

## **Interventional cardiology at Sheikh Zayed Medical College Rahim Yar Khan** **“An Oasis in a Desert”**

Rahim Yar Khan is one of the major districts of Punjab bounded by two major provinces and a gate way to Cholistan desert, it is located at the crux of Pakistan. It's namesake Rahim Yar Khan City, through its prominent and esteemed tertiary care Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital (SZMC/H), serves a vast majority encompassing the urban of RYK City and the multiple adjacent rural establishments. Patients from Upper Sindh and East Balochistan frequently visit SZMC/H for medical care. As with other specialities, there is an immense load of cardiac diseases in our general population. To cater to the needs of ailing humanity, cardiology units work around the clock to assure quality care of the patients. Approximately 35,839 patients visit cardiology out patient department and 13,793 attend the emergency unit annually, with an estimated turn-over of 8 patients/ day and a bed occupancy of 92%.

Cardiac catheterization and intervention is one of the greatest successes of man in the battle against ischemic cardiac disease and subsequent fatality. Coronary artery disease is the leading cause of death globally. Timely institution of one piece of metal to recannulize an occluded artery can mean the difference between life and death for some! The role of coronary angiogram in delineating the anatomy of the coronary arteries and its subsequent role in patient management is unrefutable. Worldwide, Primary Coronary Intervention is now considered the first line treatment in the management of Acute Myocardial Infarction, as it has a marked mortality benefit over the other treatment modalities!

It is for this reason that recently Cardiac Catheterization & Coronary Angiography laboratory has been established at Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan. This is a great achievement for us, as prior to this, many poor patients with limited means were unable to fortune off this procedure. Within six months, more than 500 diagnostic coronary angiograms have been performed and percutaneous coronary interventions initiated. Majority of the patients seeking medical care in SZMC/H cannot afford the expenses rendered in “larger” cities. Up until now, coronary interventional procedures were mostly only available in these so-called “larger” cities and many deserving patients would die because of lack of funds, non affordability, traveling distances, and long waiting lists. The availability of this facility will provide door step to modern management of coronary artery disease in this rural area, as this facility is provided almost free of cost. Many countless valuable lives can now be saved, which would otherwise have been robbed of the beauty of life!

Cardiac surgery is also rapidly on the way to become a reality at SZMC. It will further strengthen interventional cardiology with back up support. Infrastructure and training of staff for cardiac surgery is in its final stages. Hopefully it will act as a center of excellence in cardiology for patients belonging to remote districts of Punjab, Sindh & Bolochistan.

It is through the sheer hardwork, effort and determination of the cardiology team and SZMC/H administration that this dream could be realized. We are grateful to Prof. Dr. Mohammed Saeed, (Principal, SZMC) whose dynamic personality, strong motivation and constant efforts have played a pivotal role in making interventional cardiology a ground reality at Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital Rahim Yar Khan. The establishment of a cardiac catheterization laboratory & coronary angiography unit in this major, but seemingly overlooked district is like “an oasis in a desert” for poor cardiac patients!

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