

Letter to the  
Editor

## Term Back / Detention Policy Revision Measures in Academic Medical and Allied Institutions of Pakistan in the Covid-19 Epidemic for the Session 2019-2020

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### Author's Contribution

<sup>1,2</sup> Conception of study

<sup>1</sup> Experimentation/Study conduction

<sup>1</sup> Analysis/Interpretation/Discussion

<sup>1,2</sup> Manuscript Writing

<sup>3</sup> Critical Review

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### Introduction

The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) is the body concerned for the medical and dental education in Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> The council was dissolved by an order of the President of Pakistan in October 2019,<sup>2</sup> but the order was revoked by the decision of the High Court of Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> According to the PM&DC return/detention policy, a medical student has two chances of exam for his promotion in the next academic class and if one of the students could not pass the two chances provided in at least one of his subjects, the student must pass the exam in 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt with loss of his/her academic year and must pursue medical studies with the junior class. If one of these students could not pass this or these subjects by exceeding the 3<sup>rd</sup> chance, the conceded institution offers the 4<sup>th</sup> and last opportunity to the student.<sup>1</sup> If the student still cannot pass the subject in 4<sup>th</sup> and last opportunity, he is expelled from the establishment with the cancellation of his admission, and the dreams of such a student to become a doctor are fulfilled until he will only be readmitted upon reappearing in the PM&DC competitive entrance test. But due to the sudden and unexpected outbreak of COVID-19, the

medical community was the most affected. In some countries, more death rates have been reported among physicians who performed COVID-19 patient care tasks.<sup>4</sup> Due to the lockdown policy of Govt. of Pakistan across the country, academic medical institutions were closed as a result of academic months of medical and dental students have also been wasted like other academic fields. The lockdown has been continued and we expect further academic waste from these students. The Pakistan Higher Education Commission has asked for conducting online courses for these students, but the clinical subjects of medical students cannot be taught online as they require direct clinical exposure to patients for the transmission of learning. required. Therefore, as a result of COVID-19, there is expected to be a waste of courses from almost all students across the country. However, in such circumstances, detained / term-back students will suffer a greater and irreparable waste of time as there may be many other technical difficulties regarding the continuation of medical education and the examinations of these students due to the COVID-19 disaster. Therefore, it may be good to revise the Term-Back / Detain policy for these medical, dental, and related students. The authors made the following

suggestions for the PM&DC and the institutions to consider this review.

1. To Revise once the Term-Back / detention policy for the period 2019-2020 by allowing students to continue academic promotion during the next academic year with a unique relaxation in the policy.
2. Students who have not passed four chances and who are expelled from the establishment can be relaxed to have an additional chance to continue their medical studies, applicable for the year 2019-2020.
3. Relaxations are similar to those mentioned in the serial number. 1 and 2 for other courses such as Pharm-D, Bachelor of Nursing, etc.

Health workers are the main force in the fight against COVID-19 in the exercise of their functions to manage the patients of COVID-19. Mortality rates among healthcare providers have also been reported due to high viral load. There may be a shortage of health care providers around the world. Therefore, facilitation attempts are necessary to help the bona fide medical profession maintain their numbers and needs in the health sectors and to meet the future needs of the world for these health workers. Consequently, in implementing the suggestions of the authors, hundreds to thousands of health professionals and paramedical services will be able to save and secure their future in the service of the sacred mission of saving and serving the sick community.

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