



Allied health degrees in Pakistan: opportunity or uncertain promise?

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Dear Editor

In recent years, universities across Pakistan have started offering an increasing number of Allied Health Sciences programs.¹ While these programs appear promising, an important question remains: what is the future of the growing number of graduates produced each year?

A large proportion of students enrolling in these programs are those who could not secure admission in public sector medical colleges of Pakistan. At the same time, they are unable to afford the high fees of private-sector medical colleges. As a result, allied health sciences programs appear to be the only viable option for many families. Universities promote these degrees as attractive career paths, but the realities of the job market are often not discussed openly with students before admission decisions are made.

Unfortunately, the employment opportunities for many allied health graduates in Pakistan remain limited. Government hospitals offer only a small number of

positions, and the private sector is not expanding quickly enough to absorb the increasing number of graduates. Consequently, many young professionals struggle to find stable employment even after spending several years and significant financial resources on their education. Some people suggest that graduates can seek employment opportunities abroad. However, this option is not practical for everyone. The visa process, licensing exams, and relocation costs can be both expensive and challenging.² Not every graduate has the financial capacity to pursue this route. Similarly, obtaining scholarships for higher education in leading international universities is highly competitive and cannot be considered a realistic solution for most graduates.

This situation raises an important policy question. Should universities continue to expand allied health sciences programs without considering the capacity of the job market? It may be time for regulatory bodies, universities, healthcare institutions, and

policymakers to work together to assess workforce needs and guide students more responsibly. We hope this letter encourages constructive discussion and practical solutions from academics, healthcare administrators, and policymakers on how to secure a better future for allied health sciences graduates in Pakistan.

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