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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

inspire

Innovation, Service & Patient -
Centered Research & Education

Department of Medicine

Volume 5 | Issue 11

Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

I just got back from a three-day event that marked the launch of our center for Impact, jointly led by the Aga Khan University and University of York. Collaborating centers include Khyber medical university, Institute of Psychiatry, BIDE, The initiative, HealthNet TPO, University of Liverpool and University of Edinburgh. The center aims to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through evidence generation, testing implementation of evidence as well as translation to policy. It was the first-time meeting many of our collaborators in person although we have been regularly interacting over the two-year application cycle. The center brings together several groups that are building momentum in work on non-communicable diseases. This is especially important, because NCDs are largely neglected in the midst of constant crises that our health system finds itself facing. But what was especially heartening to see and observe was the rigor and thought with which the collaborators brought their research work packages for discussion. It was a testament to the building of research capacity in this area. It is critical now that we organize these efforts trans institutionally. On that note an upcoming conference on NCDs that you are all invited to is the AKUPI NCD Research conference that will highlight the landscape of NCD research in Pakistan. See flyer below. I look forward to your comment and ideas and ways to engage in this work.

Zainab

Medicine at National and International Forums

Magnificent Launch | Centre for Impact





National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Global Health Research Centre jointly led by AKU and University of York launched 'Centre for IMPACT' officially from November 1st till 3rd in Islamabad. This is an incredible five-year £7.6m initiative to improve mental and physical health of people in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

This research was funded by the NIHR using UK aid from the UK Government to support global health research. Chief guest Ms. Zeba Bakhtiar, Artist and Director; Independent Director, Arif Habib Corp, Dr. Atif Rahman, Professor of Child Psychiatry & Global Mental Health, University of Liverpool, UK, Dr. Abdul Rahman Shahab, Deputy Country Director, HealthNet TPO, Kabul, Afghanistan (virtually), AKU team: Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, Dr. Zainab Samad, Dr. Sajid Soofi, Dr. Romaina Iqbal, Dr. Aysha Almas, Dr. Imran Naeem, team from University of York, UK: Dr. Najma Siddiqi, Dr. Kamran Siddiqi, Dr. Helen Elsey, Dr. Simon Gilbody, Dr. Mona Kanaan, Dr. Catherine Hewitt, Dr. Paul Revill, Dr. Gerardo Zavala, Dr. Mehreen Faisal, Ms. Cate Cowton, Ms. Nicky Traynor, and several dignitaries graced the occasion.

The new Centre, which will be based at AKU and the University of York, will engage with patients and families through Community Advisory Panels, which will help design, conduct, and disseminate research findings. At least 60% of the new Centre's research trainees will be women.

Congratulations to Dr Zainab Samad, Director of the Centre for IMPACT, and Dr Kamran Siddiqi Co Director & Professor in Public Health at the University of York along with their winning team on this successful achievement!



Professor Bushra Jamil has been invited to serve as member of 2 WHO expert groups: taskforce to review and finalise the **WHO** Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) research and development (R&D) roadmap and WHO-led prioritization of diseases of epidemic and pandemic threat exercise, Bunyaviridae group

11 priority pathogens of concern (CCHF, Ebola, Marburg, Lassa Fever, MERS/SARS, Nipah, Henipaviruses, Rift Valley Fever, Zika, Chikungunya, Plague, Plague + Covid-19 + Pathogen X) were identified in 2018. The R&D Blueprint was established in 2015 during 68th WHA.

For each priority pathogen the R&D Blueprint

- Develops R&D Roadmap – *what research is needed to have a vaccine, treatment and diagnostics for that disease?*
- Prepares Target product profiles for vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics – *what guidance is given to developers on the ideal attributes of the medical countermeasures?*
- Tracks the clinical evaluation pipeline – *who is developing vaccines, treatments and diagnostics and where are they in the clinical development pipeline?*
- Landscapes all clinical trials and compiles evidence and results
- Develops clinical trial designs and protocols and implementing clinical trials as needed including behavioural aspects and community engagement (social science)
- Builds capacity in GPP and clinical trials in LLMICs
- It is challenging to research and develop medical countermeasures for all viruses
- Viral Family approach offers a framework for rapid research on, and product development response for, other viruses within that family

R&D roadmaps are a key component of the [WHO'S R&D blueprint to prevent epidemics](#), a global strategy and preparedness plan that allows the activation of R&D activities in advance of and during epidemics. The roadmaps are intended to accelerate the development and implementation of effective medical countermeasures for [WHO priority pathogens](#) aimed at reducing morbidity, mortality, and transmission.

Diabetes Technology for Improved Outcomes



A successful capacity building workshop titled “Diabetes Technology for improved outcomes” was effectively conducted on October 29th 2022. This capacity building workshop was supported by a grant from the MC Class of '88 fund.

Pakistan ranks 3rd in Diabetes Mellitus (DM) prevalence as per the International Diabetes Federation. With these high numbers, it is important that state of the art management is provided by all healthcare practitioners who take care of people with DM, which includes general physicians, internists, obstetricians, gynaecologists and endocrinologists.

Diabetes technology is developing rapidly and has revolutionized care worldwide. It helps improve the quality of life as well as decrease DM related complications in patients. In Pakistan, DM technology, including Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs) remain underutilized due to multiple reasons. Awareness, training and education of health practitioners about CGM is essential as it is becoming the standard of care for glucose self-monitoring and will likely replace finger stick glucose testing in the near future.

This is the first in a series of health care provider training workshops on Diabetes technology, to help improve the care and outcomes of people with Type 1, Type 2 and Gestational Diabetes.



Congrats!

Dr. Sara Shakil

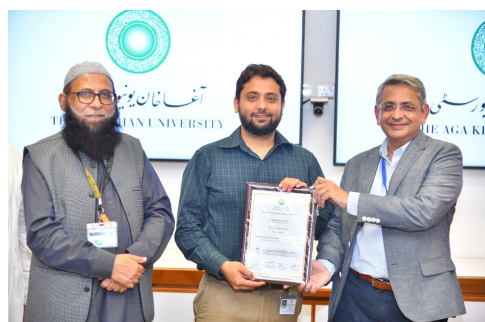
On successfully accomplishing

Early- mid career leadership course

Women in Medicine (WIM) Lunch N Learn



Professor Mehnaz Atiq senior Paediatric Cardiologist delivered an enlightening and close to the heart session recently. We are honoured to have a highly professional member who has served AKU for almost three decades! The journey had been absolutely inspiring, moving from India to Pakistan and adjusting not just in a new home but altogether a new homeland was a major challenge. But Prof Atiq with her self-motivation and much support from spouse, excelled not only professionally but also personally, looking after her family and home simultaneously. Prof Atiq has set a wonderful example and opened ways for all the females to follow in the field of Cardiology; notably at a time when the field of Medicine was specifically male dominated. She has definitely made all the working Members proud!



Congrats!

Dr. Haris Farooq Murad

On successfully accomplishing

Early- mid career leadership course

Team building lunch with Nursing team | a group photo



Dr Javaid Khan delivered a talk at APPNA school of public health Jinnah Medical University Karachi. Topic was "Reducing the burden of chronic respiratory diseases in Pakistan Oct 12th 2022. (above pic)

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

 <p>ZIA STAFF MEMBER</p> <p>CARING</p> <p><i>I would like to thank staff Zia for taking care of the patient</i></p> <p><i>-Direct Patient's feedback</i></p>	 <p>Dr FATIMA YOUSUF RESIDENT</p> <p>RESPONSIBLE & DEVOTED</p> <p><i>Extremely devoted, responsible and hardworking. She has good professional, communication and leadership skills, always available to help her juniors.</i></p> <p><i>-Chief Resident - Dr. Soman Prithiani</i></p>	 <p>KALEEM ZAMAN SENIOR ASSISTANT</p> <p>TEAMPLAYER</p> <p><i>A person like Kaleem always stands behind the team in good as well as the hard times.... Thank you for being there for your team members!</i></p> <p><i>-Dr Saadia Farooqui - Senior Manager</i></p>
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**Employee recognition Finalized by Senior Manager Clinical Services*

In-depth- featuring **Prof. Hasnain Ali Shah** |Gastroenterology section

By Maha Inam & Zahra Rahmatullah

The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), established in 1985, is now Pakistan's largest private medical institute and hospital. Large parts of this can be attributed to our "founding

Dr. Shah strongly believes that research is pivotal to better the state of health of a community. Currently, he is working on a



faculty" that helped grow the institute from its infancy. Dr. Syed Hasnain Ali Shah is considered to be one of the core members who has helped shape AKUH into what it is today. His vision was that doctors should practice

general medicine to a certain degree, but ultimately be able to specialize and practice their specialties. For him, that was gastroenterology and hepatology. He was inspired by his mentors in Edinburgh and recognized that based on the diseases that ran rampant in his country, along with the level of technological advancements at the time, this field would allow him to serve his people best.

...doctors are humanitarians first...

After completing his MBBS from King Edward Medical College, Lahore, Dr. Shah attended the Internal Medicine Course at the Edinburgh Postgraduate Board for Medicine in 1983. He stayed in the UK to study privately and participate in postgraduate activities such as completing his MRCP (1988) and subsequently moved back to Pakistan. Dr. Shah joined AKUH in 1988 as Chief Resident in Medicine and has been a Professor in the Department of Medicine/Gastroenterology at AKUH since 2006. He then went on to do his FACP from USA (1996), FRCP from Edinburgh (1997) and FCPS in Gastroenterology (2019). In 1990, Dr. Shah completed his Post MRCP fellowship training in Gastroenterology and Hepatology from the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Scotland and later received the Faculty Development Award (1998) to do research on portal hypertension and chronic liver disease there. He used this time to achieve his Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree from the University of Edinburgh (2001) based on his dissertation on studies relating to portal hypertension.

Along with portal hypertension, Dr. Shah's research interests also include viral hepatitis. He is incredibly proud of his research work as he has been involved in hundreds of publications in reputable journals worldwide, reaching up to an impact factor of 30. He has received millions of Pakistani rupees in research grants and acquired many awards throughout his robust career. These include the American College of Gastroenterology's Governor's Award for Excellence in Clinical Research for the "Best Scientific Paper" (1996), Young Investigator's Award for the "Best Scientific Paper" (1996) and The Pharmacia International Award for "Excellence in Published Clinical Research" (2000).

multicenter trial on the use of N-acetyl cysteine in acute on chronic liver failure.

...help your country by being 'good quality' doctors...

While he has had astounding success in his research career, Dr. Shah states that one of his toughest challenges to face was working in a country that doesn't prioritize research work. He hopes that there will be incentives to increase Pakistan's research output. He does not regret the sacrifice it required, but believes the intellectual developments are worth it as one is able to be a "leader" and "path-finder" in their respective fields of science. While not materialistic or monetary, "it's a different type of glamor", he says.

Dr. Shah believes that the career of an academic physician has four aspects: clinical activities, research, teaching, and administrative duties. He has organized numerous scientific meetings and workshops throughout Pakistan based on gastroenterology and hepatology. He has also been invited to give lectures internationally in countries including Scotland, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Thailand, and the Philippines. He is a member of examination boards in Pakistan (FCPS) and the UK (MRCP) and has been the Regional Advisor to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, representing Karachi, Sindh and Balochistan. At AKUH, he has held positions such as Chairperson for Departmental Management Review Committee, Chairperson of the problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum sub-committee for gastroenterology, Director of the Residency Program in Gastroenterology, and Chairperson of the Section of Gastroenterology among many other prestigious roles. Currently, he is the Director of Clinical Services in the Department of Medicine and a member of the Hepatitis Task Force.

While Dr. Shah is proud of the publications and awards that he has been accredited with throughout the years, he is appreciative of the position he is in today and considers the fact that he has clinical and research degrees from both Scotland and Pakistan to be his greatest accomplishment. However, what he looks forward to most is seeing his trainees succeed in their careers'. He has trained people throughout Pakistan in hospitals, rural areas and even the army, and greatly enjoys when they tell him that they have "learnt so much from (him)". He continues treating and teaching in communities in rural Sindh and wants his

legacy to be continued through a trail of such people nationally and internationally. He urges medical students to help their country by being “good quality doctors”, as it can make a world of a difference. He firmly believes that doctors are humanitarians first.

Featured Faculty | Dr Nida Saddaf Khan | Senior Instructor | Data Science Project

“...Your interest and hard work will earn you excellence... and then you don't need to worry about money as money follows excellence...”



Please specify your field and what made you pick this field as your calling in life? Any experience to be specific.

I started my career in Computer Science and later developed a fancy for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Science (DS). Making machines understand and perceive the world as humans do, has all the inspiration for me to pursue this as my career. This still hasn't ceased to amaze me how AI can fit in to solve various problems we face in our daily lives.

What are your hobbies/interests?

My hobbies include traveling and watching movies. For traveling, I have explored most of the northern areas in Pakistan as I love mountains, lakes, rivers, and the widespread greenery. I have a list of places I want to explore next, like the base camps of the second highest peak, “K2” and the Killer Mountain, “Nanga Parbat”.

I love adventure, sci-fiction, action, fantasy, and thriller movies, especially related to time, and space travel, and movies focusing on innovative ideas like Inception and Matrix series.

What made you choose AKU?

AKU offers that unique blend of research and academic activities, I always wanted to have in my career. Research is my passion, and no other institutes/ universities are putting their efforts into building a data science research environment in Karachi the way AKU is doing. Secondly, Dr. Zainab Samad is leading the Data Science Initiative at AKU, and she has all the qualities of leadership and mentorship not only to launch but also to build a sustained data science research platform for the ages to come.

In what profession would you have been if you were not in the current one?

I think I would've been a doctor, as this profession always feels close to my heart.

What advice would you like to give to your juniors?

Do not think about making money while planning your career; always look for what your heart desires. The most important thing is to search within yourself. First, find out what you like or enjoy doing, then the next step is to put in hard work. Your interest and hard work will earn you excellence in whatever field you choose, and then you don't need to worry about money as money follows excellence.

What lessons have you learned from your seniors?

I have always been lucky to get good people around me, and I learned a great deal from them, not only the academic qualities but also the personality traits one should possess. Time management, passion for helping others, productive teamwork, and learning from cross-disciplinary subjects are a few of those qualities.

What in your opinion is your biggest accomplishment; 1 personal and 1 professional?

I consider my ability to rise again from difficult times or failures with a new and more powerful surge of achieving success as my most outstanding personal achievement. I have learned not to quit and keep going even if the odds are not in my favor. This has made me strong, Alhamdulillah!

The professional achievement is that I am on the path of achieving what I want to become, i.e., a leader in the data science field, as this is a male-dominant field in Pakistan. I have completed many milestones in this path, like getting a Ph.D. and a relevant job, and I know that this path will reach me to my destination InshaAllah!

Tell us about 1 challenge/failure that taught you a lot in life.

The most challenging time of my life was when I had to discontinue my education after MS. Earlier, I thought it's okay as I had already achieved a good level of education, but over time I realized that it was something that I couldn't do. I can't give up on my dreams, which was a self-realizing moment that made me readjust my priorities.

Any interesting/memorable encounter

Nothing. I don't recall any such incident.

Who/what do you draw your inspiration from (your muse if you may) and why?

Two persons majorly inspired me in my life: one is my mother, and the other is my Ph.D. supervisor, Dr. Sayeed Ghani. My mother always stood by my side in all the challenging times and supported me by all the means she could muster. She has taught me how to be supportive. Similarly, Dr. Ghani has taught me to maintain calm, improve my skillset and be innovative personally and professionally.

What are your thoughts about the pandemic COVID-19?

I think this pandemic has not only shown us the needed improvements in our health systems but also has opened doors for a new paradigm, the virtual world. Though the concept and the technology already existed, during the pandemic, we learned to use it to its full extent making the distances and physical boundaries meaningless.

What are your future goals?

First, I want to achieve excellence in research and academia by providing high-quality research work to the community. Then I want to be a flag bearer of women's power in STEM and show the world that women can lead in this field too. Finally, I want to serve humanity at large, regardless of the boundaries imposed by countries.

What are Academics Around the World Reading This Month?

[A sustainable and efficient home health care network design model under uncertainty](#)

[Effect of standard skin care treatments on skin barrier function in X-irradiated hairless mice](#)

[Remote control of the recruitment and capture of endogenous stem cells by ultrasound for in situ repair of bone defects](#)

Publications

Spectrum of Common Pediatric Neurological Disorders: A Cross-Sectional Study From Three Tertiary Care Centres Across Pakistan

Prem Chand, Tipu Sultan, Shazia Kulsoom, Farida Jan, Shahnaz Ibrahim, Khairunnisa Mukhtiar, **Safia Awan**, Ibra Rafique, Durray Shahwar A. Khan, Asna Sulaiman, Muhammad Arif Nadeem Saqib, Muhammad Sajid, Zahra Ali Padhani, Jai K. Das, Shazia Soomro, **Mohammad Wasay**
In Pediatric Neurology Volume 138, January 2023, Pages 33-37

Favourable prognosis in metastatic adrenal carcinoma: An unexpected outcome

Imran Hassan, **Aisha Sheikh**

In J Pak Med Assoc. 72, No. 10, October 2022

Stroke services in the Middle East and adjacent region: A survey of 34 hospital-based stroke services

Amal. M. Al Hashmi^{1*}, Ashfaq Shuaib, Yahia Imam, Dareen Amr, Hani Humaidan, Firas Al Nidawi, Ahmed Sarhan, Wessam Mustafa, Wael Khalefa, Ismail Ramadan, Fritz Sumantri Usman, Elyar Sadeghi Hokmabadi, Mohammed Ghorbani, Temeem Nassir, Farid Aladham, Athari Salmeen, Raghid Kikano, Sobri Muda, Sachin Jose, Manal Al Bulushi, Badrai Sajwani, **Mohammad Wasay**, Qasim Bashir, Adel Al Hazzani, Waleed Kojah, Radwan Alkadere, Haytham Osman, Abbashar Hussein, Anchalee Churojana, Nadia Hammami, Atilla Ozcan Ozdemir, Semih Giray, Erdem Gurkas,
Seyd Irteza Hussain, Abdul Rahman Sallam and Ossama Yassin Mansour on behalf of MENA-SINO Organization
In Frontiers in Neurology 10.3389/fneur.2022.1016376

Upcoming Events

The Aga Khan University Pakistan Initiative for Non-communicable Diseases Research Symposium

LANDSCAPE OF RESEARCH IN PAKISTAN

Conference Highlights ▶

- National and international field experts as speakers and panelists
- Opportunities for networking and collaboration
- Research discussions
- Poster Presentations

Learning Objectives ▶

- To encourage dialogue for promotion of a conducive atmosphere for NCDs research in the country
- To highlight research efforts for local, national, and international visibility
- To identify NCDs research priorities and formation of a collaborative research network

Save the Date
December 06, 2022

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