

# BUSINESS RECORDER

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NATIONAL NEWS

## Seminar on 'Network for Consumer Protection' held

### RECORDER REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The role of healthcare professionals is very important in a society as they are bridging link between the government and the general public. They are main implementers of the Breastfeeding ordinance in the healthcare facilities and act as effective monitors for the promotion and protection of Breastfeeding practices.

These were the views of the healthcare experts in a seminar on 'The Network for Consumer Protection' organised in PIMS on Wednesday, to sensitize the healthcare professionals to play their effective role in promoting and protecting breastfeeding. More than 150 countries worldwide are celebrating World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) from August 1-7 2009. The theme of World Breastfeeding Week for this year is "Breastfeeding - a vital emergency response. Are you ready?" It highlights the need to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in emergencies for infant and young child survival, health and development.

Executive Director, PIMS, Prof Mahmood Jamal, chief guest of the meeting, said that the indicators show that the rates of almost every healthcare issues including breastfeeding are coming down.

He said that this is the core responsibility of health professionals to show commitment to

address this serious issue. "How can we guide anyone else in society until we will improve our practices? We should be committed and set ourselves as role models for other to address this sensitive issue", he added.

Dr Sadia Assad, Programme Coordinator, TheNetwork while highlighting the objectives of the seminar said the role of healthcare professionals is very important and they are responsible to create awareness among people regarding the Breastfeeding and other health related issues.

Dr Tabish Hazir, Prof Paediatrics, PIMS highlighted the current Breastfeeding practices in Pakistan. "The exclusive breastfeeding rate in Pakistan is the lowest among South Asian region, which is 37.1 percent only. Whereas the rate of bottle-feeding is higher in Pakistan in South Asian region, which is 32.1 percent. These indications are very thought-provoking for the health professionals as this is our responsibility to create awareness and set ourselves as role model for others", he informed the participants of the seminar.

He said that World Breastfeeding Week will be a good opportunity to examine the status of the breastfeeding in Pakistan. All IYCF (Infant and Young Child Feeding Strategy) indicators in Pakistan are undeniably low and need to be

improved. There is a need of an integrated approach to IYCF communication from pregnancy to early infancy.

Dr Shahid Awan, a nutrition Officer, UNICEF, has given a brief presentation on 'Importance of BF and Emergency Response'.

He said that children are among the most vulnerable groups during emergencies, and infants are the most vulnerable of all, due to increased risk of death caused by diarrhea and pneumonia. During emergencies, uncontrolled donations of breast-milk substitutes may undermine breastfeeding and should be avoided. "We should provide shelter and privacy, adequate food, community support and adequate health services to the women for breastfeeding in emergency situations to promote breastfeeding practice", he added. Dr Salman Qazi, nutrition wing, elaborated that the 'Protection of Breastfeeding and Young Child Nutrition Ordinance' was promulgated in 2002, however, its guidelines and rules are yet to be approved. The delay in framing the rules has created issues related to non-compliance of the ordinance, he added.

Rubina Bhatti, Project Coordinator, TheNetwork for Consumer Protection at the end presented vote of thanks to the chief guest, speakers and healthcare professionals present at the session.