

Centre Connect

October 2023



What's happening?

1. Latest news from the research team

Cloud of depression video launch

Ahead of World Mental Health Day, on October 9th the Initiative hosted a very successful launch of the **"Depression ka Badal" (The Cloud of Depression)** video at RAMDA Hotel, Islamabad. The momentous event was a significant moment for raising awareness about mental health issues in Pakistan and included media coverage from AajNews and The News, Pakistan.



The launch involved a panel discussion on “integration of mental health into physical health” which featured an address from Dr. Zafar Mirza, former Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health. The video has been translated into different regional languages of Pakistan and shared on the [Initiative's YouTube channel](#).

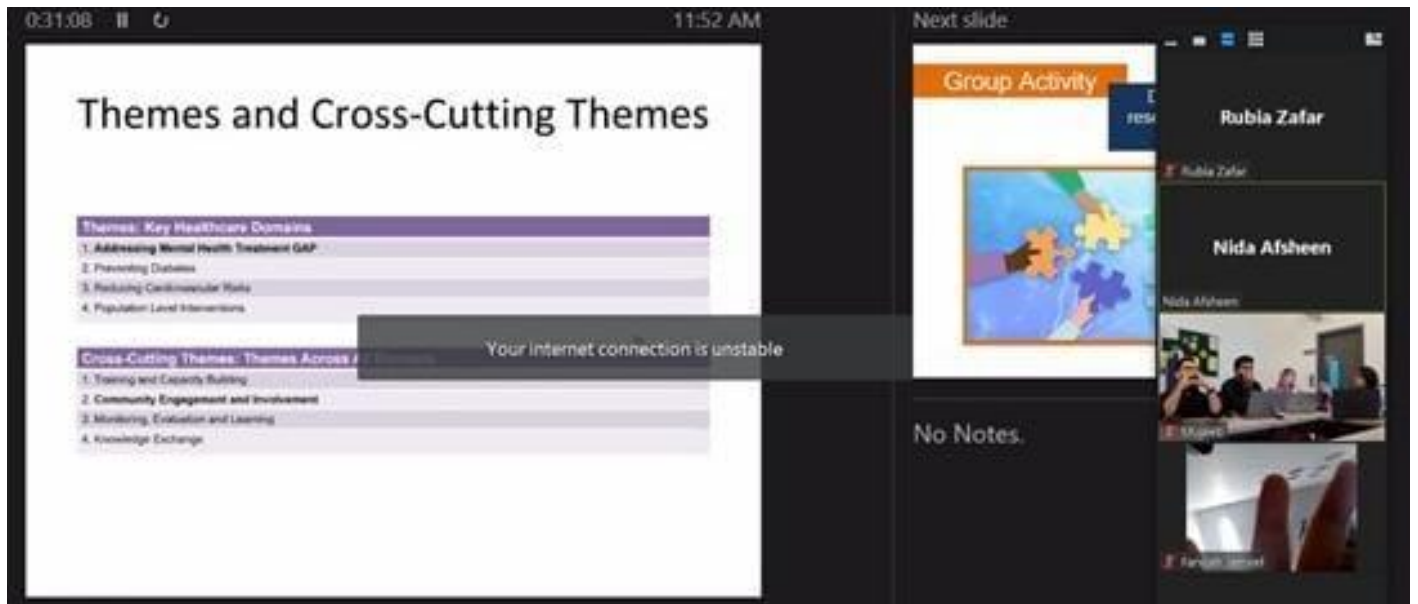
Watch the [Event Highlights](#)

Watch the [AajNews Coverage](#)

Read The News coverage: [Only 900 trained psychiatrists for millions of people facing mental health issues in Pakistan: experts](#)

Community Engagement & Involvement best practice continues

The Institute of Psychiatry continues to lead the way with its Community Engagement and Involvement (CEI) Training provision. On 11th October, a CEI training course was conducted online by IOP. Attendees included 8 participants from BIDE, 6 from IMPACT and 2 from DiaDeM.



NIHR Global Health Podcast from Faiza Aslam

In 2022, Faiza was interviewed as part of a podcast on Community Engagement and Involvement in the global pandemic. The episode, included guests from multiple NIHR funded projects, and explores how the COVID-19 pandemic affected community engagement and involvement (CEI) activities, as well as how CEI and research was adapted to cater to local restrictions and changing context.

Faiza eloquently highlighted how CEI is embedded in the research of the Centre and the DiaDeM Programme and how this has benefited our research projects and the challenges faced within CEI due to COVID-19.

Listen to the podcast: [Spotlight on community engagement and involvement \(CEI\): Managing CEI in a pandemic](#)

Update from the Cardiovascular Disease Theme

The team is in the planning phase of implementation of CVD theme in two rural Sindh districts.

In October, the COBRA Plus trial team led by Dr. Romaina Iqbal, visited the Thatta District Health Officer (DHO) to have discussions with the DHO and various programme managers about the upcoming project on high blood pressure screening for adults and the training of Community Health Workers and health care providers on hypertension management. The DHO and his team appreciated the project goal and have offered full cooperation for the implementation of the trial in the district.

2. Welcome Aboard

Dr. Shiraz has joined as Project Manager for the Centre for IMPACT programme at AKU and to oversee field operational plans of CVD theme.

We also welcome three Research Associates - Dr Sarush Ahmad Siddiqui, Dr Muhammad Faizan and Dr Muhammad Mughees Farooq. All will assist Dr Shiraz in the delivery of the CVD related theme.

3. What's new from the community & beyond

Appointment to National Health and Population Committee

Great to hear that three members of the Centre for IMPACT, Dr Zainab Samad, Dr Abdul Basit and Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta have all been nominated to join the National Health and Population Committee, Pakistan. They will have a particular focus on contributing to the NCD sub-committee for the current government. This is an excellent opportunity for the Centre's Research Themes to be engaged with and influence national policy.

Communications Coordinators

To make it easier to get your research out there we are establishing a team of locally based research communication coordinators. The coordinators also meet monthly as a team to share knowledge and build skills. Writing Centre Connect is going to one of their regular jobs. If you have questions please get in touch with them directly. So far we have Nadia Bokhari (AKU), Amna Mansoor (BIDE), Ali Kamran (The Initiative), Shabnam Azizi (HealthNet TPO) and Jenny Westad (York).

4. Looking forward

What's happening in November?

- Community Advisory Panel meeting for EMPOWER D - 11 November 2023
- Covidence training is scheduled
- Centre colleagues will be attending and presenting at the GACD flagship Annual Scientific Meeting 14, 15 and 16 November 2023 in Singapore.
- World Diabetes Day on 14th November 2023

Socials

1. X, formerly known as Twitter

This month we recommend that you share some of the outputs of the media launch of the Cloud of Depression video and highlight the excellent NIHR podcast recorded by Dr Faiza Aslam.

Suggested Tweet - Simply copy and paste the text below and adapt the text as you would like.

The @theinitiativepk animation **The Cloud of Depression** is being used to raise awareness, foster empathy, and encourage open conversations about depression in Pakistan #Centre4IMPACT Watch the media launch event highlights video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLGP1nVZXdU>

Listen to colleague @Faizaaslam_RMU introduce Community Engagement & Involvement in the #Centre4IMPACT and @DiaDeM_NIHR in this excellent @NIHRglobal @NIHRresearch podcast @Diadem_Pakistan @DiaDeM_BD <https://podcasts.apple.com/pk/podcast/spotlight-on-community-engagement-and-involvement-cei/id1572267015?i=1000604329052>

2. YouTube - youtube.com/@Centre4IMPACT

Sign-up to the [Initiative YouTube Channel](#) to watch the Cloud of Depression videos, leave a comment and share.

Funding

Global Research Professorship Round 7

The Global Research Professorship award is NIHR's flagship career development award. It aims to fund research leaders to promote effective translation of research and to strengthen research leadership at the highest academic levels. Round 7 is open please discuss with colleagues if you are interested. Closing date is 06 Dec 2023. [Find out more](#)

Latest Publications

Recent publications from Centre colleagues:

- [Health data ecosystem in Pakistan: a multisectoral qualitative assessment of needs and opportunities](#). Mahmood S, Noorali AA, Manji A, Afzal N, Abbas S, Qamar JB, Siddiqi S, Hoodbhoy Z, Virani SS, Bhutta ZA, Samad Z. *BMJ Open*. 2023 Sep 21;13(9):e071616. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-071616

Have we missed your output?

Please share any outputs for the next Centre Connect digest by completing the Centre's dissemination [form](#) OR by emailing Jenny Westad.