draft of the ToC map by identifying key pathways, assumptions, and outcomes required for the successful scale-up of the intervention. MR guided the participants through a structured discussion to explore how mental health support could be meaningfully embedded into existing TB services.

The workshop featured interactive brainstorming and mapping exercises, allowing team members to contribute insights based on their experience and research findings from earlier work packages. The group examined intervention inputs, system-level enablers, potential barriers, and key actors essential for integration.

2nd Team Meeting – 24 June 2025

The second WP4 team meeting was convened on 24th June 2025. It served as a follow-up to ToC Workshop I. The team reviewed and validated the draft ToC map which was developed during the workshop. The meeting also included planning for the next phase of WP4 activities including finalising dates and logistical plans for the upcoming stakeholder ToC workshops with service users (patients and caregivers), service providers (DOTS facilitators), and programme managers from the Provincial TB Programme.

PROCESS EVALUATION



PROCESS EVALUATION

Between April and May 2025, as part of the preparation for qualitative data collection, the process evaluation team translated the topic guides into Urdu and Pashto. These translations underwent three rounds of revision, led by the study leads and the master trainer, to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness. After finalizing the translated guides, the team participated in three training sessions, where they carefully reviewed each question and practiced how to effectively ask them during interviews with participants.

In June 2025, the quantitative tools, the Applied Mental Health Research Group (AMHR) tool, Feasibility of Intervention Measure (FIM), Acceptability of Intervention Measure (AIM), and Intervention Appropriateness Measure (IAM), were translated into Pashto and Urdu. These translations underwent several revisions and were finalized by the study leads and the master trainer. Once finalized, the process evaluation team received training on the translated tools and engaged in thorough practice to ensure accurate and consistent datacollection.



Alongside these preparations, a detailed field plan was developed. For quantitative data collection, coordination was carried out with the data manager, and a 10% random sample was selected. For the qualitative component, patient IDs were purposively selected from the sample to conduct in-depth interviews. Additionally, patient homework submissions are consistently monitored and updated as a core component of the fidelity monitoring process.

Since December 2024, fidelity data collection for the process evaluation has been actively underway in the field. This involves audio recording of randomly selected CBT sessions to assess adherence to the intervention protocol. All procedures related to session recording, secure storage, and data management are meticulously documented in comprehensive logs.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



MEET THE SCHOLAR

Dr Nishani Fonseka

Dr Nishani Fonseka is a postdoctoral research associate at Keele University, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and capacity development lead in the CONTROL project. She previously served as an honorary clinical research fellow at the School of Public Health, Imperial College London, where she also completed her post-MD training.

Dr Nishani Fonseka is a medical practitioner specialised in the field of public health and epidemiology. Her research interests include public mental health, health system research, and research methodology.



She has contributed to several national and international research initiatives, including systematic reviews, health interventions, and the COVID-19 response in Sri Lanka. She holds an MD and MSc in Community Medicine from the University of Colombo. She is committed to improving health outcomes through evidence-based public health practice.

MEET THE SCHOLAR

ABDUL LATIF

Abdul Latif is a seasoned public health professional with robust conceptual and technical expertise in institutional management, health systems research, and operational planning for healthcare programs.

He is currently pursuing a PHD in public Health at Keele University School of medicine under the NIHR -funded “CONTROL” project. Holding a master’s degree in health policy and management from Aga Khan University, Pakistan, he has transitioned seamlessly across roles as an academic, program manager, and independent researcher throughout his career.



As a research consultant, Latif has successfully executed diverse assignments for prominent funding agencies, including Oxford Policy Management (OPM), WHO-EMRO, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. His research focuses on tackling health disparities and advancing community-based health interventions through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques.

With a strong portfolio of peer-reviewed publications on critical public health issues, Latif’s contributions continue to shape meaningful discourse and action in the field.

SHOWCASING KEELE/LMIC COLLABORATION IN IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

On 30th June 2025, Keele Hall at Keele University hosted an event ‘Showcasing Keele/LMIC Collaboration in Implementation Research’, organised by Professor Saeed Farooq (lead of the CONTROL and TRANSLATE programmes) and his global mental health research team within the School of Medicine.

The event welcomed representatives from a range of national and international organisations, including the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR), Midlands Partnership University Foundation Trust (MPUFT), Khyber Medical University and the Institute of Global Health - Keele University. In total, 15 speakers delivered presentations covering diverse themes such as implementation of research in LMICs, leadership development, translating evidence into practice, progress reporting and impact, and capacity building.



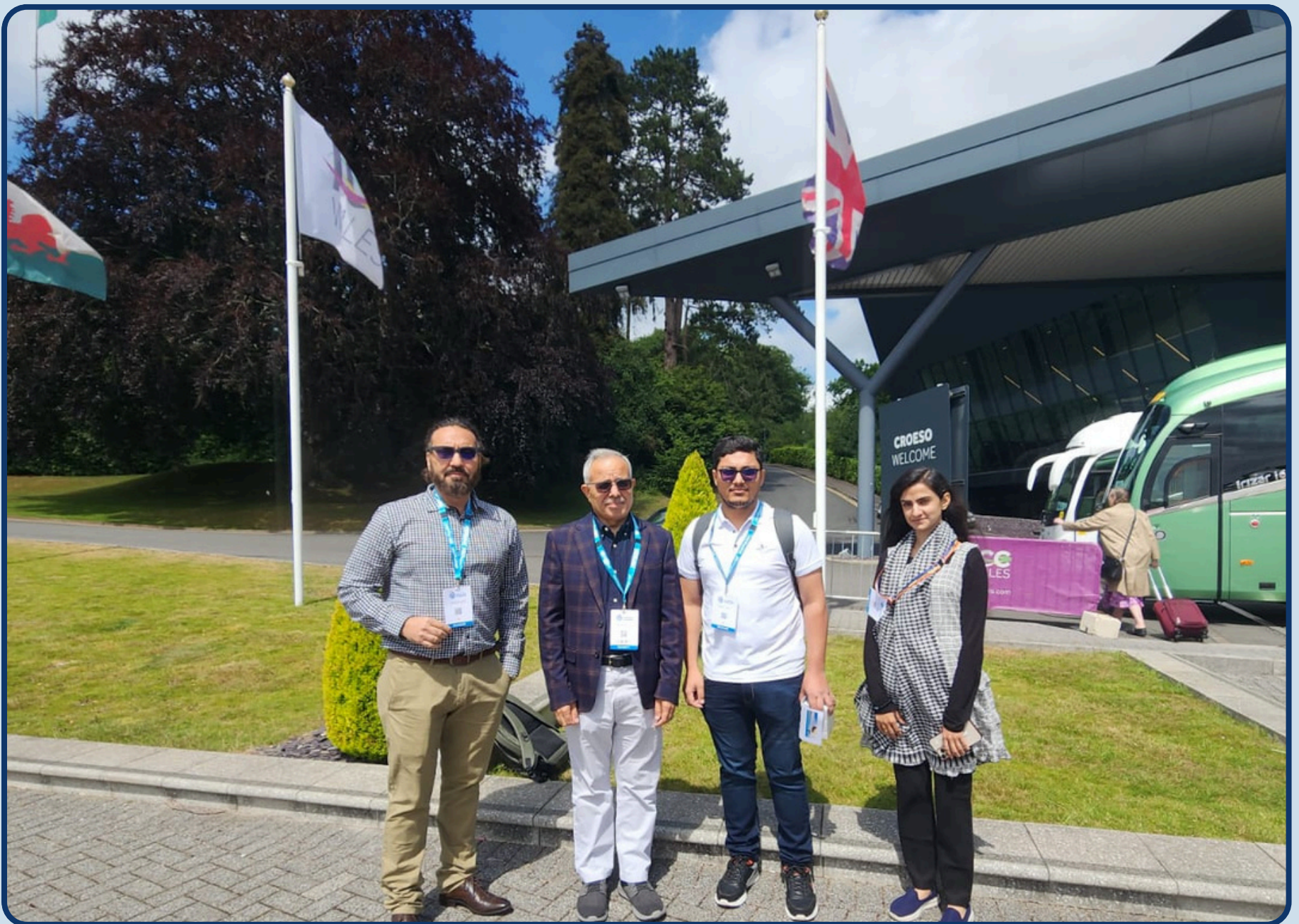
SHOWCASING KEELE/LMIC COLLABORATION IN IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

A highlight of the afternoon was the contribution from five CONTROL PhD researchers—Aliya Durrani, Abdul Latif, Safat Ullah, Huma Mughal, and Muhammad Sohaib—who each presented their PhD research and received thoughtful and constructive feedback from attendees.

The event was widely regarded as a success, fostering active engagement and sparking insightful discussions throughout the sessions. It served as a valuable platform to strengthen international collaboration and advance the field of implementation research in global mental health. The Global Mental Health Research team would like to extend their sincere thanks to everyone who attended the event and to all those who contributed to its delivery.



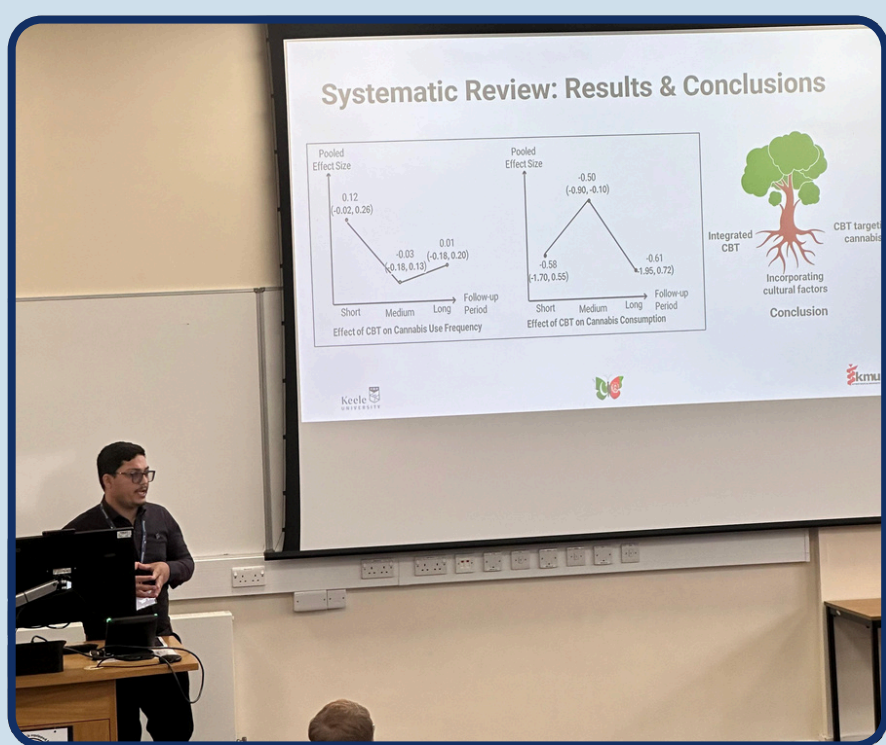
PHD STUDENT'S ANNUAL VISIT TO KEELE UNIVERSITY



During the period from June 9 to July 4, 2025, five PhD scholars from the CONTROL Project attended a series of academic and capacity-building events at Keele University, UK. These engagements were part of their second-year scheduled visit and aimed to enhance their research capabilities, strengthen their scholarly communication, and advance their methodological competencies.

The CONTROL PhD scholars actively participated in supervisory meetings with their Keele-based supervisors. These meetings provided valuable opportunities for in-depth discussions, clarifications on research direction, and refinement of their methodological approaches. The scholars received structured feedback, which helped them set realistic timelines and strengthen the foundations of their ongoing doctoral work.

The scholars also took part in the Keele Postgraduate Research Conference, where they presented their research and participated in the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition. These activities provided platforms for enhancing their academic communication skills, building confidence, and learning how to communicate complex research ideas effectively to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.



As part of their capacity-building activities, the scholars attended a series of academic workshops held at Keele University.

CONTROL scholars presented poster at the Royal College of Psychiatrists Congress, disseminating findings from their systematic reviews. This opportunity allowed for broader engagement with mental health professionals and academics, helping to integrate their research insights within a wider clinical and academic community



Furthermore, the scholars participated in the NIHR event: Keele/LMIC Collaboration in Implementation Research. During this event, they showcased their work through oral and poster presentations, highlighting the relevance of their research in the context of implementation science and collaborative work between the UK and LMICs (Low-and Middle-Income Countries). This engagement reinforced the practical application of research findings to real-world health challenges.

The scholars further benefited from a hybrid writing retreat, which supported their academic writing productivity and helped them make significant progress in drafting and refining sections of their theses.

Throughout these activities, the CONTROL PhD scholars expanded their research competencies, improved their analytical skills, and strengthened their academic communication.



INAUGURATION OF THE RESEARCHERS FOR HEALTH (R4H) ROOM AT KMU



The Researchers for Health (R4H) Room was officially inaugurated on 6th May 2025 in the Institute of Public Health and Social Sciences, Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar. Designed to provide a collaborative space, the R4H Room supports early and mid-career researchers working on NIHR-funded and other public health projects. It facilitates interdisciplinary research and innovation across five major NIHR-funded projects including:



THE CONTROL (Cognitive Therapy for Depression in TB), IMPACT (Improving Mental and Physical Health), THE HOPE (Traditional Healers and Primary Care for Psychosis), TRANSLATE (Psychosis Intervention in LMICs), and COPE-BP (Hypertension Management in Community Pharmacies).



The room was inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq (Vice Chancellor, KMU), Prof. Saeed Farooq (NIHR Global Health Researcher and PI, THE CONTROL), and Dr. Zohaib Khan (Co-PI, THE CONTROL), highlighting KMU's commitment to advancing health research and collaboration.

The Researchers for Health (R4H) Room is designed to foster a collaborative and supportive research environment for early and mid-career researchers. Its key objectives include promoting joint research through a shared workspace, enhancing productivity and innovation through focused inquiry and knowledge exchange, and strengthening interdisciplinary connections across NIHR-funded and public health projects. The space also encourages mentorship and peer learning through informal discussions and idea-sharing, while supporting capacity-building efforts aligned with national and global health priorities. More than just a physical room, the R4H space embodies KMU's commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation, collaboration, and impactful research

KMU HONORS PROF. SAEED FAROOQ WITH NEWLY INAUGURATED ACADEMIC BLOCK

On 6th May 2025, Saeed Farooq Academic Block was inaugurated in KMU to honor Professor Saeed Farooq for his outstanding contributions to mental health and global research. The inauguration ceremony was led by Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq, Vice Chancellor of KMU, and was attended by members of the CONTROL Project team.

Professor Farooq currently serves as the NIHR Global Research Professor and Professor of Psychiatry and Public Mental Health at Keele University, UK. He is also an Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist at the Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust and Co-lead of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Research Theme in Specialist Care and Global Mental Health.

Renowned for his pioneering work in translational psychiatry, Professor Farooq has significantly advanced mental health research both in the UK and globally. The dedication of the academic block in his name is a fitting tribute to his impactful leadership, mentorship, and lifelong commitment to improving mental health care and research.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



CONTROL CEI PROGRESS AND IMPACT

GUL MAKAI KI KAHANI USED TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AWARENESS



A key innovation this quarter was the dissemination of the CONTROL awareness video "Gul Makai Ki Kahani," which was developed during the NIHR CEI Guiding Principles Pilot project from CONTROL and has now become a central tool for awareness.

The video was shared widely during these sessions and also via social media platforms, effectively reaching women and low- literacy groups across multiple communities.

During this quarter, the CONTROL CEI team successfully organized a series of structured community engagement sessions in Peshawar and Haripur. A total of six gender-segregated sessions were held in culturally appropriate spaces (hujras), engaging a diverse range of participants including local residents, Afghan refugees, religious scholars, teachers, lay community members, and individuals from marginalized groups. These sessions were made possible through the dedicated efforts of local focal persons who mobilized participants for Awareness and engagement sessions

Each session generated interactive dialogue where participants shared lived experiences, and team did the myth busting regarding TB, stigma and common mental health disorders. The participants also benefitted from the involvement of religious scholars who helped link health-seeking behaviors with Islamic teachings.



IMPACT AND REAL WORLD OUTCOMES

The CEI activities have significantly enhanced community knowledge, engagement, and trust. Participants demonstrated increased understanding of TB, symptoms, transmission, and the intersection between TB and mental health, particularly depression. Misconceptions were openly addressed, and communities expressed greater comfort in discussing both TB and mental health concerns.



The "Gul Makai Ki Kahani" video proved particularly effective among low-literacy populations. A particularly noteworthy impact emerged after the launch and dissemination of the CEI awareness video. Two Afghan refugees one male and one female from different refugee camps in Peshawar approached the Afghan focal person, stating that they had attended CONTROL CEI awareness sessions and later watched the video. They expressed concerns about experiencing symptoms similar to those discussed in the sessions and video. The CONTROL refugee focal person facilitated their referral to the nearest health facility, where both individuals were screened and diagnosed as TB positive. They are now receiving appropriate treatment. This case powerfully illustrates how CEI efforts are not only raising awareness but directly contributing to early diagnosis and linkage to care.

CONTROL CEI Visibility at Global Level

Dr. Saima Aleem and Dr. Zeeshan Kibria are formally invited by NIHR CEI Global via email on 8th May 2025 to participate in NIHR CEI Guiding Principle Launch Webinar on 15 July 2025. This webinar will offer attendees the opportunity to hear directly about why and how the NIHR CEI Guiding Principles were developed, and to understand each Principle and the value it brings to CEI activities and research. From the 11 pilot project, CONTROL Art for Impact pilot project is amongst the 4 projects that will be presented in launch webinar.

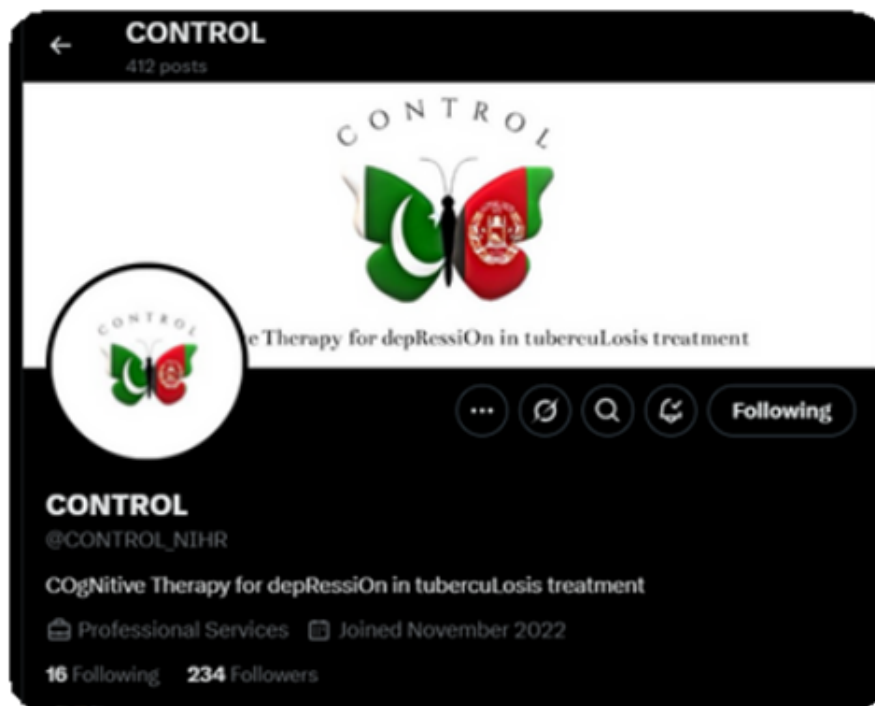


From the 11 pilot project, CONTROL Art for Impact pilot project is amongst the 4 projects that will be presented in launch webinar. To maximize global participation, the webinar is scheduled to run twice (with a maximum of 500 attendees per session), and will feature presentations from two pilot teams in each session. The Art for Impact will be presented in first session (9:00am – 10:30am (UK time) followed by a panel Question and Answer session.

This invitation reflects the significant recognition of the CONTROL CEI team's dedication and hard work in advancing meaningful and impactful CEI work at both local and global levels.

Dr. Saima has worked with Saumu Lwembe from NIHR in May 2025 to develop and refine the content from Art for Impact for the two guiding principle that will be presented in the guiding principle web page expected to be launched on 15th July 2025.

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