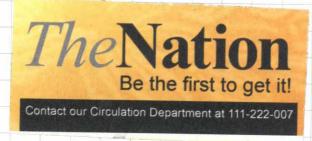
## CONSUMER REPORT

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Pakistan is witnessing an alarming increase in psychic and mental disorders among citizens and the drug menufacturing compared to drug menufacturing compar nies are capitalising on this sitceding huge monetary losses in 1.36 billion (\$23.18 million) (an quackery. purchasing such drugs.

treating the patients with men- ures in context, the Gross Do- addicts in Pakistan. tal and psychiatric disorders mestic Product of Pakistan is Suicide rates have increased majority of psychiatrists are ur-

3 billion. For only one year (July people have to resort to gener- another 1-3pc of the population. ined at undergraduate level, county without a health care cal practice or drug prescribing tives is for the pharmaceutical tional policies limiting direct 2003 to June 2004) the sales stood at Rs 2.76 billion (\$46.77 million). of mental and psychic diseases. of the government's annual cians with poor diagnostic and

## uation by introducing expansive were worth Rs 821.17 million even without prescriptions. The not have a separate budget. atric corders. drugs, which serve only doctors (\$13.4 million) (an increase of patients who could not afford There is no health insurance and

The situation further aggra- spectively from the previous

vates in the absence of effective year) and antipsychotics Rs million makes it the world's most non-existent and limited doctorto Bangkok, Thailand for atrists in developing countries, rules and regulations on the sale 377.02 million (\$6.39 million). sixth most populous country. to either psychiatry departments a 3-night all-expenses-paid trip. using Pakistan as an example. ments on offer include: sponsor- the circumstances the interest of and qualified psychiatrists. It categorised as 'nootropics' (so-studies for common mental dis-run clinics. seems that big multinationals called brain stimulants) were orders give high figures: 25-66pc have picked Pakistan as a fa- worth Rs 187.6 million (\$3.18 women and 10-40pc men. There fied psychiatrists in Pakistan, an vourite spot for 'creating' and million). To put the above fig- are an estimated 3 million drug alarming ratio of one psychia-

through the sale of such drugs. approximately \$61.6 billion dramatically in the last few ban-based, whereas 70pc of the Annually psychotropic drug whereas the per capita income years, from a few hundred to population is rural-based. Exsales (allopathic only) in Paki- is \$440. There are only 150-200 more than 3000 annually. Seri- cept in a few instances, psychistan is touching the figure of Rs qualified psychiatrists and the ous mental illnesses account for atry is neither taught nor examal practitioners for the treatment Health spending is a pitiable 1pc leaving most practising physi-

and manufacturers and the pa- 23pc from the previous year), doctors' fee or purchase of ex- a poorly funded public health yours tients get no relief despite con- tranquillisers and hypnotics Rs pansive drugs have to rely on service is accessed by only the poorest. All healthcare costs are increase of 18pc and 137pc re- Mental healthcare in Pakistan borne by patients themselves. a drugor dementia in Pakistan relationship between pharma- demanding of favours as com-Pakistan's population of 150 Mental health services are al-

There are only 150-200 qualitrist to a million people. The

You satch my back, I'll scratch

Pakistni doctors were part of ed doors from other countries. pees (120,000).

A mltinational pharmaceu- majority of Pakistani patients. aggressively. The traffic is bi- chiatrists in developing coun-

320 (\$5.40) per recommended against doctors is unheard of. daily maintenance dose prohib- Pharmaceutical companies have itively expensive for the vast therefore targeted psychiatrists and integrity regained by psytical capany recently launched This article addresses the murky directional - psychiatrists are as and fiw about 70 Pakistani ceutical companies and psychipanies are of providing them.'

Dr Murad Musa Khan, Profes- ing attendance at conferences, the patient remains paramount. a large group that also includ- sor of Psychiatry in Aga Khan underwriting symposia, all-ex- Anything that compromises this University Karachi, in an arti-penses-paid trips for self and A conservative estimate of costs cle published in latest issue of spouse for a drug launch abroad, for the Pakistani doctors alone 'Watch on Medicine' writes 'the free drug samples and expenis about 7 million Pakistani ru- pharmaceutical companies and sive gifts (watches, air conditionphysicians have a well-estab- ers, briefcases, laptops, etc). - from pharmaceutical compa-Although, the company could lished symbiotic relationship in Other methods include funding nies. Alternative ways of fundjustifyt, questions linger about Pakistan, not unlike that in many a physician's family wedding, ing attendance at conferences the raionale for spending this other countries. However, with holidays and other events of this must be found. This must be huge mount in a developing little or no regulation of medinature. One of the latest incenstrengthened by strong institusystem and where all health care and dispensing, companies and company to provide the physicontact with pharmaceutical is out-of-pocket expenditure. physicians are free to act as they cian with a down payment for sales representatives. Of these, antidepressants sales However, such drugs are sold budget and mental health does management skills for psychi- The dug in question costs Rs deem fit. Malpractice litigation a new car. All the physician has

to do in return is write 200 prescriptions for the company's expensive drug', he says. Cleansing murky waters: re-

gaining integrity

Can the murky waters be cleansed, boundaries redrawn tries such as Pakistan? Dr Musa believes they can, providing that there is a serious will to do so. 'Some of the many induce- It is vital that no matter what must be identified and eliminated. This includes accepting any kind of inducement - large or small, in any form, shape or size



## **TheNetwork for Consumer Protection**

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