



The CONTROL

(COgNitive Therapy for depRessiOn in tubercuLosis treatment)

to improve outcomes for depression and TB in Pakistan and

Afghanistan

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“The 15th International CBT Conference”

28th April – 3rd May 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Capacity development is an integral component of the CONTROL study, as the research team comprises early-career researchers, including Research Assistants, qualitative and quantitative researchers, data input administrators, DOTS facilitators, master's students, Ph.D. scholars, and Postdoctoral Fellows. Developing their knowledge and skills will, in turn, contribute to the quality of project deliverables.

During the 15th International Conference on CBT, held from April 28 to May 3, 2025, the Intervention Development Team, including the Clinical Research Fellow, Intervention Development Coordinator, and CBT Master Trainers, actively participated in the event. They attended a three-day pre-conference short course on CBT for Psychosis. This training enhanced the team's capacity beyond depression, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to address other mental health conditions such as psychosis.

The 15th International CBT Conference

The 15th International CBT Conference, organized by the Pakistan Association of Cognitive Therapy (PACT), was held from April 28 to May 3, 2025. The event brought together psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and CBT practitioners from around the world. It featured a range of activities, including a pre-conference workshop at Fountain House in Lahore and a two-day main conference at PIMS Hospital in Islamabad.

Pre-Conference Workshop: Three-day short course workshop on CBT for Psychosis



The pre-conference workshop included a three-day short course on CBT for Psychosis, conducted on April 28, 29, and 30 at Fountain House, Lahore. The training was led by Prof. Farooq Naeem (Professor of

Psychiatry, Founder of PACT, and Intervention Development Lead for the CONTROL project) and Ms. Nazish Noureen (Expert in CBT Psychosis). Members of the CONTROL intervention team participated in this workshop, including Dr. Aamir Aziz (Clinical Research Fellow), Saara Khan (Intervention Development Coordinator and CBT master trainer), and CBT Master Trainers Faryal Fazal, Rafia Khalil, and Zumar Malik.





The training focused on low-intensity CBT for psychosis. On the first day, the team was introduced to the CBTp manual, along with a comprehensive overview of psychosis, its symptoms and causes, and the biopsychosocial and spiritual models used in understanding the disorder. The second day covered key techniques such as normalization and befriending,

supported by roleplays and informative video demonstrations. The final day addressed how to manage delusions and hallucinations, and included practical relaxation exercises and other strategies for dealing with these symptoms.

This workshop significantly improved the skills of the CONTROL intervention team. The intervention

development

team already

held diplomas

in CBT and

had training in

CBT for

depression,



which they used to train TB health workers under the CONTROL project. With this additional training, their capabilities have now been expanded to include CBT for psychosis, enabling them to contribute more meaningfully to manual development, handle psychosis-related cases, and support future projects in this area.

Conference Day 1: One-Day Workshop on Treating Psychosexual issues using open dialogue and safe therapeutic environments



Following the workshop, the main conference took place on May 2nd and 3rd at PIMS Hospital in Islamabad. On the first day, the team attended a workshop led by Dr. Colin Hughes (Program Director, Cognitive

Behavioural Therapy programme, Queen's University, Belfast) on treating psychosexual issues using open dialogue and safe therapeutic environments. This session focused on culturally and religiously sensitive approaches to addressing psychosexual concerns, an often-taboo topic in Pakistan. The importance of cultural adaptation in psychotherapy was strongly emphasized, aligning closely with the approach taken in the CONTROL project, which prioritizes culturally adapted CBT in low- and middle-income countries.

Conference Day 2: Session on “Will Technology Deliver?”

The second day featured various presentations and case studies delivered by professionals from PACT and other psychiatric institutions. A panel discussion was held on the theme “Will Technology Deliver?” exploring the potential and limitations of using technology in the delivery of CBT. The discussion highlighted both the opportunities that technology offers in increasing access to therapy and the challenges that may arise, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Overall, the conference was a valuable experience for the CONTROL team, reinforcing their commitment to culturally adapted,



evidence-based CBT interventions and further enhancing their skills in addressing both depression and psychosis.



**Group photo of the Intervention Development Team – CONTROL,
with facilitators Prof. Farooq Naeem, Dr. Mirrat Gul, and Ms. Nazish**



A memorable moment with participants and facilitators