

Seminar Report**Quacks behind Deafness and other Diseases****Mohsin Masud Jan****Editor**

Medical experts have emphasised the need to create awareness among people about not going to quacks as they are a major source of spreading diseases, including deafness, in people on mass scale.

“The government must take stringent action against roadside quacks, who are spreading innumerable diseases, including deafness, among the unsuspecting people,” they said while speaking at a seminar on “21st Century - Deafness is no more an issue” organised by the Mir Khalil-ur-Rahman Memorial Society (Jang Group of Newspapers) in collaboration with the Deafness Foundation of Pakistan here at a local hotel the other day.

Speaking on the occasion, Deafness Foundation of Pakistan Chairman and ENT specialist Dr Nasrullah Rana said people should neither visit quacks nor resort to self-medication specially in case of hearing loss and he advised them to only go to qualified consultants for their treatment in this regard.

He also pointed out that people had mistaken ear wax as ear filth and tried to remove it through various means, which might cause deafness, adding that ear wax was actually guard against deafness and prevents hearing loss. “Cotton bud, match-stick, hair-pin and keys should not be used to clean ears,” he advised people and prohibited them from putting oil in ears as well. He also advised people not to slap on the face of children as it could also cause deafness.

He also suggested that the people with hearing disability should accept hearing aid, as people with weak eyesight accept glasses, to improve the quality of life and it should not be taken as a stigma. The hearing implant could also help compensate hearing impairment in children, he said.

In elderly age, he said, deafness and depression go side by side. He said proper treatment of deafness could also help prevent depression in old age. Justice (retd) Munir A Sheikh, former federal Ombudsman and honorary patron-in-chief of Deafness Foundation of Pakistan, said the Deafness Foundation of Pakistan had waged a struggle against deafness and working on the slogan “Hearing for All” by providing useful information to the masses for prevention of deafness. He said deafness was increasing due to careless attitude of the people. He also lamented that society segregated people with deafness and called upon the people not to adopt discriminatory behaviour with the people with hearing impairment.

He stressed the need to spread awareness among the people to prevent deafness. Punjab Parliamentary Secretary of Health Dr Saeed Elahi said health facilities/hospitals and medical expertise in Pakistan were far better than in neighbouring countries like India, Bangladesh and other countries across the border. He said there was no shortage of talent in the country however there was a need to streamline the talent and work hard with dedication.

Prof Dr Nazeefa Ahmad, head of the Department of Pathology at Fatima Jinnah Medical College, said that careless behaviour of the people was among various other reasons of deafness.

“The children are used to put several things in their ears, which bursts the membrane in ear, which causes deafness among children,” she said and added that the parents must take care of the activities of their children. She said hearing ability of the people staying in high-noise environment might also affect. Besides, she said, continuous use of Aspirin might also cause deafness. Similarly, the diabetics might also lose hearing ability. “The delay in timely treatment of ear infection can also cause hearing impairment,” she added.

Saima Kausar, chairperson of Mass Communication Department, said private TV channels should allocate specific time for highlighting health issues in addition to news and entertainment for the benefit of the masses. She also called upon the NGOs to work more in health sector.

She urged the government to establish special health centers and schools for deaf people for their proper rehabilitation, adding that the government should also allocate a special quota in jobs for deaf people.