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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Newsletter



APRIL 2003

VOL 4. NO.1

Donors Honoured for Generous Support to Oncology Services Building

Philanthropic Support for New Facilities on Campus

The growth in existing programmes and demand for new education, research and service initiatives have led to rapid development on AKU Health Sciences campus.

Since 1996, the Rufayda Al-Aslamiya Building has extended AKU School of Nursing's education facilities, the Hadi Building expanded Aga Khan University Hospital's radiology imaging modalities, the Juma Building enhanced capacity for research, the Ibn Ridwan Building accommodated AKU's Community Health Sciences Department, and the Nazerali-Walji Building for ambulatory care provided outpatients with greater access to multipurpose facilities under one roof. More recently, projects targeting women's residences and cardiac and oncology services have been realised as corporations and citizens demonstrate their responsibility to social sector development through generous donations. The commitment and support of the national and multinational corporate sector, families and individuals to the University's burgeoning facilities reflects their confidence in the Institution. These collaborative endeavours bringing together such diverse groups also provide a model of philanthropy not often seen in the developing world.

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The Nazerali-Walji Building for ambulatory care offers outpatients with easily accessible and comprehensive multipurpose facilities, with clinics, diagnostics and pharmacy services all under one roof.

Syrian Education Ministry and AKU-IED Collaborate for Professional Development of Syrian Teachers

Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), under the aegis of Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), and the Syrian Ministry of Education have been working closely together to optimise utilisation of human resources in the education sector in Syria.



AKU-IED faculty with members of the Syrian inspectors team at the Institute.

In January 2002, a needs assessment was conducted by AKU-IED with Syrian teachers, inspectors and teacher educators, followed by dialogues with senior Syrian education ministry officials to explore possibilities for collaboration. These culminated in the request by the Syrian government that AKU-IED conduct an eight-week Certificate in Education: English Language programme for Syrian English language inspectors and teachers.

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Role of Family Medicine Practitioner for Increased Quality of Care with Decreased Cost

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified unequal access to prevention and care, rising costs of health care, inefficient health care systems, and lack of emphasis on generalist training as major barriers to equitable health care in developing countries. It also acknowledges the family medicine practitioner as an important contributor in overcoming these barriers.

A three-day international conference on family medicine highlighted these concerns and made recommendations for providing better access to high quality health care to the burgeoning populations in developing countries. The conference, on the theme, "Family Medicine – Challenges for the Next Decade",

weak, or non-existent. He emphasised that expenditure on the health sector both in developing and developed countries did not meet the demand. "This trend needs to be reversed, and this aim can be achieved if we attach due importance to the discipline of family medicine," he said. WONCA is the largest organisation of family physicians in the world, with 180,000 members from North America to the Far East.

Dr. Garth Manning, Medical Director, International Development Programme, RCGP, UK, discussed the successful partnership between this organisation and AKU over the past 10 years. He suggested that where a country's health care system is family practice care orientated, the results are lower



Participants from 11 countries attended the Family Medicine Conference at AKU.

welcomed delegates from medical institutions in the UK, Ireland, Tanzania, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. The conference was organised by AKU's Department of Family Medicine in collaboration with the World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (WONCA); Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), UK, and the College of Family Medicine, Pakistan. It also celebrated the first and very successful decade of AKU's four-year residency programme in Family Medicine.

Professor Sultan M. Farooqui, President, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan, and member of AKU Board of Trustees, who was chief guest on the occasion, highlighted the multitude of health care problems afflicting the developing world, especially Pakistan. He said that at 2.8 per cent, Pakistan had the sixth fastest population growth rate in the world, but a very poor health services network. Professor Farooqui added that 80 per cent of the diseases reported to doctors were preventable in nature. "These diseases are either totally preventable or such that their course can be positively altered if properly dealt with at the first level of care by a trained family physician," he said.

Dr. Michael Boland, President of WONCA, said the practice of family medicine is required most in countries where it is

costs, higher satisfaction levels of its health care services, a more healthy population and lower medication usage. Dr. Azhar Faruqi, Professor and Executive Director, National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, highlighted the central role of family medicine in prevention of cardiovascular diseases including hypertension.

"There is world-wide recognition that trained family physicians combine knowledge and skills from various medical specialities with a holistic approach, offering accessible, high quality and cost-effective care to individuals, family and the community," said Dr. Riaz Qureshi, Chair of the Department of Family Medicine, AKU. He said that the challenges ahead were, amongst others, a paltry budget of less than one per cent of GNP for the health sector in Pakistan, and a lack of structured training programmes in family medicine. It was for this reason that AKU started its four-year Family Medicine training programme, which later gained recognition for MRCP, UK and FCPS.

Challenges in family medicine identified for the next decade included a proactive, joint approach by regional parties in collaboration with international organisations to promote the awareness and recognition of family medicine as an important speciality. ■

Government of Pakistan Honours AKU's President Kassim-Lakha and Dr. Mohammad Khurshid with Prestigious Civil Awards

The President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, honoured Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President and founding trustee of Aga Khan University, by conferring on him the prestigious civil award of Hilal-i-Imtiaz at an investiture ceremony in Islamabad in March 2003.



The President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, conferring the Hilal-i-Imtiaz award on Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of Aga Khan University, at the investiture ceremony, which recognised his outstanding civic service in the fields of environmental protection, economic development, health, culture and education in Pakistan.

Also honoured on this occasion was Dr. Mohammad Khurshid, Medical Director and Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs of Aga Khan University Hospital, who was awarded the Pride of Performance for his significant contributions to medical education and research.

The second highest honour awarded for civic service in the nation, the Hilal-i-Imtiaz recognised Kassim-Lakha's "contributions on the boards of numerous government, professional and research institutions, and outstanding civic service in the fields of environmental protection, economic development, health, culture and education in Pakistan."

Expressing his sentiments on this occasion, Kassim-Lakha said, "This is a great honour not only for me but also for everyone at Aga Khan University and other institutions with whom I have had the privilege of working. I am fortunate that the government has allowed me to make a humble contribution towards the uplift of our society." He appreciated that the University had allowed him to devote time to public service and noted that the Institution is increasingly becoming an agent of change by focusing on research and high quality academic and service standards in programmes relevant to the needs of developing countries. Under the direction and vision of the founder and Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan, Kassim-Lakha has led the overall planning, construction, commissioning and operations of Pakistan's first private university. In 2002, President Pervez Musharraf assigned Kassim-Lakha the task of overseeing reforms in Pakistan's higher education as Chairman of the Steering Committee on Higher Education with the status of Minister of State. Prior to this, he was co-chair of the Task Force for

Improvement of Higher Education. He is also Chairman of the Board of Directors of the newly established, independent Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy and has served in the past as member of the Board of Habib Bank Ltd. and Pakistan Medical Research Council as well as the Economic Development Council for Karachi. Kassim-Lakha also served on the Pakistan Environmental Protection Council, and chaired the Council's tripartite Environmental Standards Committee as well as the Advisory Board on Environment. A recipient of several noteworthy awards, President Kassim-Lakha was conferred the Officier de l'Ordre National du Mérite by the President of France in 2001, the Sitara-i-Imtiaz by the President of Pakistan in 1998, and the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa, by McMaster University, Canada, in 1994.



Dr. Mohammad Khurshid, Medical Director and Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs of Aga Khan University Hospital, receiving the Pride of Performance award, which recognised his significant contributions to medical education and research.

Professor Mohammad Khurshid of AKU, recipient of the Pride of Performance Award, said, "I feel happy that such an honour will be in actuality a recognition of the efforts of all my colleagues at Aga Khan University ... that in some way we are making a contribution to society." Professor Khurshid has been a faculty member and clinical practitioner at AKU since 1985, when the University's campus was inaugurated. As Director of Aga Khan University Laboratory Services from 1985 to 2000, he set up a modern scientific clinical laboratory at the University Hospital with laboratory specimen collection units across Pakistan.

Professor Khurshid has a distinguished academic record and has excelled in teaching and research. His research contributions in the field of haematology, particularly leukaemia, are well documented in renowned international journals. Based on his national role in the development of haematology, he was elected President of the Pakistan Society of Haematology (2001-2003) and European Council Member, the International Society of Haematology (Asia Division). With over 73 research papers to his credit, he holds the second highest rank on the list of scientists in Health Sciences, as published by the Pakistan Council for Science and Technology. ■

AKU Faculty and Staff Circle the Globe in 2002



Professor Dr. Sheikh Arshad Saeed of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, travelled to San Francisco, California, USA, to present his findings on the molecular mechanisms involved in the "Synergistic Interaction of Adrenaline and Arachidonic Acid in Human Platelets," at the 14th World Congress of Pharmacology.



In October, Dr. Anwar-ul-Hassan Gilani, Professor of Pharmacology, Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, was an invited speaker at the International Seminar on Integration of Complementary / Alternative Medicine and Modern Medicine, in Cairo, Egypt, sponsored by WHO, and spoke on "Prospects of Traditional Medicine in Pakistan."



The Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, Dr. Abul Faizi, spoke on "Drug Addiction: An Islamic Perspective," at the first ever World Forum on Drug Dependencies, during a session on "Culture, Spirituality and Religions" in Montreal, Canada, in September.



Dr. Jamsheer Talati, the Associate Dean, Education and Head, Section of Urology, facilitated a workshop on "What is the Key Role of a Physician in Society?" at the Association for Medical Education in Europe Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, in August.



Dr. Fauzia Khan, Chair of the Department of Anaesthesia, delivered a talk on "Regional Techniques in Paediatric Anaesthesia," at the World Congress of Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Therapy, in Barcelona, Spain, in May.



Dr. Rehana Kamal, Professor, Department of Anaesthesia, spoke on "Pain Relief for Paediatrics," at the 18th Annual Scientific Sessions of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Sri Lanka, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January.



Dr. Javed Rizvi, Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, spoke on and chaired a session on "Surgery for Stress Incontinence," at the Asian Congress of Urology in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in August.



Dr. Yasmin Amarsi, Dean, School of Nursing, travelled to Dartford, United Kingdom, for the Arista 3 Conference, an initiative of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, and spoke on "Challenges of Nursing Profession in Pakistan."



Jacqueline Dias (RN, '85), Assistant Professor at the School of Nursing, presented a paper on "Children: The Wealth of a Nation," in October at the fifth International Nursing Conference of Nursing and Midwifery in Darussalam, Brunei.



Dr. Iffat Farah, Head of Research and Policy Studies at AKU-IED was invited as a resource person at the Uppingham Seminar titled "Literacy and Livelihoods: Unpacking the Concepts and Practice," in Rutland, United Kingdom, in March.



Iffat Nayyar, Tutor at AKU-IED gave a talk on "Reflective Practice: An Innovative Approach for Teacher Development," at the ninth International Literacy and Education Research Network Learning Conference in Beijing, China, in July.



The Head of Graduate Programmes at AKU-IED, Dr. Fauzia Shamim, travelled to Colombo, Sri Lanka, in August to deliver a lecture on "Building Communities of Practice for Improving Teaching and Learning of English in Pakistan," at the Sri Lanka English Language Teachers' Association Conference.



In September, Assistant Professor Dr. Bernadette Dean (MEd, '96) and Senior Instructor Dr. Shahzad Mithani of AKU-IED, presented a paper on "Critical Issues in Assessment in Higher Education in a Developing Country: A Case of AKU-IED," at the British Educational Research Association Conference at Exeter University, United Kingdom. ■

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

May - August 2003

Programme	Date
Seminars and Conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKU-ISMC Seminars on Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - London - Karachi International Conference on Building Capacity for School Improvement (AKU-IED 10th Anniversary) 	May 9 June 21 Aug 28 - 30
Continuing Medical Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of Common Paediatric Problems Workshop on Asthma Management of Common Gynaecological Problems 	May 27 - 29 June 25 - 26 July 29 - 31
'Signs, Symptoms and Care' - Public Health Awareness Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstetrics and Gynaecology Family Medicine Paediatrics 	May 3 June 7 July 5

AKU Clinical Epidemiology Unit Recognised by International Clinical Epidemiology Network

The Clinical Epidemiology Unit (CEU) at AKU gained membership in August 2002 within the International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN). It is the first unit of its kind in Pakistan to have achieved this international recognition.

CEU is an initiative of AKU's Department of Community Health Sciences, and was launched in January 2002. It seeks to enhance individual and population health by advancing measurement of and knowledge about the social, behavioural, medical and biological factors influencing health. This will help to improve the quality of care and advance clinical research using appropriate epidemiological methods. It endeavours to work in an interactive partnership with clinicians, government and industry, both nationally and internationally.

This partnership with INCLEN opens avenues for collaborative research with other member countries and builds institutional research capacity. CEU will thereby become eligible to participate in research exchange programmes and make available potential funding for projects and workshops from the INCLEN Trust and other sister agencies. It also opens the possibility for CEU to eventually become a coordinating centre for INCLEN-led multi-centre research studies and programmes.

The International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN) was founded by the Rockefeller Foundation with the

objective of improving health in the developing world. The INCLEN network uses diverse disciplinary resources and collaborative arrangements to address health care problems. INCLEN follows a multidisciplinary approach in promoting application of evidence-based health care practice. It is active in linking evidence to health policy and interventions, serves as a forum for dissemination of health research, and builds capacity for research leadership and management.

The criteria for membership into INCLEN as a recognised clinical epidemiology unit are evidence of local (indigenous) faculty with highly specialised, structured training in various aspects of clinical research, and proof of commitment to research. Currently, it has a membership of over 500 scientists in various disciplines, including clinical epidemiology, biostatistics, clinical economics, and other social sciences based in 44 clinical epidemiology units and 19 clinical research and training centres in 26 countries.

Dr. Tazeen Jafar (MBBS, '90), Director of CEU, envisions that "CEU's participation in INCLEN's regional priority setting exercises for developing and planning of health care research projects would allow projection of Pakistan's health care needs at a global forum. It would also facilitate appropriate international resource allocation to our country for clinical research and health initiatives." ■

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.aku.edu/research/index.shtml>



The Clinical Epidemiology Unit (CEU) seeks to enhance the population and the individual's health by advancing measurement of and knowledge about the social, behavioural, medical and biological factors influencing health. On the extreme left is Dr. Tazeen Jafar (MBBS, '90), Director of CEU, supervising a clinic for patients with hypertension.

Family Medicine - A Lifelong Commitment to Patients

The person-centred scientific discipline of family medicine is viewed as central to an effective and efficient delivery of health care in developed countries, where the need for high quality care at affordable prices, clinical competence, and lifelong, compassionate doctor-patient relationships are now firmly entrenched. Such expectations are also gaining strength in the developing world.

It was this realisation which in 1984 prompted AKU to incorporate family medicine as a speciality in its undergraduate programme, making it the first medical institution in Pakistan to do so. Less than a decade later, in 1993, AKU pioneered the launch of a three-year (expanded in 2001 to a four-year) structured training programme in Family Medicine. This was followed by the creation of a Family Medicine division in its Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) in 1994. Since then, the division has been raising the benchmark through the expanding range and



The promotion of an integrated health care system, with linkages across multi-clinical disciplines, engenders more effective clinical care to all socio-economic groups.

enhanced quality of its services to an ever-increasing number of patients. As of January 2003, it stands as an independent department, fully-equipped and strengthened by the spirit of teamwork, evident in the compassionate care the faculty and family medicine practitioners provide to their patients.

"It is through teamwork that the department strives to deliver the best possible curative, preventive and rehabilitative care to patients and their families," says Dr. Riaz Qureshi, the first Chair of the Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Qureshi and his team of consultants continue to reinforce family medicine as an integral part of the health care delivery system at AKUH.

At the undergraduate level, the department is actively involved in problem and evidence-based learning, with the responsibility of teaching in all the three clinical years. At the postgraduate level, there are currently six residents each year in its four-year residency programme, and to date 27 have graduated. The anticipated development of a research unit within the department will also enhance the output and quality of clinical research by its faculty and residents, while encouraging inter-departmental projects. Educational

activities in the department include development and implementation of the undergraduate Family Medicine curriculum and residency programme. They also include establishment of academic and service linkages with national and international institutions, such as College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP); World Organization of



The Department of Family Medicine has been raising the benchmark through the expanding range and enhanced quality of its services to an ever-increasing number of patients.

National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (WONCA) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), UK, which accredited the department's residency programme for the MRCGP, UK examination. Dr. Rukhsana W. Zuberi, Associate Professor, Family Medicine, was the Chair of the New Undergraduate Curriculum Task Force of AKU.

The department's on-campus services range from Consulting and Executive and Community Health Centre clinics, to student health, employee health, and pre-employment check-ups (for AKU and other organisations). Outside the Hospital premises, the department runs teaching and service field clinics at three sites in lower socio-economic areas, and integrated units combining Family Medicine, Pharmacy and Phlebotomy



Dr. Riaz Qureshi (centre) and his team of consultants continue to reinforce family medicine as an integral part of the health care delivery system at AKUH.

services. Off campus Family Medicine sites, including five Family Health sites in collaboration with Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS,P) provide important avenues for service, teaching and research. The promotion of an integrated health care system, with linkages across all clinical disciplines, engenders more effective clinical care to all socio-economic groups.

The new department with its expanding activities will be better placed to create and promote professional opportunities

Patient Welfare Programme Corrective Surgery Restores Iqbal's Quality of Life

Twenty-two year old Iqbal was admitted to AKUH severely debilitated by vomiting and fever, neither able to eat nor perform his daily activities, and had also lost a significant amount of weight. He was diagnosed with megacolon, a dilation or lengthening of the colon due to an obstruction or disease, leading to difficulty in breathing, food intake and digestion.



The eldest of seven children, Iqbal was an apprentice electrician and the primary breadwinner in his family along with his father, who worked in a milk shop. With a joint monthly income of Rs. 10,000 (US\$ 167), the family struggled to make ends meet. They could only afford to pay Rs. 5,000 (US\$ 83) of the total Rs. 151,924 (US\$ 2,532) required for the corrective surgery. Iqbal's physician advised him to consult the Hospital's welfare officer, who, after reviewing his case, assured him of his eligibility for financial assistance. The Patient Welfare Programme provided Rs. 75,962 (US\$ 1,266) towards the treatment. The remaining Rs. 50,000 (US\$ 833) was donated by "The Patients Behbud Society for AKUH", started by a group of the University's well wishers and friends, through which zakat contributions are received and disbursed to the deserving.

After surgery, Iqbal recovered rapidly and was soon back on his feet. He is now a fully qualified electrician and a key contributor to his family's income. ■

for AKU Medical College and Family Medicine residency graduates. Its first landmark achievement was the International Family Medicine Conference organised at AKU in February 2003, in collaboration with WONCA, RCGP, UK, and the College of Family Medicine, Pakistan. The newly independent department will also seek to encourage policy-makers in Pakistan to appreciate the pivotal contribution of family medicine to the health care delivery system as well as providing a replicable model for national and regional medical institutions to follow. ■

Professional Development of Syrian Teachers

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Jointly developed by AKU-IED and the Syrian Ministry, the programme commenced in December 2002, and carried the objective of helping the English language inspectors and teachers in re-conceptualising their role as pedagogical leaders, enabling them to become catalysts for improving the quality of education in Syria. Participants were exposed to various professional development approaches, including mentoring, to be able to provide adequate professional support to English language teachers on the job. Monitoring and evaluation strategies were also imparted to scrutinise the quality of education in schools. This helped broaden the participants' future impact as instructional leaders and agents of change.

Besides their involvement in academic activities, the participants visited numerous educational institutions as well as holding meetings with senior Sindh Education Department officials.

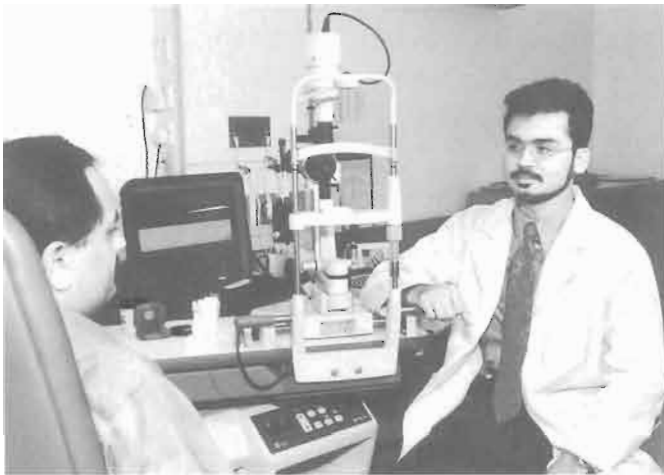
Enjoyed by both the participants and AKU-IED educators, the programme proved useful in enhancing the understanding of the teachers' role as pedagogical leaders. "Micro-teaching sessions were very helpful for self-reflection and improving our action plans. We learnt new academic vocabulary, which was interesting and challenging. We also benefited in exploring the important role of information technology in enhancing students' learning," said a participant.

Sharing his reflections on the programme, Dr. Muhammad Memon, Head of Professional Programmes at AKU-IED, said, "Working with the senior members of the Syrian Ministry of Education for their professional growth was a new and very rewarding experience for many of us." It provided both parties with an avenue for continued mutual exchange and sharing of experiences, he added.

A follow-up to the programme with course participants as well as a stakeholders workshop have been planned in Syria in May 2003. These will focus on examining participants successes and challenges faced while implementing the new ideas and skills learnt in their own context. The workshop will also focus on developing a strategic plan for future collaborative endeavours between AKU-IED and the Syrian Ministry of Education. ■

Dr. Azam Ali Makes Headway into Macular Degeneration in Pakistan

Macular degeneration has long been considered one of the most intriguing challenges for ophthalmologists. It is a physical disturbance in the retina of the eye, eventually causing permanent central visual loss. The macula is the part of the retina which is capable of providing the most acute and detailed vision, and is used for reading, driving, recognising faces, and fine work. The need for newer and more effective treatment continues, even though considerable research has gone into preventing central visual loss from macular degeneration.



Dr. Azam Ali (MBBS, '88), Assistant Professor, Department of Ophthalmology at AKUH, is the third ophthalmic surgeon in Pakistan to perform photodynamic therapy for treatment of macular degeneration.

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is one of the new procedures available for patients with macular degeneration. This still infrequently used, specialised laser procedure was only approved in the USA in 2000. Therefore, Pakistani patients with macular degeneration had to go to the United States to benefit from this technological advancement. In December 2002, Dr. Azam Ali (MBBS, '88), Assistant Professor, Department of Ophthalmology at AKUH, became the third ophthalmic surgeon in Pakistan to utilise this innovative procedure with excellent results.

Photodynamic Therapy is a major improvement because it affects only the bleeding blood vessels under the retina and does not damage the retina itself. While PDT is a milestone in the treatment of eye disorders, it is applicable to certain cases only, such as age-related macular degeneration. It involves the injection of a unique dye followed by special laser application, and has to be done by highly-trained retinal specialists.

Dr. Azam Ali has been closely monitoring developments taking place in the area of macular degeneration, attending lectures and workshops at international meetings. Prior to performing this procedure at AKUH, he had completed the necessary certification in 2001. He has presented his results at national ophthalmology meetings in Lahore and Karachi, delivered lectures at national and international ophthalmology

conferences, and conducted workshops on this procedure nationally and internationally. Recently, he was invited to Bangladesh as a guest speaker on this topic, training local doctors in PDT as well as performing the first three such procedures in that country. ■

Philanthropic Support for New Facilities on Campus

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At the inauguration ceremony of the Nazerali-Walji Building for ambulatory care in November 2002, the Governor of Sindh at that time, Mohammedian Soomro, paid tribute to the generosity of donors, saying, "I admire that you have not forgotten your roots."

The Rs. 288 million (US\$ 4.8 million), three-storied ambulatory care building has a built-up area of 24,000 square feet. It offers outpatients with easily accessible and comprehensive multipurpose facilities, with clinics, diagnostics and pharmacy services all under one roof. The facility, made possible through a generous donation of Rs. 180 million (US\$ 3 million) by the Nazerali-Walji family of Canada, is an important step by the University towards meeting the growing demand for high quality outpatient services in Pakistan.

The recent expansion of facilities on AKU Health Sciences campus has been enabled by a broad range of donor groups, fostering a platform for ecumenism between diverse communities.

Governor Soomro also expressed his gratitude to donors at the dedication ceremony of the Karimi Residences, the Noor Residences and the Arman Rupani Residences for women. As an equal opportunity employer, AKU attracts women seeking professional engagement and development from across the country and the region. Located within the secure environs of the University campus, these amenities will provide accommodation for such out-of-station women. To be completed in November 2003 at a total cost of Rs. 390 million (US\$ 6.5 million), the built-up area of the three-building complex will be 64,500 square feet spread over 8.6 acres. This project has been constructed with generous donations from the Mansoorali J. Karimi, the Mewawalla and the Amir Ali Rupani families.

A third new construction on campus, which will be operational in June 2003, is the Khimji Building, named after the Khimji family, also of Canada, who donated Rs. 180 million (US\$ 3 million) towards the Rs. 315 million (US\$ 5.3 million)

total cost of the project. Additionally, nine donors have contributed Rs. 75.5 million (US\$ 1.26 million) to meet the cost for equipment. The three-storied, 20,000 square feet facility will meet the increasing demand for the Hospital's cardiac services.

The latest philanthropic endeavour to meet the growing need for high quality, comprehensive care to cancer patients in Pakistan is the proposed Oncology Services Building. Of the total cost of Rs. 456 million (US\$ 7.6 million), Rs. 240 million (US\$ 4 million) is being raised by donors from Pakistan and abroad in 48 units of Rs. 5 million (US\$ 83,000) each. Donations have originated from a very broad segment of the corporate sector and individuals, including the largest single contribution of Rs. 30 million (US\$ 500,000) by San Francisco based Asim Abdullah and his wife, Dr. Isha Abdullah, an AKU Medical College graduate (MBBS, '91). The balance of Rs. 216 million (US\$ 3.6 million) is being funded by the Institution's own resources.

With construction beginning in 2003 and completion expected in 2005, the new Oncology Services Building will be a state-of-the-art comprehensive cancer care facility, available to the seven million cancer sufferers in Pakistan. The 27,000 square feet facility will offer cutting-edge diagnostic and treatment services, as well as training and research programmes. Patient care will focus on prevention, with screening for common cancers and AKUH sponsored health awareness programmes.

In February 2003, donors of the Oncology Services Building were honoured for their generous support towards this addition to a growing ambulatory care complex at AKUH. Shaukat Aziz, Advisor (presently Federal Minister) to the Prime Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Planning, Development and Statistics, Government of Pakistan, chief guest on this occasion, complimenting the donors said, "Philanthropy is not just a simple act of giving to the underprivileged. It is an ongoing process that tackles the root

causes of poverty, inequity and disadvantage." He continued that there was no substitute for a partnership between Pakistan's public and private sectors in fighting poverty. He acknowledged the generosity of all donors present and said that "their support is an excellent example of corporate philanthropy in action, of building trust, and a motivation for the entire private sector." The chief guest also acknowledged His Highness the Aga Khan's commitment to social sector development and commended Aga Khan Development Network for its continued efforts towards poverty alleviation, access to education, health care and development of rural areas, describing it as "a continuous beacon of hope for Pakistan's less fortunate."

Welcoming the chief guest, Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU, said the generous support of donors to the new building was a prime example of how a "sincere and committed partnership between the community, business and government can change our collective destiny in the developing world." He explained that being in effect a national project, the new facility would be a recognition of the country's collective will for societal development. "Tonight is a celebration of the ongoing effort to bring such partnerships to fruition," he said. Munnawar Hamid, member of AKU Board of Trustees and Chair of the University's Resource Development Committee (corporate), appreciating the contributions by donors, said that this undertaking would not have been possible without their support.

The recent expansion of facilities on AKU Health Sciences campus has been enabled by a broad range of donor groups, fostering a platform for ecumenism between diverse communities. Motivated by more than just charitable sentiment, this demonstrates the undertaking of a cogent responsibility by those who want to invest in the betterment of society. ■

For speeches and more pictures, please visit:
<http://www.aku.edu/news/archives/page1.shtml>



Chief guest Shaukat Aziz, (5th from right) Advisor (presently Federal Minister) to the Prime Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Planning, Development and Statistics; Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi (2nd from left), Chairman, AKU Board of Trustees; and Shamsh Kassim-Lakha (extreme left), President, AKU, with members of AKU Resource Development Committee (corporate) at the dinner honouring donors of the Oncology Services Building. The Committee has raised Rs. 235 million (US\$ 3.92 million) for this comprehensive cancer care facility, which will offer cutting-edge diagnostic and treatment services as well as training and research programmes.

Dr. Gordon MacLeod: Dedicated to Quality Teacher Education

Dr. Gordon MacLeod was appointed Director of Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) in August 2001. He had previously served there as Acting Director and had joined the Institute in 1999 as a professor. Dr. MacLeod has extensive experience as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher, holding faculty and management positions in educational institutions in Australia and the UK. With a PhD in education and psychology from the University of Stirling, UK, he also has a substantial number of research publications to his credit.

What inspired you to choose a profession of teaching teachers?

As an adolescent in the 1960s, like many of my contemporaries, I believed that the world could "be put to rights." One of the crucially important ways of achieving this was via education – humanizing education; radical education; respectful education. I was also very fortunate to complete my graduate studies in education under the guidance of an intellectual mentor whose commitment to quality in educational enquiry and an associated honesty in intellectual life was inspirational. It was from him that I learnt the force of a simple truth – the quality of our schools cannot be better than the quality of teachers in them.

What attracted you to Pakistan and AKU-IED?

Initially, it was through personal contact with the Director of AKU-IED at that time. My visits to Karachi and the Northern Areas of Pakistan were also most encouraging. But it has really been being here and the immensity of the intrinsic rewards of working with the staff and students of AKU-IED which has led to my commitment. My wife and I have met tremendous friendliness and friendship here.

What are some of the challenges the Institute is faced with and how does it address these?

This answer requires a book or two! We face several challenges including coping with unmet demand for our services and programmes; overcoming distance, as we expand both in Pakistan and elsewhere; and ensuring impact and impact amplification as we contemplate how this small, private university can best address large and enduring public educational problems in our natural constituencies.

These challenges interact with each other and it becomes very clear that doing 'more of the same' is neither realistic nor cost-effective. Instead, we must continue with initiatives such as internationalisation (and the need to respond to this by decentralising); the creation of Professional Development Centres, providing continuing professional education for in-service teachers; the continuing growth of open learning; and the ongoing development of impact-multiplying and amplifying approaches such as our creative work with our graduates as professional development teachers and the exciting policy dialogues we have recently undertaken



throughout Pakistan. Above all, we need to maintain and indeed strengthen the very impressive approach to individual capacity development that AKU-IED has been pursuing. This includes the introduction of our own PhD programme in 2004. Just as schools need high quality teachers, so too do universities need high quality faculty. Our faculty is already good; we need to enable them to become better.

How has AKU-IED made a difference to the lives of teachers and others through its programmes and outreach activities both nationally and internationally?

I am glad that the question includes our international efforts. I think we sometimes forget that AKU-IED has been developing individual capacity for countries outside Pakistan since January 1994, and that we ran our first Certificate course outside the country in 1998. Recent impact studies carried out at AKU-IED demonstrated that our courses and programmes are making a difference. At the professional level, our graduates become promotable and/or are promoted. At another level, they develop and apply new skill-sets as well as enhancing their social skills, including listening skills, sharing and respect. They also develop new classroom skills including those of classroom management; become reflective practitioners or educational leaders rather than technocratic supervisors; engage in cooperative learning and develop active environments for the pursuit of learning and teaching with the assistance of their communities, both in school and outside school. Above all, we hope that they learn to assert and re-assert their humanity.

What role does information technology play in the development and delivery of teaching and learning programmes in Pakistan?

I think we do the same things with information technology as do other sections of the University. We provide individual email access to students, faculty, researchers, and teaching staff, and, for example, almost all programmatic and academic announcements are now sent to the students via email. We have two multimedia-enabled computer laboratories for student use and these are complemented

by four library terminals for public Internet access. We make some use of web-based technologies in our open learning courses not only in Pakistan but also for our current students enrolled at a distance from Central Asia and East Africa as well as Pakistan. Our library offers access to a large number of online journals and provides a small audio-visual facility. All

our faculty, research and teaching staff have individual access to a computer. For example, average Internet use for faculty is some 17 hours per month. We already see the Net as an invaluable information resource but its use will only fully emerge when we can obtain fast, reliable broadband Internet connections. ■

University Offers Support to Afghanistan in Medical and Nursing Education

A five-member delegation from Afghanistan, headed by the Minister for Public Health, Dr. General Soheila Sediq, visited AKU in January 2003. This visit was part of a programme to seek expertise from Pakistan's medical, nursing, educational and training centres, and discuss various options in which assistance could be offered to improve health conditions in Afghanistan.

The Minister was accompanied by Dr. Abdullah Fahim, Director of the Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Public Health; Dr. Khalil Mossadegh, President of the Intermediate Medical Educational Institute (IMEI) of Kabul; Dr. Arabshah, Director of IMEI; Dr. Bashir Noormal, World Health Organization Education and Training Coordinator; members of the Consulate of Afghanistan in Karachi and Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan.



Dr. General Soheila Sediq, Minister for Public Health, Afghanistan, receives a souvenir from Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President, AKU.

During meetings with President Shamsh Kassim-Lakha as well as senior leadership of the University, the delegation exchanged views on the possibilities and scope of extending support of health services to the people in Afghanistan. The Minister noted that Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) had established credibility with the Afghan government by virtue of timely and effective implementation of various programmes.

The delegation appreciated His Highness the Aga Khan's long-term commitment to Afghanistan as well as the high quality of programmes and services offered by AKU. AKDN

is playing a continual role in the economic, social and cultural development of Afghanistan, with US\$ 75 million committed by His Highness the Aga Khan in 2002 towards the reconstruction of the country.

At the request of the Afghan government, AKU offered help in providing postgraduate medical education through residency programmes for Afghan physicians at Aga Khan University Hospital and General Nursing as well as BScN programmes at the University's School of Nursing (AKU-SON). Some of the current activities of AKU-SON in Afghanistan include initiating English courses, establishing a computer laboratory and renovating and equipping a nursing skills laboratory.

AKU-SON faculty recently conducted a workshop on "Curriculum Development Process" and assisted IMEI in strengthening and developing their nursing and midwifery curriculum and programmes. To respond to the need for continuing medical and nursing education, AKU has already offered to develop programmes specifically for capacity building of medical and nursing faculty in Afghanistan.



Representatives from teacher training institutions and officials from Afghanistan's Ministry of Higher Education with AKU-IED staff and faculty.

Earlier, in September and October 2002, representatives from teacher training institutions and officials from Afghanistan's Ministry of Higher Education visited Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, to seek help in educational planning and policy-making. The officials acquainted themselves with the process of educational decision-making, as well as learning ways of aligning government policy with development plans for the country. ■

Inaugural Seminar on Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts

Pluralism as explored in the context of Muslim societies has now emerged as a field of investigation on its own. It deals with the ways in which Muslims have understood themselves in the light of their internal diversity in relation to others, as well as the ways in which they have dealt with these differences both historically and in contemporary time. Though many recent works by philosophers, political scientists, sociologists and others have made pluralism a major theme of discussion within intellectual discourse, this scholarly debate has, however, not yet reached larger audiences.

With the objective of encouraging engagement with the notion of pluralism and its specific relevance to Muslim societies, Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC), inaugurated the first of a series of seminars in January 2003. The seminar titled "Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts", was also the first public event organised by the newly established Institute, based in London. Welcoming the invitees, Dr. Filali-Ansary, Director of AKU-ISMC, and Dr. David Taylor, Vice-Provost of the University, called it a historic day and an auspicious beginning to an effort to initiate open and meaningful intellectual encounters between scholars from various persuasions.

The seminar aimed at addressing and putting into perspective many questions and challenges surrounding the notion of pluralism. The growing interconnectedness of cultures and the urgent need to find ways of peaceful co-existence of people from different backgrounds has added premium to the orientation we adopt towards diversity. In this context, the term pluralism – alongside more traditional notions such as monism and relativism – has attracted a great deal of attention. Pluralism assumes that diversity is beneficial to society and seeks an active engagement with it. Though the concept is much discussed, there is no consensus about its utility. Some see it as a dangerous slide towards relativism while others see it as the most desirable approach to living with

differences between oneself (or one's community, nation, religion) and others.

Two distinguished scholars spoke at the event, approaching the subject from a philosophical and an historical perspective. Professor Adel Daher of Pace University, New York, explored the philosophical differences between a political and militant interpretation of Islam and the vision of establishing a just, democratic and pluralistic social order. He concluded that political Islam as an ideology was incompatible with the requirements of the establishment of such a social order. He continued that while the actual socio-political outcomes of an ideology could be different from its formal consequences, it was important that we bear these in mind as part of our analysis of the issues.

Professor Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Professor of History at Harvard University, argued that though political Islam may be incompatible with pluralism, there are other traditions within the history of Muslim societies that can serve as harbingers of a contemporary rapprochement between Islamic faith and pluralistic outlook. In this regard, he quoted extensively from the poetic and humanistic corpus of Muslim societies, particularly from the Persian Sufi context, bringing out the underlying and implied tolerance and acceptance of differences.

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion in which the reasons why the harbingers of pluralism in Muslim traditions have been eclipsed by the discourse of absolutism in many contemporary Muslim societies were deliberated upon. In conclusion, participants observed that the seminar had opened up various intellectual vistas into the issues pertaining to the importance and relevance of pluralism in Muslim societies. These can provide the basis for taking the discussion forward in the second and third seminars in the series, to be held in London and Karachi respectively. ■



Head of the table (L to R): Professor Roy Mottahedeh, Gurney Professor of History at Harvard University; Professor Adel Daher of Pace University, New York, and Dr. Abdou Filali-Ansary, Director, AKU-ISMC, at the inaugural seminar on "Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts", held at AKU-ISMC in January 2003.