

AKU-NAMA

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Members of the MBBS Class of 2013 pose with Dr Fizza Naqvi '04 at the Alumni Reunion Dinner held on December 20, 2013.

Editorial Board Members 2014

Editor-in-Chief

Adeel A. Butt
aabout@gmail.com

Associate Editors

Faisal Qureshi
North American Chapter
president@na.akualumni.net

Rahila Zakir
Medical College, European Chapter
rahila.zakir@gmail.com

Tazeen Jafar
Medical College
tazeen.jafar@aku.edu

Amyr Malak
AKU-MC Alumni Association – Asia Chapter
amyr.malak@gmail.com

Tayyaba Ansari
Postgraduate Medical Education
tayyaba.ansari@aku.edu

Yasmin Mithani
School of Nursing and Midwifery, Pakistan
yasmin.mithani@aku.edu

Salima Sulaiman
School of Nursing and Midwifery, Pakistan
salima.sulaiman@aku.edu

Manzoor H. Changazi
Institute for Educational Development, Pakistan
manzoor.hussain@aku.edu

Joan Musau
School of Nursing and Midwifery, East Africa
joan.musau@aku.edu

Ginorah Mwamburi
Institute for Educational Development, East Africa
ginorah.mwamburi@gmail.com

Balkis Rouached
Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
balkis19hope@yahoo.ca

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Nominations Wanted!

The AKU-NAMA Editorial Board seeks nominations for distinguished alumni profiles from all programmes, departments and entities.

Please send a short profile of your nominee to: alumni@aku.edu

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Need for a Tolerant Society

Dr Adeel Butt, MBBS '90

Our world continues to suffer from increasing levels of violence. Apparent reasons for such violence include sectarian differences, religious disagreements and cultural misconceptions. Real reasons are not always clear, but more often than not involve matters of power and money. Disguising these ulterior motives as sectarian, religious or cultural is a travesty of justice, and against all religious, cultural and nationalistic norms.

Two examples from recent weeks stand out. A physician from the United States had returned to Pakistan to undertake some humanitarian work. He was gunned down in front of his family while leaving a graveyard where his relatives were buried. A young

woman was stoned to death by her relatives outside a Lahore, Pakistan courthouse for daring to marry against her family's wishes. The first case represents a frightening trend of killing our own, the best and brightest even when they are trying to help the country in some small way. The second represents the mass apathy in face of grave crimes, since no one from the crowd or the police that were present were willing or able to stop it. The silence of the masses in both instances is indicative of the moral abyss the nation has reached. There are similar instances across the world, from India to Nigeria, Egypt to China.

But what are we going to do about it? There is no concerted

effort to tackle the hate and disregard for dissent that is being woven into the fabric of our societies. Tolerance needs to start at home, and we need to preach it to ourselves, to those immediately around us and then to everyone beyond. As was aptly said by Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." There is a Hadith in *Al Muslim* stating that: Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith." Let's make a conscious attempt to strengthen our faith, our belief in tolerant, pluralist societies. ■



▲ MBBS alumni pose for a group photo at the Alumni Reunion Dinner on December 20, 2013.



▲ (L - R) Dr Anjum Halai MEd '95, Dr Saad Shafqat MBBS '88, and Ms Khadija Pirmuhammad Nursing Diploma '83 present a token of appreciation to Mr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha H.I., S.I., following his keynote address at the Alumni Reunion on December 20, 2013.



▲ Nursing alumni pose for a group photo at Alumni Reunion Dinner on December 20, 2013.

The Right Attitude is Important

Josephine Awor's academic achievement was the highest in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in the Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania campuses of AKU's School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Josephine Awor, BScN '13, grew up poor in eastern Uganda, one of eight children of a secondary school teacher. Today she holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from AKU, where she posted the highest GPA of any nurse in the class of 2013 across the University's three East Africa campuses.

committing suicide. So I took her to a side room and spent a lot of time with her. I thoroughly explained the meaning of the test, the implications, and what she can still do to protect the life of this baby in her womb. I gave her examples of people who are out there doing well, much as they are HIV-positive. Eventually,

that the next test, at 18 months, will also be negative.

"I think that was really a great intervention," said Awor, one of the 840 individuals who have earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from AKU in East Africa. "Everyone had given up with her. They were like, 'No, no, that woman is not cooperative.' But I took time to address her problem and succeeded."

Awor believes that "AKU is quite different from other nursing schools. At other places, the tutors are very rough, and they do not have the time to sit and explain things. When you look at our national training, students are often based in hostile environments. They learn to live like soldiers – they feel they have to be commanded to do something. Hospital staff may also be harsh, and people learn from that and say, 'Oh, this is how I'm supposed to behave.' Health workers develop a negative attitude. But at AKU, nobody is harsh to you. You are in a friendly environment. If you are stuck, the faculty is always willing to explain solutions."

"Nursing is actually the backbone of our health system," she added. "We'd like to have nurses out there having an impact in the community, and that is the kind of nurses AKU is training. Being a health worker – you are out to save lives. If you have a passion for what you are doing, you can always make a difference, no matter your pay." ■



Dr Maggie Kigozi, President of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Kampala presents an academic excellence award to Josephine Awor.

AKU

"AKU has changed how I practice nursing," said Awor, 33, who manages a staff of 14 at Mpumudde Health Centre in Jinja, outside of Kampala, and plans to pursue a master's degree. "I've learned to have a lot of time for my patients and to really communicate with them."

She cites the example of a pregnant woman who became despondent after learning she was HIV-positive.

"She was talking of dying and

"We'd like to have nurses out there having an impact in the community, and that is the kind of nurses AKU is training."

she accepted to start taking drugs."

Thereafter, Awor continued to follow up with the woman, including during breastfeeding. So far, the baby has tested negative twice, a promising sign, and Awor is praying

Nathaniel Zimmer, Associate Director Communications, AKU.

Keep Learning

Dr Javed Butler, MBBS '90, Professor of Medicine at Emory University, USA and Deputy Chief Science Officer for the American Heart Association reflects on his experiences at the 18th PGME Graduation Ceremony in Karachi.

“Your training has reached a milestone, but your learning is life-long. There are just far more unknowns than known about the mysteries of human biology and disease today. So we have to keep on learning. Newtonian realizations are few while most of the progress in medicine comes in small increments. It is these smaller incremental changes in knowledge however, that eventually amount to what makes the difference.”

“Circumstances may ask you to change direction in life, but what should not be negotiable is the passion ...”

“His Highness the Aga Khan once said, and I quote “The great universities of the world have a special mission – a high calling I believe – to take a leading role in



Dr Javed Butler addresses the PGME Graduation ceremony AKU

the struggle to narrow and even to eliminate the knowledge deficits which challenge our world.” We need to realize that the University is more than the four walls. It lives inside of you and me. So it is imperative that we make it a life-long mission to what His Highness alluded to, i.e. to lead the struggle to narrow and eliminate the knowledge deficits.”

“Failure is just an event, not an indictment. Failure is not in falling down but instead in not willing to try to get up once we do fall down. Circumstances may ask you to change directions in life, but what should not be negotiable is the passion with which we pursue whatever we are doing ... what differentiates the winners, is how you play whatever cards are given to us by nature.”

“Life is not about wondering why you did not get ... three aces, but instead how to play a poor hand well.”

“When all is said and done, life is short and time passes by fast. Value time. We all have 24 hours in a day. We have to sleep, eat, fulfil our civic and personal duties, and spend time with our loved ones – discretionary time is little. Be conscious of how you spend it. Efficient use of time requires effort and planning. Use it for positive purposes.” ■



Graduating residents pose for a group photo prior to the PGME Graduation ceremony with Dr Mughis Sheerani, Associate Dean PGME, President Firoz Rasul, Dr Javed Butler, Chief Guest, and Dean Medical College Dr Farhat Abbas on December 21, 2013.

The Journey Within

Dr Maria Khan Junaidi, MBBS '01, Internship '02, Residency '09, Fellowship '10, MSc '13

I still remember that warm October day in 1996 when my journey started. As a first year medical student at the Aga Khan University I was apprehensive and fearful, but also excited about what lay ahead. Little did I realise at the time that the University would grow on me the way it did. What started off as just a five-year programme transformed into an intense 17-year relationship, and I am proud to say that the bond that was formed in the process will last a lifetime.

I am told that I am the first to gain AKU alumni status five times over! I, however, feel that it is not the number of graduation ceremonies, but the countless experiences and interactions along the way that have characterised my relationship with the University.

“The fondest memory for me was the visits we made to the Edhi Centre Clinic in our final year. That was one place that really made me feel that I was making a difference in the lives of other human beings.”

It is the journey within that has defined me, and shaped who I am today. I have made the best of friends along the way, and have been fortunate to gain from the most brilliant of teachers and extraordinary colleagues, both nurses and doctors.

The Medical College years were perhaps the most carefree period I spent. It seemed that there were no real responsibilities other than achieving good grades. The fondest memory for me was of the visits we



made to the Edhi Centre clinic in our final year. That was one place that really made me feel that I was making a difference in the lives of other human beings.

Of all my time at AKU, the real bonding took place during the residency years, which followed the requisite internship. If it were not for the countless nights spent at the University Hospital, I would not have remembered AKU the way I do today. I never thought I would admit to this, but I miss having *samosas* for dinner at two in the night, and having tea loaded with sugar in the staff lounge a couple of hours later. However, amidst all of this struggle and physical labour, the experience and knowledge that I gained remains priceless.

The culture of learning grew so much on me that after residency came the fellowship. And as if that was not enough, just as everyone thought my training was finally coming to an end, I went ahead and

enrolled in the graduate programme. This turned out to be the most rigorous of all experiences in terms of academic intensity. Completing home assignments with my six-year-old son, and sharing his pencils and erasers was a unique experience in itself. Above all, the programme gave me a broader understanding of the sickness and suffering that I had been seeing in the hospital and helped me focus on the determinants of disease unlike ever before.

Looking back, each experience has shaped my personality. AKU has inculcated in me compassion, patience, the value of hard work, and above all, a thirst for knowledge.

At my fifth graduation ceremony just a few months ago, people asked me about my future plans. I just smiled and stayed quiet, for I do not know what lies ahead. However, I do know that the journey does not end here.

In fact, it is just the beginning. ■

What is Our Worth?

Faisal Ghulam Qureshi, MBBS '93

AKU medical school graduates have been very successful as academics, private physicians, politicians, public health professionals, and even as entrepreneurs. This success is one measure of our worth, but not the only one.

AKU graduates across the globe have been instrumental in trying to improve the lives of those around them especially those that are not as fortunate as we have been. This mission comes naturally to us because that is what we saw happening around us during our time at the University.

Our professors genuinely cared for our success, our seniors guided us, and our institution looked after people in Karachi that everyone else forgot. These lessons have stayed

with us and we continue to apply them to our lives every day.

“Our professors genuinely cared for our success, our seniors guided us, and our institution looked after the people in Karachi that everyone else forgets. These lessons have stayed with us and we continue to apply them to our lives every day.”

Now we have a chance to use the strength of our numbers to do more. I do not have the perfect method or formula but I

know that every little bit helps and that our alumni association needs membership, participation and collective guidance to move forward.

Whether we decide to help start a NICU in Hyderabad or a major student endowment, provide grants for research or a myriad of other programmes, one thing is extremely clear: we must make a difference. To this end, I encourage everyone to become a member of his or her alumni chapter. Pay your dues, give voice to your ideas, and become active locally, nationally and internationally. Start the conversation at your next event and convince others of the importance of this work. You will find leaders amongst yourselves and only your involvement will help us succeed. ■

What Alumni Can Do

Haider Warraich, MBBS '09

I have frequently been asked about what makes the Aga Khan University a special place. What people are hoping to learn is if there is a secret formula behind the success of AKU graduates or if there is a secret society that helps place students in research and residency spots.

To me the answer has always been very simple: while AKU has great teachers and tremendous facilities, its greatest strength is the community of graduates it has created.

My relationship with AKU alumni began even before I took the entry test to apply to the University.

In the summer of 2003, I met Ali Safdar, who had just graduated from the University. Not only was I unsure about whether AKU was the place for me, I was still undecided about pursuing a career in medicine. Ali, whom I met by chance when he came to my school in Rawalpindi to visit his brother, not only convinced me to apply to AKU but also mentored me throughout the entire process. That was just the first instance of how an AKU alumnus helped shape my career.

As an alumnus myself now, I am keenly aware of my role as a representative of not only my country but especially my institution.

However, the contribution of any individual is limited. My futon can only accommodate two people at a time and I can only ask a limited number to help interview AKU graduates for residency or research.

The alumni association, though, does not have any such limitations. In fact, as last year's astounding donation from the Class of '88 demonstrated, the alumni association is becoming increasingly resourceful.

It is time that the younger generation of alumni took up the banner and played their role in strengthening the alumni association. ■

On the Frontline

Dr Rafat Jan Rukanuddin, General Nursing '83, AKU; MScN, University of South Carolina '94; PhD, University of Iowa, '04 is currently Associate Professor at the School of Nursing and Midwifery. With a strong passion for midwifery, she became the first Director of AKU's undergraduate midwifery programme. Dr Jan also serves as President of the Midwifery Association of Pakistan, as Chair of the South Asian Midwifery Alliance and was recently elected as a board member of the South Asian International Confederation of Midwives.

When did your association with AKU begin?

With the very first class: the Class of '83. On our first day, His Highness The Aga Khan came to our class and said, "work hard, work hard, work hard." Later at the formal opening he said, "If you fail I've failed, if you succeed, Pakistan will be rewarded." These words have guided me throughout my professional life.

Over the years, I have seen the barren landscape change their colour to green and the small School of Nursing develop into the School of Nursing and Midwifery.



From the time you stepped into the profession, how have you seen midwifery change?

When I entered this profession, there was no higher education option for midwives. This lack contributed to the 'non-acceptance' of the profession and made midwives 'invisible' within the entire health care scenario. At the same time, the autonomous practice of midwifery was absent and in many South Asian countries the term 'midwife' did not even have any legal cover.

The recent launch by AKU of Pakistan's first ever degree programme in midwifery will, I believe, have a profound impact on

maternal and neonatal mortality in Pakistan, while leading to excellence in evidence-based midwifery practice, teaching and leadership. Since the programme is based on a competency-based curriculum

– identifying the characteristics that graduating students should demonstrate – it is bound to serve as a prototype for countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Afghanistan.

Although we understand that a bachelor's programme is absolutely necessary

as a university-wide programme, we also realise that not everybody can enter a university-based programme because not everybody can be eligible. However, this does not mean that we cannot produce competent midwives.

To fill in this gap, we are planning continuing professional education for midwives: short trainings in midwifery at SONAM from the platform of the Midwifery Association of Pakistan (MAP). We are training tutors for these short courses and, after much canvassing, have received funds from various donor agencies.

I have been approached by the government to start a similar programme within the public sector in any one of the other provinces.

This will build on earlier initiatives: in 2013, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) funded 24 public sector candidates from the four provinces and promised that each year, till 2017, it will fund another 12 women (3 from each province) from the public sector. The Pakistan Nursing Council has also lent considerable support to our endeavours.

What role do you see the midwifery association playing in the future?

In December 2013, MAP held a formal meeting in Dubai bringing together midwives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. At that meeting it was agreed that South Asian Midwifery Alliance (SAMA) would be the regional umbrella organization and the country association would fall under it. This year, at the International Confederation of Midwives Congress in Prague in June, we launched the regional online Journal of Asian Midwives; hosted by AKU library it will be an online free access journal. In 2015, we are hoping to have a meeting in Pakistan and formally launch SAMA, which will provide continuing professional education, disseminate evidence-based research for midwives of the region, strengthen regulation and associations, and ultimately advocate for better care for pregnant women and babies. ■

Writing *The Lost Pearl*

Lara Zuberi, MBBS '00, knew she wanted to be a writer long before she decided on a career in medicine. "I said I would become a writer when I was seven, which was many years before I said I would become a doctor," she admits candidly.

But when it came to making a choice on her profession she opted, somewhat reluctantly and with some gentle prodding from her parents, for medicine.

In spite of AKU's gruelling schedule, there was enough time for some light-hearted moments as well. Zuberi still recalls the laughter bubbling through the quad, the taste of cafeteria tea and, above all, the camaraderie of sharing in the experience of becoming a doctor.

Post MBBS, Zuberi completed her residency followed by a fellowship. During a year's hiatus from medicine, an old friend suggested that she set about to fulfil her dream of becoming an author. "I needed to write because once I decided to go ahead, it became an obsession."

Her maiden creative project, the novel, *The Lost Pearl*, was the culmination of this obsession.

A creative mix of fiction and nostalgia about a young girl's feelings about her family and the alienation she experiences having to leave the country of her birth, drawing upon her feelings of leaving her birthplace in the US



"Charity was an easy decision ... there is so much to be done and we all share the responsibility of creating a better world."

The Story

The tragedy of her father's death forces nine-year-old Sana Shah to leave her home in Pakistan, and move to California. As time passes, she remains tormented by her memories as she struggles to rediscover her identity in a foreign land. She attends Stanford, where she meets Ahmer who becomes the source of her happiness. However, their lives become intertwined in unexpected ways. The obstacles are countless and may be impossible to overcome. ■

for Pakistan at just 6 years old. The novel explores the strength of human relationships caught up in tumultuous situations.

"I wanted to write a story with a subtle moral message, something sad enough to touch the heart, but happy enough to lift it up again."

Zuberi who teaches haematology/oncology at the University of Florida, Jacksonville, feels that all of us share a responsibility of creating a better world. *The Lost Pearl* is her opportunity to make that difference.

Fifty per cent of the sales from her novel are being donated towards the health care costs of underprivileged cancer patients in Pakistan.

"I chose cancer patients in Pakistan, because that way I can indirectly participate in oncologic care in Pakistan while being physically far away," explains Zuberi. ■

Request for Contributions

You are invited to contribute to the next issue of the magazine. Articles should be approximately 500-600 words, while images must be 300 dpi resolution digital photographs (jpeg files over 1MB). Submit articles at www.aku.edu/alumni/articlesubmissionform. Share your successes with other AKU alumni by submitting your class notes at www.aku.edu/alumni/classnotessubmissionform. Do you know any alumni still not on the AKU-NAMA mailing list? Direct them to www.aku.edu/alumniform. Thank you for all your previous submissions, feedback and suggestions.

CONVOCATION



From L to R: Graduands, Grace Wachuka, Miriam Muthomi, Risper Muthomi, Irene Khalibwa and Ammet Kingwa pose together as they arrive for the Kenya Convocation ceremony held in Nairobi on February 12, 2014.



Annet Kngwa, BScN Graduate, celebrates the milestone with her son following the Kenya Convocation on February 12, 2014.



MEd graduate, Franklin Omar Borura, delivers the valedictory address at the Tanzania Convocation ceremony held in Dar es Salaam on February 5, 2014.



Masiko Gad, AKU-IED (EA) graduate and Ugandan resident, receives his MEd degree from Mr Yusuf Keshavjee, member AKU Board of Trustees, at the Uganda Convocation held in Kampala on February 8, 2014



BScN graduands pose for a class photo with the graduation party and Chief Guest, Prof Sifuni Mchome, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Educational and Vocational Training, Tanzania prior to the Tanzania Convocation ceremony held in Dar es Salaam on February 5, 2014.



From L to R: Twemanye Juliet, Alimpa Ben and Nalukwago Christine, graduates from the Nursing Diploma programme pose outside the venue following the Uganda Convocation ceremony on February 8, 2014.



Nabadda Christine, receives her Nursing Diploma from Mr Yusuf Keshavjee, member AKU Board of Trustees at the Uganda Convocation on February 8, 2014.



BScN graduands pose for a class photo with the Convocation party and the School of Nursing and Midwifery faculty prior to the Uganda Convocation held on February 8, 2014.

CONVOCATION



Dr Mughis Sheerani, Associate Dean PGME, Dean Medical College, Dr Farhat Abbas and Dr Javed Butler, Chief Guest at the 18th PGME Graduation held on December 21, 2013.



From L to R: MBBS graduates, Syed Muzzammil Uddin, Nadeem Khan and Sarosh Ahmed Khan following the Pakistan Convocation ceremony held in Karachi on December 19, 2013.



From L to R: MBBS graduates, Zarak Khan Shiraz and Muhammad Hasnain Chatha following the Pakistan Convocation ceremony on December 19, 2013.



From L to R: MBBS graduands, Omar Akhter, Jamal Hussain Mahar, Sobia Nasir Laique, Zeeshan Nasir Shaikh and Moiz Salahuddin as they arrive for the Pakistan Convocation ceremony held in Karachi on December 19, 2013.



From L to R: MScN graduates, Layla Abdullah, Ambreen Gowani, Sehrish Pirani, Shahina Essani, Rozina Khimani, Mehtab Jaffer, Shirin Rajan, Sajida Chagani and Yasmeen Khowaja pose together following the Pakistan Convocation ceremony held at Stadium Road, Karachi, on December 19, 2013.



From L to R: Muhammad Nasir, Naureen Wazir Ali Hussaini and Barkatullah Khan after receiving their Post RN BScN degrees.



Dr Tania Arshad Siddiqui (Orthodontics) delivers the valedictory address on behalf of graduating residents at the PGME Graduation ceremony held in Karachi on December 21, 2013.



Dr Ghulam Murtaza receives the Excellence in Research Award (Residency) in the Department of Surgery at the PGME Graduation ceremony from Chief Guest, Dr Javed Butler MBBS '90, as President Firoz Rasul (centre) looks on.

From Karachi to Lecco and Back

Muhammad Hamayun Hameed, Residency '11, Fellowship '13

A story of a fellowship in two very distinct cities

If anyone had asked in early 2011 whether I would get a chance to travel to Italy to complete my fellowship, I would have doubted the sincerity of the question.

But by the time I graduated from my AKU orthopaedics residency programme in December of the same year, I had developed a keen interest in two orthopaedic surgery techniques – Ilizarov and adult reconstructive surgery – and knew exactly where I had to go to get the best possible training.

The Alessandro Manzoni Hospital in Lecco, Italy.

So I wrote off to Professor M.A. Catagni, Chief of the Orthopaedic and Ilizarov Department, requesting a fellowship in Ilizarov surgery. He approved a two-month fellowship and I joined the programme in November 2012.

The picturesque city of Lecco, just 50 km north of industrialised Milan, is a landscape of centuries-old villas and parks. Surrounded by the Bergamo Alps on all sides, with the beautiful Lake Como and history-rich towns and ancient monuments nearby, it is one of the cultural attractions of northern Italy.

The Alessandro Manzoni Hospital – named after the famous poet and author of 1827 novel *The Betrothed* – is a state-of-the-art facility. The orthopaedic clinic is purpose built and has all the facilities to cater to Ilizarov patients. The clinic also has a very effective follow-up system, which allowed me

to attend on patients that had been operated on many months and even years ago. I was fortunate to be working with Dr Catagni, one of the founders of ASAMI (Association for the Study and Application of the Method of Ilizarov International and External Fixation) International.

“Celebrating Christmas in Europe and spending a weekend in Zurich are things I will remember my whole life.”

Dr Catagni and his team were humble, friendly and relaxed. I still distinctly remember our daily evening walks around Lake Como. Italy is a beautiful country, highlighting the distinctive cultures from the Romans on. It was a great experience to visit Milan, Venice, Rome, Florence, Bergamo, Bellagio and various hill stations. Celebrating Christmas in Europe and spending a weekend in Zurich are things I will remember my whole life.

After returning to Pakistan, I joined a year-long fellowship in adult reconstructive surgery with Dr Mohammad Umar, founder of the orthopaedic department at AKUH. My aim was to improve my skills in primary and revision joint replacement surgeries, and I was provided with ample opportunity to do just that. Dr Umar was always willing to teach, to demonstrate and practically guide me on how to deal with difficult operative steps in troublesome joints. Apart from joint replacements, I was also dealing with trauma surgery, arthroscopic surgeries and paediatrics.

I never really had the chance to explore Karachi during the tough orthopaedic residency at AKU. I made up for that missed opportunity during my fellowship. My fellowship ended in May 2013 and in June I joined my posting as a Senior Registrar in Bolan Medical Complex Hospital, Quetta, equipped not only with a world of knowledge but also the memories of two very unique cities. ■



Dr Catagni and Dr Humayun

Humayun Hameed

Saving Lives through Early Childhood Education – Badakhshan

In the remote and mountainous areas of Badakhshan, Afghanistan, when people get sick, they use opium as an alternative to medicine.

This way of healing is used not only by adults but is also a recommended practice to put children to sleep which is mostly understood as a sign of ‘healthiness’ by mothers. During winters, some mothers even blowback opium smoke in the mouth and face of their children to cure their illness.

Worse, most houses where majority of the people in Badakhshan live are built using mud and wood with little or no ventilation due to the severe cold weather. Children are then forced to breathe secondhand opium smoke from smokers in the family.

It is certainly due to these malpractices that around 5,000 children are opium-addicted in Badakhshan and are growing up without even experiencing a single day of a healthy and normal life.

Non-government educational organizations’ interventions have increasingly helped these children with their holistic development. Access to education in general and early childhood development (ECD) interventions in particular are considered a ‘healing touch’, in managing these very complex and culturally dominant practices in Afghanistan.

Recently, I got an opportunity to visit Qazi Deh ECD centre in a very remote area of Badakhshan. One of the ECD teachers shared an eye-opening story of a five-year-old child who had joined the ECD programme. During the first 6 months, this child appeared to be very upset, isolated, tired, silent, always complaining of body aches

and taking no interest in playing with the other children.

The ECD teachers became curious and started to explore the reason behind all this weariness and sickness.

They approached his parents but found them unwilling to discuss the issue. They approached their neighbours and learnt that “the child and his parents are opium addicts”.

The ECD teachers admitted the child to the anti-addiction clinic where the doctor confirmed that the child was a drug-addict. This child

It implies that early childhood education and development experiences not only provide intellectual stimulation but also serve as an entry point to help children live a healthy life.

remained in the clinic for 25 days before he was sent home. During his recovery, the ECD teachers played a pivotal role: bringing him to the ECD centre regularly, spending quality time with him and feeding him with healthy food so that he recovered quicker. Their efforts paid back, after a short period of treatment and care, the child became energetic, vibrant and jolly.

Today, he is in grade 4 and stands first amongst his classmates

in the school.

The ECD teachers shared that they had, much later, probed the parents about why they had kept their child’s addiction hidden. “If we had shared it, he would not have been given a chance to join the ECD class with other children,” was the parent’s response.

This story has both happy and sad messages. It is very sad, as these innocent children are living a life they have not chosen nor had any part in deciding.

The positive messages of this story are manifold. It implies that early childhood education and development experiences not only provide intellectual stimulation but also serve as an entry point to help children live a healthy life. It highlights the fact that NGOs interventions are not only changing lives, but also saving the lives of children in very remote areas of Afghanistan.

The child in this story, may not be the first nor the last drug-addicted child in Afghanistan but this must be the way forward – with aid from the international community, NGOs and government educational institutions should focus on investing in early childhood development opportunities, to provide children with a platform to grow, develop, flourish and finally be the leaders of tomorrow! ■

Omidullah Khawary, MEd '12 is currently working as a Head, Human Resources Management and Development at the Aga Khan Education Service, Afghanistan.

This article first appeared in Outlook Afghanistan on June 9, 2014.

Fast Medicine

Asad I. Mian, MBBS' 97, MD, PhD is a paediatrician, ER physician and clinical researcher. He's an Associate Professor at the Aga Khan University. He is author of An Itinerant Observer published available through Amazon.com.

Around the turn of the century, Y2K was ushering in a doomsday scenario. I, on the other hand, as a young physician-scientist, was quite excited. You see, I was quite confident that knowledge of our genetic heritage would be the panacea that the world was seeking. I think the lure of genes and genomes was merely an obsession for me. However, once I realized that, on a global scale, sustainable health for kids was not going to come from the deciphering of genetic codes, I had to switch my trajectory.

First came the awareness that I could no longer be an indefinite graduate student. That realization was made all the more potent when Ayesha, my wife, threatened to enrol in graduate school for English Literature in lieu of her relatively better compensated psychiatry residency. In order to determine what I wanted to do, clinically and academically, I remember asking myself a few hard-hitting questions. The most crucial was: 'Where can I make the most difference or have the most impact with the least effort?'

The Emergency Room, being the answer to the above question, was not all that apparent initially. Swapping a cerebral field like medical genetics with an adrenalin-driven ER setting required a bit of a leap of faith. I was exchanging a group of untreatable rare disorders with readily-treatable, frequently-encountered paediatric illnesses. Being able to do something for the kids being seen in the ER was a significant motivator for continuing with that line of work.

Working in an ER in a major metropolitan area provides a

fascinating view of humanity.

The ER is a microcosm that is a reflection of the real world outside.

People bring their presumably



sick children to be fixed; in their minds, my stethoscope becomes the proverbial magic wand, as potent as Harry Potter's. Just like their other problems, medical ones should be tackled instantly and gratification achieved ... yes, instantly. For now, I often ask myself whether I have the ability to be a true healer or am I just doling out quick, albeit temporary, fixes to medical ailments of children that for the most part would eventually self-resolve. I have also figured over the past few years that more than the sick child, the overly anxious parent (usually the mother) requires much more placation.

As a medical professional educated in the 'developing' world, having practiced medicine for fifteen years in the 'developed' world, and now being back as a faculty member at my Alma Mater in the

'developing' world, I question those labels. There are pockets of underdeveloped, underserved and developing communities in the developed world. It is likely that an ER doctor in a poor rural county hospital of the U.S. faces much the same issues as an ER doctor in a big city of a developing nation - both settings have limited access to resources and thus have to deal with absurd expectations of large numbers of patients as well as hospital administrations.

At the end of the day, there are significant limitations that the medical infrastructure faces no matter where you are in today's world. The doctor's honesty about what medicine can or cannot achieve, or how fast, should be matched by the public's patience with and realism about their 'healers'.

Health generates passion and interest in experts and non-experts alike. And so it should. If one's mind and body are unhealthy then we are unlikely to be productive members of society. Unhealthy minds and bodies cannot be educated. This does raise an interesting chicken versus the egg paradox: is a healthy mind and body needed prior to any hope of education, or is an educated mind needed prior to a healthy state being achieved? In either situation, I feel that education drives targeting the community about health and disease, can be a move towards sustainably improving health, and not just merely 'fixing' diseases in ER and hospital settings.

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School of Nursing and Midwifery, Pakistan

1987

Amina Hussain Ali née Jivani, Diploma, is working as a Critical Care Registered Nurse. She has been living in the USA for the last 20 years and completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from Florida Southern College. She recently passed her Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner exam and is licensed to practice as an ARNP in the State of Florida. She credits her achievements to the strong foundations laid at AKU and AKUH.

1991

Laila Rafique née Bhayani, Diploma, is based in Toronto, Canada, and in 2012 completed her BScN from Ryerson University, Ontario. She is presently enrolled in the MScN programme at Athabasca University, Canada.

Laila Valliani née Gowani, Diploma, completed her BScN from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1996 and MSN in Nursing Education from East Carolina University in 2012. She is currently enrolled in a postgraduate Family Nurse Practitioner programme at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

1993

Zohra Ashraf Kurji née Khoja, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2006, is currently working as Senior Instructor and Co-Chair of the Curriculum Committee at SONAM. She completed the Global Tobacco Control Certificate Program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

1995

Khairunnisa Mansoor, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2000, completed her master's degree in Advanced Nursing Practice on a Commonwealth Scholarship from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, in September 2013. She has since joined AKUH Home Healthcare Services as a head nurse.

2001

Mehtab Qutbuddin Jaffer, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2007, MScN 2013 has joined the Department of Emergency Medicine at AKU as Nurse Specialist.

2003

Shela Akbarali Hirani, BScN, MScN 2010, is an Assistant Professor at SONAM. She has also successfully passed her International Board Certified Lactation Consultant Examination in 2013.

2006

Niaz Ahmad, BScN, secured an AusAid scholarship after a competitive qualification process. The scholarship award enabled him to join the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, where he is enrolled in a Master in Health Management programme.

Nourin Mansoor Ali, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2012, is currently working as Assistant Head Nurse in Ward B2 at AKUH. She enjoys the working environment which promotes safety and is also conducive to learning.

Yasmeen Rahim Ali née Hassan Ali, BScN is currently working as a Senior Nursing Instructor at Saida Waheed Fatima Memorial Hospital, College of Nursing, Lahore.

2007

Atiya Hussain Khowaja, BScN, MSc HPM 2012, is working as Research Specialist, Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at AKU.

Kiran Sadruddin, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2013, joined AKU as a Registered Nurse almost five years ago and is presently working in the Cardiac Cath Lab.

Rabia M Iqbal née Parpio, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2012, is working as an Assistant Head Nurse in Home Health Care at AKUH.

2008

Hasina Amin Punjwani, Post RN BScN, is currently residing in Toronto, Canada.

Saira Khimani, BScN, has been actively involved in the ongoing polio immunization campaign in Pakistan. She salutes care providers who are working selflessly under difficult circumstances for a polio-free Pakistan.

Sehrish Munir Farhan née Sultan Ali, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2013, is working as an Assistant Head Nurse in Private Wing II at AKUH, Karachi. During her Post RN BScN, she was recognised for the highest GPA in the programme, and received a merit scholarship, distinction in Nursing Research, Mental Health Nursing and Community Health Nursing. She was also placed on the Dean's Honour Roll.

2009

Amber Ali Muhammad, BScN, MBioeth 2012, is working as Senior Research Associate at the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at Aga Khan University.

Kiran Anwer Bardai, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2013 is working as Operating Room Coordinator at the AKUH, Karachi.

Layla Abdullah, BScN, MScN 2012, is working as Clinical Nurse Instructor at the Coronary Care Unit at AKUH, Karachi.

Mehreen Murtaza Ali, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2013, enjoyed becoming an AKU alumna all over again with the completion of her Post RN BScN programme in 2013. During the course of the programme, she received a scholarship in year one, a distinction in Nursing Research, and was placed on the Dean's Honour Roll.

Samina Qamruddin Ladhani, Diploma, Post RN BScN 2013 recently moved to the United Arab Emirates and is enrolled in a distance-learning course on the role of research in health professions from the University of California, San Francisco.

Saniya Riaz née Khowaja Karim, Diploma, recently joined ER at AKUH, Karachi after having been at Ward B1 for two years.

2010

Sunila Munir Lalji, Diploma, is currently enrolled in Post RN BScN course and looks forward to graduating later this year.

2012

Anam Feroz Pathani, BScN, is working as a Registered Nurse in the Department of Medicine at AKUH. She is also working as a programme officer with the National Committee for Maternal and Child Health. The Committee works under the chairmanship of the Federal Secretary Health, Government of Pakistan, for safe motherhood and

prevention of maternal and neonatal deaths and disabilities.

Kiran Qasim Ali, BScN, is enrolled in the MEd programme at IED. She is involved in a special course on health promotion in schools aimed at promoting health through education.

Nourin Abdul Karim Badruddin Shivji, Diploma, recently celebrated two major milestones: The first was completion of a fast-track BScN from Ziauddin University College of Nursing, and the other, her marriage to Farhan Ali.

2013

Kashif Shahzad Ghulam, Post RN BScN, got promoted to Assistant Head Nurse of Oncology Unit at AKUH, Karachi following the completion of his degree.

Shazia Sardar Khan, Post RN BScN, recently transferred to Cardiac ICU at AKUH as a Registered Nurse.

Medical College, Pakistan

2002

Khorrum Essa Abdullah, Residency, FRC Path UK 2007, has been working as a Consultant Histopathologist in the United Kingdom since 2007.

2004

Farhan Vakani, MSc HPM, Assistant Manager, Department of Continuing Professional Education, AKU, has been nominated for the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Award 2014-15. The programme provides for a year of professional enrichment in the United States for experienced professionals from designated countries throughout the world.

Muhammad Jawad Sethi, MBBS, is a Diplomate American Board of Clinical Lipidology, 2013, and Senior Fellow Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, University of Arizona, Tucson.

2007

Awais Amjad Malik, MBBS, is Surgical Resident at Services Institute of Medical Sciences, Lahore.

Salman Ali, Advanced Diploma HDP, is currently working at Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan as the Early Childhood Development Coordinator in Gilgit-Baltistan. After having successfully completed the Releasing Confidence and Creativity Programme in ECD, he hopes to be part of a larger scale effort in coordination with AKU and the Aga Khan Development Network's health and planning and building services focusing on expectant mothers and young children.

2009

Haider Warraich, MBBS, was awarded second place by the American College of Cardiology's 2014 Young Investigator Award Committee.

Sidra Ishaque, MBBS, Internship 2011, is pursuing a residency in paediatrics at AKU. She was awarded a certificate as the best first year resident in paediatrics 2013, and was also selected as a member of the Karachi-US Youth Council 2014.

2010

Lu Sam, Advanced Diploma HDP, was selected from Myanmar as a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow, 2013-14 to study in the US for 10 months. Currently working as Education Program Coordinator for Save the

Children, Myanmar she is hopeful that her experience in the US will help build partnerships between Myanmar's government and civil society to create high-quality early childhood interventions.

2011

Farid Khan, MBBS, is currently working in the Maldives as Surgical Medical Officer. His work focuses on recruiting pre- and post-operative patients for various research studies with WHO.

Muhammad Waseem Khan, MBioeth, is working as a Lecturer in the Department of Biotechnology and Informatics, Faculty of Life Sciences and Informatics, Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Qurratal Ain Fatimah, MBBS, celebrated the arrival of a baby boy, Muhammad Hashim, in November 2013. In January 2014, she started work as Research Assistant with the National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland.

2013

Minaz Zulfiqar Mawani, MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics,



Ms Minaz Mawani MSc EpiBio 2013

is the first recipient of the Fogarty Research Fellowship from her programme. She successfully completed her research fellowship in acute care, injuries and trauma from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and has recently joined AKU's Department of Medicine, as a Senior Instructor in Research.



Ms Nida Zahid MSc EpiBio 2013

Nida Zahid, MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics, recalls the two memorable years spent at AKU where she underwent an intense course of study, which required great levels of hard work and devotion. She acknowledges the faculty and staff at the Department of Community Health Sciences as great resources.

Institute for Educational Development, Pakistan

2000

Meenaz Shams MEd, PhD, is proud to be the first IED MEd alumna to have also completed a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from IED in 2013.

Mohammad Khan, MEd, is working as an Interim Head at IED

Professional Development Centre, Chitral since December 2012.

2010

Saeed Akhtar Awan, MEd, received a promotion to Grade 18, and is now working as a Senior Subject Specialist in the Directorate of Education Extension,

Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir. He is blessed to have four lovely sons and a daughter, and asks for prayers for his eldest son who is being treated for a serious medical condition.

Amina Baig, MEd, is working as a Research Officer at Aga Khan Education Services, P. She is based in Gilgit where she is a key resource in developing rural curriculum. She believes this achievement is a result of the professional development training at IED, which enabled her to progress from a teacher to a research officer and finally to a curriculum developer.

2011

Murad Baig, MEd, worked at AKES, P for three months and later joined the public sector as a teacher. Last year, he qualified as a Head Teacher in Grade 17 and has further been accepted as Lecturer Grade 17.

