

## Médecins Sans Frontières Expands Medical Care of Cutaneous Leishmaniasis through Satellite Clinic in Badhabher, Peshawar

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**Peshawar:** Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders has established a satellite clinic at Rural Health Centre (RHC) Badhabher to expand medical care of cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) in Peshawar district. The satellite clinic was set up in collaboration with the health department Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to reach out to the infected and vulnerable people and increase diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

Cutaneous leishmaniasis is caused by a parasite transmitted by the bite of an infected female phlebotomine sandfly. The disease appears in the form of a small lesion and, if not treated, can cause severe physical disfigurement. It is not life-threatening but may expose patients to stigma and discrimination in their community. Cutaneous leishmaniasis is one of the main tropical diseases in Pakistan.

The new satellite clinic is designed to provide treatment to infected people in the outskirts of Peshawar. The clinic at RHC Badhabher will receive patients who are diagnosed at MSF's cutaneous leishmaniasis clinic in the Government Naseerullah Khan Baber Memorial Hospital (GNKBMH).

The treatment of cutaneous leishmaniasis requires a daily or biweekly injection during three to eight weeks, depending on the severity. In the past, MSF has seen patients not completing their treatment as travelling long hours every day is difficult and expensive for them. The satellite clinic at RHC Badhabher allows patients to continue treatment close to their communities. MSF plans to open one other satellite clinic in BHU Tellaband later this year. Diagnosis and treatment of CL at MSF's facilities are free of charge for patients.

Delphine Convert, MSF's project coordinator in Peshawar, says 'The satellite clinics are part of the extended support to the health department to improve access of the community to free specialized Cutaneous Leishmaniasis (CL) care in Peshawar district. The clinics will help to counter the burden of increasing cases in the district. "

A team of health promoters from MSF will raise awareness about the prevention and treatment of the disease in vulnerable communities. In 2020, MSF has screened 4,988 patients of CL and 3,363 patients started on treatment for CL. We have treated over 4,900 patients in Pakistan last year, out of which 1,583 were treated at Peshawar and Bannu treatment centres.

MSF has been providing diagnostic and treatment facilities for CL at GNKBMH in Peshawar since 2018 and in District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital in Bannu since 2020 in collaboration with the health department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The facilities at GNKBMH and DHQ hospital Bannu include a laboratory for microscopic diagnosis of CL and a treatment centre, where patients receive medical treatment, wound dressing and health awareness education.

**About MSF**

*Médecins Sans Frontières is an international medical humanitarian association that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters and exclusion from healthcare. MSF first started working in Pakistan in 1986, and now provides urgently needed quality medical care to people in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces. MSF works in collaboration with the health authorities in the country and its activities in Pakistan are funded solely by private donations, with no institutional or government contributions.*

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