

### A case of deplorable healthcare

BR RESEARCH (January 04, 2013) : If you thought target killings and bomb blasts were the only proof of the cheap value of human lives in Pakistan, theres another graver competitor for these two - poor healthcare. 2012 saw two key issues surge up in the country, putting to shame the efficacy of health-related policies and measures as observed (or not) here. The first one, that keeps surging again and again, is that of fake medicines. A oxic cough syrup killed 16 in Lahore last November, making people wary of using an otherwise not-so-potent potion. Its another thing that the syrup was consumed by drug addicts who use it to get high, but by no means does that mellow the fact that a cough syrup killed 16 people. Earlier last year, 120 people lost their lives to a fake medicine for heart patients, making many hold back the thought of getting treated for a cardiac disease. Who can you blame for the utter negligence as far as the pervasive use of counterfeit drugs goes? Is it the lack of intellectual property rights and the poor legislation when it comes to counterfeiting drugs? Or is it sheer negligence and oblivious attitude of policymakers? Next highlighting the deplorable health status of the nation is the astonishing outbreak of measles in the country, particularly in Sindh as the nation bid farewell to 2012. "A spokeswoman for the World Health Organisation, Maryam Yunus, said that 306 children died in Pakistan of measles in 2012, compared to 64 the year before...Provincial Health Minister Saghir Ahmed said 100 children died in Sindh province in December alone, mostly in areas where many people were not vaccinated," the Washington Post quoted a story by the Associated Press. While awareness regarding the necessity of vaccinating against life threatening and crippling diseases, attacks on volunteers and health workers are a brutal reality, threatening to perpetuate diseases like polio that have been wiped out globally. And lets not forget the death of philanthropy in kind, as many will be wary of participating in charity campaigns for fear of losing their lives. All in all, another year has drawn to a close, with just additions to the miserable condition of healthcare and nothing concrete being done about it.