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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Need Assessment and Availability of Psychiatric Services in Sialkot City: Clients' Perspectives

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**Abstract:** Mental health is an integral part of public health, yet psychiatric facilities face inadequate utilization and are often inconvenient. It is very important to understand the perceptions of clients in order to improve mental health care provision and identify deficiency in health care network in Sialkot. This qualitative study was undertaken in order to analyze the recognized need for psychiatric facilities and assess the quality and accessibility of present facilities in Sialkot City from the clients' insights. The study was carried out in Sialkot City, using qualitative descriptive design. Purposive sampling strategy was employed to choose 20 participants who had exposure of psychiatric Services. Data were collected by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was used for identifying patterns and themes within the qualitative data. Preliminary research discoveries recommend that culture-based perceptions and social stigma substantially affect the use of psychiatric services. Participants revealed a lack of understanding regarding existing services and showed fear regarding confidentiality. Hurdles to approaching to health care network contained deficiency of competent health care providers, therapeutic expenses, and insufficient transportation facilities are highlighted. Recommendations for bringing improvement comprised of integration of mental health facilities into primary health care network, training programs for mental health professionals, and community-based awareness campaigns.

**Keywords:** Psychiatric Services, Clients' Perceptions, Mental Health, Sialkot, Pakistan

## Introduction

Psychiatric services have important role in managing mental health challenges, which are extensively acknowledged as an important international health challenge. Mental health challenges such as drug addiction, anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia impact millions of individuals worldwide, and Pakistan is likewise impacted (Mubbashar et al., 2000). In recent times, there have been increasing concern regarding mental health requirements of the individuals in several urban and rural areas all over Pakistan, such as Sialkot City. In any case, in spite of this growing insight, there is inadequate research examining the mental health provision and accessibility, and clients' perceptions about these facilities in particular cities including Sialkot. It is industrial hub, where psychiatric services are inadequate in spite of the growing need of mental health care network.

Sialkot, a famous historical city in Pakistan with increasingly thriving population, encounters its own obstacles about mental health care provision. Estimated resident population of more than 500,000 individuals, requirements for mental health services have probably risen up. However, financial accessibility of such services, availability of skilled practitioners, and provision of expert mental health care network continue to imply uncertainties (Khan et al., 2013). The purpose of this study is to explore the requirement for psychiatric services in Sialkot City from clients; point of view, exploring elements, including standard of health care network, provision, and financial accessibility.

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The clients' perceptions about psychiatric services are important for exploring deficiency in the availability of facility and bringing improvement in the entire mental health network. Perceptions regarding mental health facilities can be affected by multiple factors, such as insight, cultural beliefs, and social stigma (Rathod et al., 2017). In Pakistan, social stigma about mental health continues an important hurdle to pursuing psychological support, with several people encountering unwillingness in achieving services as a result of cultural and social norms (Fayyaz et al., 2021). Grasping the clients' perceptions is necessary for customizing treatments that not only enhancing service provision but also decrease the hurdles that people encounter in pursuing psychiatric support.

Psychological disorders reveal an increasing public health challenge worldwide, with far-reaching personal, economic, and social impacts for people and communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that depression is major contributor to disability globally, impacting exceeding 264 million individuals (WHO, 2019). As mental health challenges rise in frequency and intricacy, the requirement for useful psychiatric services becomes more necessary. In countries including Pakistan, the situation is exacerbated by inadequate accessibility to mental health facility, limited insight, and prevalent social stigma involving mental well-being (Rathod et al., 2017). Mental health facility in Pakistan is primarily focused on urban facility centers, in spite of being prominent regional nodes, often face limited infrastructures and limited resources to fulfill the increasing need for mental health facilities (Khan et al., 2013). As reported by Kausar, et al. (2020) that patients visiting to the outdoor setting of Aziz Bhatti Shaheed Hospital, Gujrat reported the psychiatric disorders with severe symptoms.

Mental health care network has been progressing for long time, and there has been insufficient investment in mental health facilities in contrast to other health care sector (Fayyaz et al., 2021). Mental health facilities in Pakistan experience many issues, including limited infrastructure, lack of mental health care experts, and inadequate funds across the urban-rural spectrum (Khan et al., 2013). Mental health services are concentrated in main cities, with Sialkot, an important urban locality in the Punjab Province, facing the similar disparities in mental health service provision. Sialkot has been the site of population explosion and rapid urban development has not been paralleled by surge in psychiatric facilities or services (Nawaz et al., 2020). The mismatch between need for mental health facilities and their provision in Sialkot cause unsatisfied needs, often compelling people to pursuing psychological support and sources with limited credibility (Jabeen et al., 2021). There is an increasing trend in psychiatric disorders particularly depression is most prevalent in general population of Jalal Pur Jattan district Gujrat (kausar et al.2015).

Awareness regarding the perceptions of people who pursue psychiatric support is necessary for enhancing service provision and challenging the hurdles that hinders availability. In Pakistan, where mental health facilities continue to face considerable stigma, clients experience misunderstanding and fear regarding psychiatric services or facilities. Research have highlighted that negative perceptions involving mental wellbeing is important factor that hiders several people from pursuing psychological help (Fayyaz et al., 2021). In addition, societal factors, including community norms, religious belief, and family dynamics impact people' decisions to pursue psychiatric support. Clients 'perceptions of the efficacy, expenses and provision of mental health facilities affect their readiness to use those (Rathod et al., 2017).

The significance of assessing clients' perceptions is reinforced by the reality that experienced client care quality can directly shape service utilization patterns. For instance, clients who experience social exclusion or discomfort with psychiatric facilities they get may be less probable to consult for long term intervention or may refrain from pursuing help completely. Conversely, positive perceptions of mental health facilities can increase intervention compliance and motivate people to involve in prolonged mental health treatment (Thornicroft, 2006). As a result, awareness about perceptions is necessary not only for enhancing service provision but for tackling the core issue has leading to underutilization in regions liked Sialkot.

Mental well-being is a significant domain but often under valuated aspect of public health, specifically in low-and middle-income countries including Pakistan. The world Health Organization reports that mental well-being is not only the lack of mental health challenges but a condition of well-being in which people work productively, contribute to their communities, realize their competencies, and cope with stresses of normal life (WHO, 2022). In spite of this, mental health issues impact round about 1 in 4 individuals worldwide at some point in their lives (WHO, 2021), the burden of mental disorders is increasing in underdeveloped countries as result of inadequate health facilities, conflict, urban development and financial difficulties (Patel et al., 2018).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and examine both the requirement for psychiatric facilities and the provision of mental health network in Sialkot by means of qualitative research. Getting awareness about lived experiences of clients, local stakeholders, health professionals, and caregivers will give important understanding into the potential domains for improvement in mental health facilities in the area. A qualitative study is specifically appropriate for this research, as it enables for in-depth insight of systematic elements affecting approach to mental health network, economic and sociocultural factors (Tong et al., 2007). Eventually, this study aims to provide increasing number of regional findings that can intimate similar at-risk groups, mixing mental health facilities into basic health care networks in Sialkot, health care planners, and NGOs.

In Pakistan, approximate 10-16% of the individuals with some form of psychopathology, with anxiety disorders, and depression are most common (Gadit & Khalid, 2002). On the other hand, the provision of psychiatric facilities is utterly insufficient. As per World Health Organization's Health Guide (2020), Pakistan has lesser than 500 psychiatrists for individuals more than 220 million, and an overwhelmingly majority of these experts are based in main urban centers including Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore. This disparity leads to immediate necessity for focused mental well-being evaluations and long-term planning understudied territories including Sialkot, a main industrial city Punjab Province, Pakistan with individuals more than 900,000 (PBS, 2017).

Sialkot is famous for its participation in economic condition of Pakistan by means of surgical instrument manufacturing and sports goods. On the other hand, fast urban and industrial development in the city have also participated to enhancing family disruption, substance abuse, unemployment, and levels of social stress-all contributory factors for psychological disorder (Khan et al., 2020). But psychiatric facilities in Sialkot are scattered and underfunded, commonly confined to primary care providers with limited training regarding mental well-being or private medical practice unaffordable for economically vulnerable communities.

The situation is similarly troubling in trouble, where exceeding 240 million individuals live. According to existing information, approximately 10% to 35% people have some mental disorder, with schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety among the most common psychological problems (Mirza & Jenkins, 2004; Riaz et al., 2019). Mental health challenges are more worsened by natural calamities, terrorism, poverty, and political instability-elements which are often seen in Pakistani Society (Saeed et al., 2021).

Social stigma, deficiency in understanding, and inadequate coordination between mental health facilities and primary health care network maintains to limit utilization of effective and well-in time psychiatric facility (Husain et al., 2006).

Pakistan comes in the list of lower-middle income country, encounters huge restrictions in its mental health network. The country fixes merely approximately 0.4% of its health budget to mental well-being (WHO, 2020). There is strong disparity between psychiatrists and population namely 1:500,000, and even limited number of human resources deficiency, trained psychiatric nurses, and clinical psychologists is overwhelming

(Jooma et al., 2009). The legislation about mental well-being in Pakistan is historically vague and implementation, in spite of Mental Health Ordinance of 2001 (Dayani et al., 2024).

In Pakistan mental disorder and cultural setting is often experienced by means of paranormal and religious paradigms, like Jinn possession or heavenly retribution, which hinders people from pursuing psychiatric intervention (Karim et al., 2004). Several families preliminary consult spiritual leaders before going to mental health experts. These faiths are deeply ingrained in customary societies and can cause late diagnoses, inadequate interventions, and grave prognosis (Ameen & Lloyd, 2005).

### Rationale for the Study

In spite of the undeniable requirement, there is notable dearth of regional mental health data and needs of emerging cities, such as Sialkot. The majority of current research in Pakistan are mainly focused on major cities, including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi (Naeem et al., 2009).

This research demands to encounter this deficiency by carrying out a qualitative needs assessment of Psychiatric Services in Sialkot. A qualitative research design is specifically appropriate for this purpose as it permits for deeply examination of hurdles, perceptions, and experiences faced by clients, health care providers, and care providers. Employing semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, the purpose of this research is to convey the intricacies of mental health support in the city-understanding that quantitative data cannot show (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

These discoveries of the research will not only participate in academic insight of mental health in moderate-sized urban centers in Pakistan but also advise mental health institution administrators and policy makers on mechanisms to bring improvement in psychiatric services in equal socioeconomic set-ups.

### Research Problem

In spite of these issues, there has been inadequate study concentrated on assessing the particular requirements and perceptions of clients who pursue psychiatric support in Sialkot. Current studies often concentrate on general mental health challenges or mental health experts' viewpoints without delivering deep insight about experiences and needs of those who need more treatment. Therefore, this research pursues to explore the needs and availability of Psychiatric services in Sialkot City from the viewpoints of the clients who depend on these psychiatric facilities. This study will evaluate the deficiency between real needs for mental health care and the accessibility of services, while entertaining clients' satisfaction with the facilities they get. Moreover, it aims to explore any obstacles that resist people from pursuing support and the elements that impact their decision-making processes about psychiatric treatment.

### Research Questions

1. What do clients expect about the quality of Psychiatric Services in Sialkot?
2. To what extent do clients feel about that current Psychiatric Services in Sialkot fulfill their psychological and social needs?
3. What obstacle do clients face in reaching psychiatric facility center in Sialkot?
4. What are the perceived needs of mental health of clients' pursuing Psychiatric Services in Sialkot?
5. How do clients perceive the provision of Psychiatric services in Sialkot?

## Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to identify clients' perceptions of the need for psychiatric services and provision of these facilities.

### Assessment of Need

The assessment of need is a systematic procedure for examining preferences and requirements of particular people (Stevens & Hall,2017). In the light of psychiatric services, assessment of need can support exploring

deficiencies in the availability of services, awareness about spread of mental health problems, and focus on psychological treatments (Anderson et al., 2018). Clients' perceptions can have significant role in need assessment, as they give beneficial understanding about perceived experiences and unfulfilled requirements (Bee et., 2019). Assessment of need is important aspect of health care network and provision of service. It contains exploring the requirements of individuals and focus on treatments to fulfill those requirements (Stevens & Gillam, 1998). In the view of psychiatric services, assessment of need can support exploring deficiencies in availability of service and developing effective treatments.

### Clients' Perceptions regarding Psychiatric Services

Research by Anderson et al., showed that clients having anxiety and depression experienced need for user-friendly services. Research revealed that clients suffering from severe psychological disorder experienced a need for more psychological help with employment, social relations, and everyday life functioning (Bee et al.,2019). A study has revealed that clients' perception about psychiatric services are impacted by multiple elements, such as therapeutic relations, provision, and standard treatment system (Johansson & Eklund, 2003).

### Provision of Psychiatric Services

A study has revealed that people with mental health challenges often encounter obstacles to approaching psychiatric services, such as social stigma, limited transportation system, and long appointment (Clemen et al.,2015). Research showed that clients with psychiatric problems experienced a need for enhanced service availability (Lo et al., 2020). The provision of psychiatric services changes extensively based on cultural setting, health care network, and area (World Health Organization, 2018).

### Deficiency in Availability of Service

Research has explored many deficiencies in availability of service, such as inadequate provision of evidence-based treatments, limited approach to particular services, and limited psychological support for caregivers and families (Mueser et al., 2013). Deficiencies in Service availability can have important findings for people with psychological problems, such as decreased life standard, delay in provision of intervention, and enhanced symptoms of psychological issues (Kesssler et al., 2003).

### Prevalence of Mental Disorders

Psychological disorders are very common globally, with an approximate 450 million population have psychological or neurological problems (World Health Organization, 2001). Research revealed that round about 26 % of adults in America encounter a psychological problem in a given year (Kessler et al., 2005).

### Client-Centered Intervention

Client-centered intervention is an important component of effective psychiatric facilities. Research discovered that client-centered intervention can enhance client gratification and results in psychiatric systems (Lawn et al., 2016).

### Efficacy of Psychiatric Services

The efficacy of psychiatric services has been assessed in various studies. Research showed that psychiatric services can be efficacious in decreasing symptoms and enhancing activities in people suffering from psychological disorders (Andrews et al., 2018).

### Hurdles to consulting Psychiatric Services

In spite of the significance of psychiatric services, many people encounter obstacles to consult these facilities. A study revealed that experienced need for intervention, social stigma, and limited approach to psychiatric services were important hurdles to pursuing psychological intervention (Mojtabai et al., 2011).

## Research Methodology

The research methodology comprises of research design, sampling technique, instrumentation used for data collection and brief description of data analysis technique for the existing research enquiry. This researcher used a qualitative research design, employing phenomenological approach to identify clients' lived experiences and perspectives. Purposive sampling strategy was employed to recruit participants having experience of psychiatric services. Participants were recruited from hospitals and mental health institutions in Sialkot city. Semi-structured interviews were done with research participants in order to examine their perspectives and experiences. Thematic analysis was employed for data analysis. Codes and themes were explored, and patterns and relations were examined. All ethical considerations were followed pertaining to research and publications.

## Results and Discussion

### Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=20)*

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 12 | 60% |
| Female | 08 | 40% |
| Educational Level | | |
| High School | 05 | 25% |
| College-graduate | 15 | 75% |

### Table 2

*Main Themes and Sub-themes*

| Themes | Sub-themes | Participants | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Attitude and Stigma | ▸ Fear of labelling<br>▸ Community Misconception<br>▸ Family Hindrance | 15 | My family members said going to Psychiatrist is very shameful. |
| Accessibility and Affordability | ▸ Long appointment times<br>▸ Expensive Private Treatment<br>Conveyance Issues | 12 | Even if Dr. is competent, we cannot afford psychological intervention. |
| Quality of Service | ▸ Medication Attention<br>▸ Lack of Expert Psychiatrists<br>▸ Poor Clients Communication | 10 | Doctors do not listen; they just prescribe medications |
| Availability of Services | ▸ Rural-Urban Distance<br>▸ Limited Private Center<br>▸ Few Govt. Centers | 18 | There is only one hospital that is full daily |
| Perceived Need for Psychiatric Care | ▸ Limited Insights<br>▸ Arising Psychological Problems<br>▸ Increase in Anxiety and Stress | 14 | People do not understand the need of psychological help, until it is too late |

The research findings reveal significant deficiencies in both availability and perceptions of Psychiatric Service in Sialkot City. This discussion reveals the results, deriving from previous study, to share an in-depth insight regarding factors affecting need assessment and availability of psychiatric services in Sialkot City.

### Social Attitude and Stigma

The social attitude and stigma are big challenge about psychological disorder that was shown by 15 participants. Family members, spirituality, and misunderstanding play important role in delay in pursuing psychological intervention. These cultural hindrances cannot be ignored they must be addressed.

### Accessibility and Affordability

In Government-run hospital, the psychiatric ward is overcrowded, limited consultation slots, and long wait times. The 12 participants described how they would reach early in the morning but cannot see psychiatrist because of poor administration and time bound system. This tradition does not only impact the standard of treatment services but also affect future visits.

### Quality of Service

The client dissatisfaction with psychiatric services reveals a systematic challenge with the standard of psychological service. Some health professionals are very emphatic and competent, their competency is confined by lack of medical assistants, time bound system, and high clients' burden. Reports of brief examinations, biomedical intervention without psychotherapy that ignores psychosocial aspects of psychological disorder. This discovery recommends a requirement for multidisciplinary approach, including counsellors, psychologists, and social workers. It also demands concentration to the need for supervision for mental health workers and professional development, so that intervention is not only efficacious clinical point of view.

### Availability of Hospitals

The provision of psychiatric services in Sialkot City are the matter of increasing concern, particularly in view of increasing mental health issues perceived both at local and world level. Sialkot, as rapidly growing region in Pakistan, has made progress in general health care network, but mental health care system is not so much focused. By means of exploring clients' perceptions, it is very clear that the psychiatric care health network in Sialkot is considered inadequate in term of provision and quality.

### Perceived Need for Psychiatric Care

The provision of mental health resources, social attitudes, and individual experiences shape perceived requirement for Psychiatric services in Sialkot City. The understanding about mental health slowly increases in Pakistan, specifically in cities like Sialkot. Many individuals are starting to confess mental health challenges as a curable and genuine problems. The demand for psychiatric services is still not fully fulfilled, and the perceived need is often suppressed, underestimated, and misinterpreted as a result of multiple obstacles.

## Conclusion

This qualitative research investigated the clients' perceptions about adequacy and provision of Psychiatric services in Sialkot City. The discoveries of the research reveal an important deficiency between the facilities presently existing and mental health requirements to tackle them. Participants persistently documented deficiency of psychiatric facilities, inadequate provision of skilled experts, and social stigma related with pursuing mental health support. In several cases, general practitioners and basic health care providers were initial point of contact for mental health challenges, because of deficiency of expert specialized psychiatric facilities.

Additionally, the research highlighted that current psychiatric services are not only inadequate in strength but are also focused on particular urban regions, making it hard for people from rural areas to approach health care facility. Participants also raised issues about the standard of intervention provided, long appointments, and provision of health services. A large number of participants highlighted deficiency of holistic interventions and culturally responsive strategies, causing detachment and displeasure with the structured psychiatric services.

This research determines that when there is an increasing perception of mental health challenges among the people of Sialkot, the available network and facilities are inadequate to fulfill the requirements of the

society. There is a precise and immediate requirement for public awareness efforts, resource planning, and intervention strategies to increase mental health care network in the city.

## Limitations

In spite of important exploration, the research has some shorting coming and limitations that must be focused in future research. The concentration of this study is only on Sialkot City, which means the findings may not applied to the situation in other districts or areas of Pakistan. Mental health network provision can differ extensively in other areas. Participants may have involuntarily misunderstood their experiences because of the want to represent themselves in socially desirable way and forgetfulness, specifically given the social stigma affecting mental well-being. The research concentrated only on clients' perceptions, neglecting viewpoints from other important parties, including caregivers, policymakers, and mental health experts, which can provide wider insight about psychiatric service.

## Recommendations

Relying on the findings of research and recognized deficiencies, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Partnership among private sector, Government, and NGOs can enhance resources, extend service coverage, and modernity in service provision.
- Mental Health Professionals should be imparted training to offer culturally competent, holistic and respectful competent treatment service that identifies clients lived personal contexts and experiences.
- Continuous monitoring of mental health services, along with client feedback mechanisms, should be institutionalized to ensure quality assurance and responsiveness to community needs.
- Constant evaluation of mental health facilities with client's responses should be established to ensure quality assurance and adaptable community requirements.
- The Provincial Government of the Punjab and Federal Government of Pakistan should give preference to mental well-being of the Public within their agenda. A well-supported and well-funded mental health policy is required to advise evaluation, rule, and provision of service.
- Enhancing the strength of highly skilled clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, and psychiatric nurses is necessary. Investment in continued professional development and education is also proposed.
- There is pressing need of building up more psychiatric services providing institutions, such as inpatient department and outpatient department all over Sialkot.
- Mental health services should be consolidated into the current basic healthcare system to permit early diagnosis, basic intervention and suitable recommendations, particularly in areas with no special facilities.
- Public education campaign should initiate to clarify mental health conditions and decrease social stigma. These initiatives should be culturally adapted and carried out in local languages to enhance their influence.

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