

CITY NEWS

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS

Thursday

August 6, 2009

Healthcare professionals have vital role in breastfeeding promotion

Islamabad

In order to sensitise the healthcare professionals to play their effective role in promoting and protecting breastfeeding, The Network for Consumer Protection organised a seminar here Wednesday at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

Executive Director PIMS Prof Mahmood Jamal, the chief guest of the meeting, said the indicators show that the rates of almost every healthcare issue including breastfeeding are coming down, adding that it is the core responsibility of health professionals to show their commitment in this regard, says a press release.

"How can we guide anyone else in society till the time we don't improve our practices? We should be committed and set ourselves as role models for others to address this sensitive issue," he said.

Dr Sadia Assad, Programme

Coordinator The Network for Consumer Protection, while highlighting the objectives of the meeting said the role of healthcare professionals is very important, as they are the bridging link between the government and the general public.

"They are the main implementers of the breastfeeding ordinance in healthcare facilities and act as effective monitors for the promotion and protection of breastfeeding practices," she said.

Prof Dr Tabish Hazir of Paediatrics Department PIMS, said the exclusive breastfeeding rate in the country at 37.1 per cent only is the lowest in the South Asian region whereas the rate of bottle-feeding is higher in Pakistan at 32.1 per cent as compared to other South Asian countries.

"These indications are very thought provoking for health professionals, as it is our responsibility to create awareness," he said and added that all

Infant & Young Child Feeding (IYCF) strategy indicators in Pakistan are undesirably 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, Nutrition Officer Unicef, in his brief presentation on the 'Importance of Breastfeeding & Emergency Response' said that children are amongst the vulnerable groups during emergencies, with infants being the most vulnerable of all due to the increased risk of death caused by diarrhoea and pneumonia.

During emergencies, uncontrolled donations of breast-milk substitutes might undermine breastfeeding and should be avoided, and added that we should provide shelter and privacy, adequate food, community support and adequate health services to women for breastfeeding in emergency situations to promote this practice.