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PIMS gets 25-30 HIV/AIDS cases monthly, says official

More individuals, who may have been exposed to HIV are getting tested

ISLAMABAD

The number of new HIV/AIDS patients is on the increase and some 25 to 30 new cases are registered in PIMS every month, the national programme manager said on Monday.

Dr Hasan Abbas Zaheer, who runs the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) says most of the registered HIV/AIDS cases are related to intravenous drug users and deported migrant workers from the Middle East and their families.

NACP is providing free treatment to 864 HIV/AIDS patients in the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Zaheer said, and added, this service was being provided through an

PATIENTS

864

the number of HIV/AIDS patients been provided free treatment at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences

HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Centre established in PIMS.

"The services being provided in this centre includes free voluntary HIV counseling and testing, specialised medical consultation, laboratory and radiological diagnostics, AIDS medicines, antibiotics and psychosocial support," he said.

"Many of the new cases are referred through the NACP and partner NGOs which work for the welfare of people living with HIV. The advocacy and

awareness efforts of the NACP have resulted in more individuals, who may have exposed themselves to HIV, getting tested for HIV/AIDS," he said.

Talking to APP, Zaheer said cases are being diagnosed at earlier stages of infection, which not only benefits the concerned individual but also helps in the prevention of the spread of HIV to family members.

Zaheer felt that over the years, the PIMS HIV Centre has evolved as a model HIV Treatment Centre in the country, providing high quality outdoor and in-door treatment, care and support. The centre caters to HIV/AIDS patients from Islamabad, Azad Kashmir, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Fata and Punjab. Some patients from the Middle East and Afghanistan are also registered with the Centre.

He said that different UN

agencies also collaborate with the NACP in the provision of quality care to these patients. The Centre has referral links with the Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission Centre in the Centre in PIMS for pregnant HIV positive women.

Free treatment is also being provided to HIV positive women and newborns while trained pediatricians at the Children Hospital for pediatric AIDS management are also available at PIMS.

Zaheer said a proposal is under consideration by the PIMS administration to upgrade this centre into a full-fledged department. The NACP regularly provides opportunities for advanced training, at national and international levels, to both the medical and technical staff of the centre.

The research data generated from the centre is regularly

published in reputed journals and presented internationally, while the NACP has made efforts to develop country specific guidelines for the clinical management of HIV/AIDS patients. The NACP has also developed a strong link with the Clinton Foundation for collaboration in of treatment and care.

The Foundation has provided a state-of-the-art Management Information System (MIS) system and hardware for the NACP's 20 treatment centres all over the country, including the PIMS Centre, free of cost.

With this system, the quality of services provided to the patients will improve immensely, streamline the functioning of the operations and also provide a boost to the research activities of the centre. The Clinton Foundation has also provided a free consignment of AIDS medicines to the NACP. APP