

URGENT CALL TO COMBAT THE HEPATITIS C EPIDEMIC IN PAKISTAN



Chairman Message

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The Hepatitis C crisis in Pakistan is reaching critical levels, with an alarming 400,000 new cases reported annually. An immediate and comprehensive action to address this pressing public health concern is needed.

The current efforts by The Hepatitis Foundation (THF) are commendable, screening approximately 200,000 individuals and treating 6,000 patients each year. However, these numbers represent only a fraction of what is required. To address the issue, we must implement a nationwide awareness and screening program, including a rapid initial test followed by PCR test and treatment if needed.

Preempting losses

The cost of treating a Hepatitis C-positive patient (around PKR 30,000) is equivalent to one month's minimum wage. Left untreated, these individuals face a significant loss of productive years, often 10 years or more, during which they could have contributed significantly to our economy and the support of their families. This results in a financial loss of over 3,000,000 rupees per patient over a decade, not to mention the human suffering and increased healthcare costs due to potential cancer cases.

Political will necessary

Our primary objective must be to significantly expand screening efforts and eliminate Hepatitis C from Pakistan. Achieving this goal requires unwavering political commitment at both federal and provincial levels. We need a system similar to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) used during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial step should be screening the entire population giving priority to the most severely affected areas followed by treatment of those infected. Ultimately, our aim is to reduce the prevalence rate from 5-7% to below 1%.

Resource allocation

It is encouraging to see the Federal and Provincial Governments taking this matter seriously and allocating resources, as evident at the 23rd Annual Congress of the Pakistan Society of Hepatology in Karachi. Prominent national and international hepatologists emphasized the need for swift action to prevent a healthcare catastrophe.

We can draw inspiration from Egypt's success in combating Hepatitis C, where the president led a comprehensive awareness and screening campaign tracking positive patients on a national database and treating them. Egypt, once facing the world's highest Hepatitis C incidence, effectively controlled the disease.

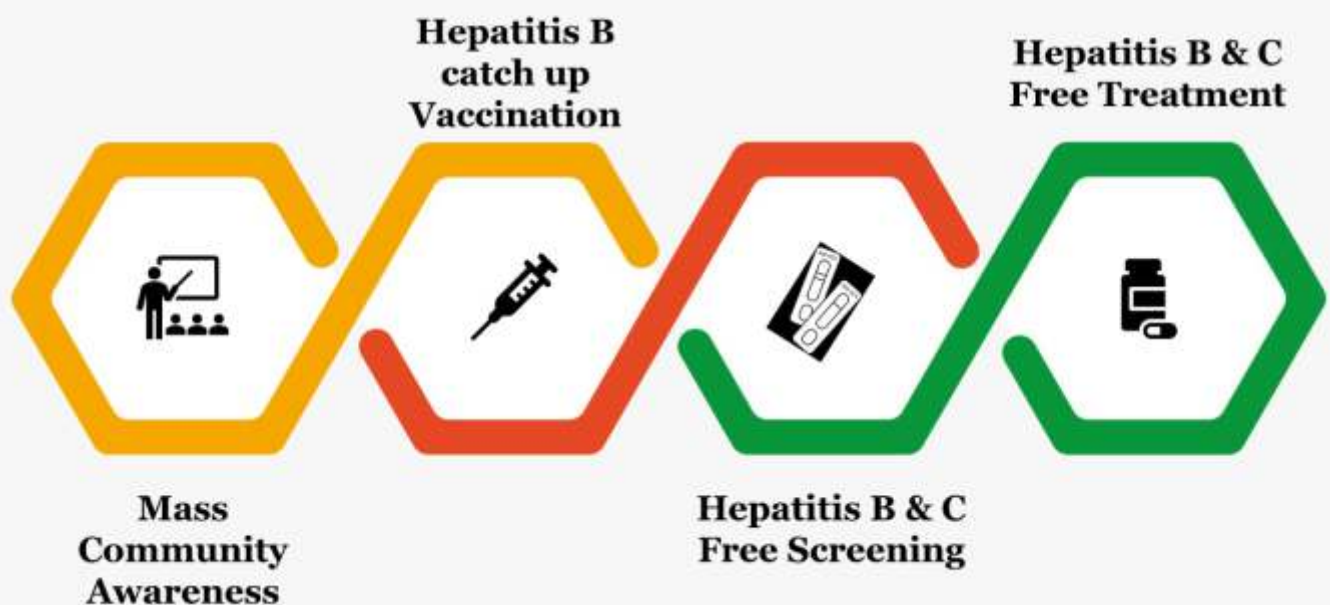
Swift, decisive action imperative

In conclusion, we are at a pivotal moment. Swift, decisive action is imperative to combat the Hepatitis C epidemic in Pakistan. With united efforts and a well-defined strategy, we can eliminate this scourge from our society. I urge you to consider this matter seriously and support initiatives aimed at eradicating Hepatitis C from our nation.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of our people.

Dr. Farid Khan

THF Hepatitis-Free Community Model





1 MILLION+



Individuals have been made aware of Hepatitis.

600,000+



People have been screened for detection of the Hepatis Virus.

480,000+



Individuals have received all three doses of the Hepatis B Vaccine.

30,000



Hepatitis Patients have been completely cured, with another 2,000 patients currently undergoing treatment.



GOOD SAMARITANS

The Health Foundation, popularly referred to as THF, styles itself as an independent social welfare organization committed to social change and striving to bring an improvement in the quality of life of the people through better health. THF is a not-for-profit public service organization registered under section 42 of the companies' ordinance 1984. It comprises a group of like-minded individuals concerned about the general health of less privileged people subsisting on very limited incomes in Pakistan.

At the nucleus of The Health Foundation are successful entrepreneurs, experienced physicians of great repute, media and advertising personnel, and those who have established a name for themselves in social work. Each brings to this noble endeavor a heightened social consciousness, and a wealth of experience in diverse fields. By working together for a common objective in the realms of the public good, these good Samaritans bring a passion to the purpose so necessary in the surmounting of seemingly hopeless odds.

THF has flagged as priorities the broad dissemination of awareness aimed at disease prevention, and the management of viral hepatitis in the general public in all social strata, particularly low income groups. Out of the five types of Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E), Hepatitis C and B have the highest mortality.

They say that offense is the best defense, so becoming proactive and getting to the disease before it strikes requires playing the ball on the front foot as they say in cricket. Protection through prevention is a crucial aspect of this mass awareness effort undertaken by THF. Alongside with awareness, THF also addresses the treatment of those who suffer from the consequences of chronic infection.

THF Fundraiser March 2023

TANYA WELLS

mesmerizes over 300 THF well-wishers

The internationally acclaimed *Ghazal* and *Sufi* poetry singer Tanya Wells performed for The Health Foundation's fundraising *Ghazal* Night, and enthralled the audience with a lively performance, the proceeds from which are earmarked for the treatment of deserving hepatitis patients across Pakistan.

Honorary Karachiite!

Storytelling infused with spirituality is the hallmark of Tanya Wells' compositions, an eclectic blend of Western music with influences from around the world. She has returned time and again to Karachi to help raise funds for the herculean task that THF has assumed, that of combating hepatitis, what with Pakistan having achieved the dubious distinction of the world's most hepatitis infected country, ahead of Egypt.

In tribute to Tanya Wells' altruism, we probe deeper into this unique phenomenon that has dedicated her life to bridging the Eastern and Western civilizations, using her vocal genius as glue. In this exploration our job was made infinitely easier thanks to an interview she gave the Khabar e-zine's Niraj Sharma back in December 2018, with photos courtesy Ahsan Saeed.





Perfect Urdu diction

A Caucasian woman is usually not what comes to mind when we think of a ghazal artist. This Anglo-Swiss singer, however, with her perfect Urdu diction and moving voice, can hold her own amongst the best of contemporary ghazal exponents. And yet, she is quick to point out, her music extends well beyond ghazals.

Storytelling infused with spirituality is the hallmark of Tanya Wells' compositions, an eclectic blend of Western music with influences from around the world. The novelty of seeing a striking Caucasian woman singing ghazals soon gives way to the awe of her sheer talent for this art form—the perfect Urdu diction, the characteristic lilts and inflections of ghazals, and of course the soulful voice.

Aaj jaane ki zid na karo
 Yun hi pehlu mein baithe raho
 Aaj jaane ki zid na karo
 Hai mar jaayenge, hum toh lut jaayenge
 Aisi baatein kiya na karo
 Aaj jaane ki zid na karo...

Pure stage magic

As the plaintive lyrics of this popular Farida Khanum *ghazal* waft across the concert hall, the London-born Tanya Wells' delicate features, framed by blonde hair cascading over a silk *kurta* are pure stage magic—but it's her chaste Urdu and the emotion-laden voice that leave listeners spellbound and yearning for more.

Her flexible vocal style has given her opportunities to perform with world-renowned artistes such as sitarist Anoushka Shankar (Cannes Film Festival 2014), soul singer Joss Stone (Mama Stones 2013), and Arabic vocalist Natacha Atlas (Ronnie Scotts 2016), as well as lay down vocals for award-winning film composers such as A. R. Rahman and Nitin Sawhney.

Bringing cultures together

With a double Masters (with distinction) in International Performance Research, Tanya now embraces the practical side of bringing cultures together to tell stories through music. Seven Eyes, the band she co-founded with her husband, Brazilian guitarist Paulo Vinicius creates “world music,” inspired by a host of diverse cultural influences.

The secret of Tanya's versatility and her complete ease with Eastern cultural traditions goes back to her childhood during which she was educated with her sisters at an international school in Dharamshala (Himachal Pradesh) where she was surrounded by some spiritual grounding.

Every morning we would wake up and go to meditation. We would learn about the different religions. We would learn about the prophets, the different gurus from different religions. We were growing up in quite a spiritually integrated climate where we could appreciate many different religions.” Besides regular school subjects, there was Kuchipudi dance, bhajan singing, and listening to qawalis, a wide and happy exposure to Indian culture that Tanya imbibed in the organic way of young children.

Return to roots

The turning point came during her late teens, some years after she had returned to England, when these early experiences converged to become her life's passion. A cousin's recommendation took Tanya back to India, to Vaitarna, Thane district, near Mumbai for a brief course in Hindustani Classical Music and Music Therapy.

“It just blew my world,” she reminisces. “It showed me how music is so interconnected to one's own self. It was teaching me the subtleties of raag and chakras, how we can be subtly impacted by music. I was learning Sanskrit shlokas and classical bandish, and also getting some understanding of light classical music like thumri. I was hooked.”

Passionate pursuits

She returned to England to join Warwick University where she was majoring in the performing arts. But the desire to pursue Hindustani music burned strong. Tanya found a teacher in Leicester, Tofa H. Ahmed, who helped her continue her practice and pursue her passion for music. What started as a hobby grew into something deeper. “I would drive up and do my riyaz and then come back and just listen, listen, listen. It was with this listening that my awareness of different types of music [expanded]. Because with classical music, it's all raag based which is absolutely wonderful, but I was also interested in the mixing of raags, and this is where ghazals come in. Because ghazals are considered light classical, so you can bring in a raag but then you can change its color by introducing a different raag.”

After graduating, Tanya headed back to India to study music under Pandit Prabhakar Dhakde of Nagpur whom she considers her guru. “He introduced me to ghazals, some of his own compositions. And that's when I started listening to Mehdi Hasan saheb and Shobha Gurtu and many singers from the Indian subcontinent who sing this type of music. And that also was interesting to me, and I started listening to more.... it all comes with listening,” says Tanya.

Avoiding stereotyping

While ghazals came to her naturally, Tanya is wary of being slotted as a ghazal singer. “I don't want to be put in a box, no,” she says firmly. “I'm a singer, and the way that I approach my job as a singer is a bit like an actor. My job is to interpret and to tell the story, that's my role. So, of course, if I'm singing a ghazal I need to tell the listener the story of the poetry. [But] I don't necessarily consider myself a ghazal singer in that sense.”

Born multitasker

Storytelling infused with spirituality is the hallmark of the world music of Tanya and her husband, Brazilian guitarist Paulo Vinicius. For this talented singer and songwriter, performances and composing her own music isn't the end of her journey. She's a born multitasker and a lover of all the arts. Painting is another outlet for her creative spirit.

“I studied Indian miniature painting. There are so many beautiful ornamented patterns that you see in Indian art.” Speaking more about her painting, she says she does commissioned work. “I've just done one recently on Shujaat Khan playing the sitar.” And if that's not enough, Tanya enjoys another creative activity—cooking! While she's a dab hand at Indian basics like rice, dal and sabzis, Brazilian cooking is now a new space to explore.

Ladies & Gentlemen! Please welcome, TANYA WELLS!

Help THF & Make a Hepatitis Free Pakistan!

Donate through:

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Titled "The Health Foundation"

THF Head Office :

First Floor, C-10/D Street 1, Badar Commercial,
DHA Phase V, Karachi, Sindh - 75500.
Contact 021-37443616

THF Punjab Office :

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital Mozang Road,
OPD Gate No. 5, PMRC Building,
Room No. 3, 2nd Floor, Lahore.
Contact: 0335-4997514

For cheque or cash pick up:

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☎ 0300-0555021

 facebook.com/THFPK

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 communication@thehealthfoundation.org

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