

## **Abstract**

The dearth of psychiatric institutions leads to symptoms of mental illness to be treated as signs of malingering in Pakistan. During colonial times, soldiers from what the British had defined as the “martial races” were considered as less likely to develop mental illness. After the war on terror in Pakistan, millions were displaced and the exposure to violence led to a dramatic increase in the incidence of trauma. Due to the non-recognition of their mental illness and accusations of malingering, people undergo negotiations within their wider families and psychiatric institutions for diagnosis, treatment and admission in psychiatric hospitals. The study considers the implications of such accusations for diminished criminal responsibility, which is contested by appellants and used strategically by families of the accused to reduce punishment. I consider how families also resist the state’s definitions of mental illness by seeking treatment from traditional healers while also trying to resolve deep-seated family conflicts. Finally, I investigate how patients articulate mental illness as representing disappointments with existing kinship obligations within a clan (biraderi), representing limits of care for the mentally ill as well as accusations of abuse in the context of increasing access to psycho-pharmaceuticals.

Key words: Psychiatry, war on terror, post-colonialism, diagnosis, treatment, kinship