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WORLD BRAIN DAY- BRAIN HEALTH FOR ALL

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World Brain Day is celebrated annually on July 22nd, and this year’s theme was “Brain Health for All”. In honor of World Brain Day, Aga Khan University, in collaboration with the World Federation of Neurology, hosted an international webinar moderated by Dr. Shafaq Saleem. Dr. Mohammad Wasay commenced the session by discussing the importance of WHO’s adoption of the Intersectoral Global Action Plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders. He discussed how significantly this 10-year action plan will improve neurological training, awareness, and advocacy. He explained how this webinar would unpack problems related to neurological care in different parts of the world and how neurological care and brain health could be improved across the globe.

Dr. Sara Khan spoke about neurological issues faced in Pakistan. She discussed the lack of awareness of neurological disorders. She focused on the need to train primary care physicians in remote areas how to perform neurological evaluations, recognize neurological problems and initiate treatment. Dr. Khan explained how there is a huge deficit of after-care, and emphasized the importance of establishing multidisciplinary rehabilitation centers. Following this, Dr. Akhtar Sherin discussed how the Pakistan Society of Neurology is committed to healthcare provision, education, advocacy, and community engagement and research. He stated that while Pakistan has a population of more than 220 million, there are only 400 neurologists—a ratio of one neurologist per 600,000 people. He believes there is a need to increase the number of neurology specialists, promote quality research, and raise awareness in schools and communities.

Dr. Wolfgang Griseold elaborated on the importance of brain health and the significance of the Intersectoral Global Action plan. It will help low and middle-income countries bring the topic of brain health to politicians. He stressed that prevention, progress, research, and innovation should be fostered.

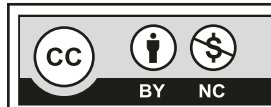
Dr. Philip Adebayo discussed the challenges of neurological care in Tanzania. He stated that Tanzania has a population of about 50 million with 13 practicing Neurologists concentrated in big cities. He explained how there is only one hospital that trains for neurology, with 3 trainees per year and therefore a huge lacking in neurological education. Accordingly, the main issues Tanzania is facing is lack of neurological man-power, a huge burden of disease, minimal neurological treatment access, and low accessibility of basic neurological medication. Thus, there is a need to raise awareness with the public and medical community, as well as NGOs about brain health. There is also a need to increase neurology specialists.

Dr. Dilraj Singh Sokhi spoke about Kenya’s neurological challenges. He quantified that there are only 18 neurologists in the country. He emphasized that neurological health needs more public awareness. Tele-neurology can be used but cannot replace the physical consult from a neuro-physician. He believes support from groups from WFN and AAN are important.

Dr. Zul Merali shared a global perspective regarding brain health. Brain and Mind institute of Aga Khan University is located in Karachi and Nairobi. Their mission is to advance brain health through collaborative research, education, and innovation in mental health and neuroscience.

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