

## **The Aga Khan University - Pakistan Initiative for Non-Communicable Diseases (AKUPI-NCDs) Research Training Program**

**Funded by National Institute of Health, USA**

### **Primary Investigator:**

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### **Project Summary:**

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent an extraordinary global crisis. Over three quarters of all NCD related deaths and 82% of premature NCD-related deaths occur in low-middle income countries (LMIC). Locally relevant, high-quality data regarding NCDs are scarce and most low-middle income countries (LMICs) like Pakistan, are not equipped to manage this epidemic. A critical gap in the response of LMICs to the NCD epidemic is a dearth of trained researchers who can contribute to the understanding of prevalence, risk factors, and development and testing of safe, effective, and low-cost solutions.

With the aim to address this dearth and directly increase Pakistan's research capacity, the AKUPI-NCDs Research Training Program is a collaboration of the Department of Medicine, Institute for Global Health at the Aga Khan University and Duke University, USA.

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### **The Early Career Research Accelerator –A (ECRA-A) in NCD**

The ECRA in NCD is one of the long-term career path included in the AKUPI-NCDs research training program. Its goal is to launch independent NCDs research career of candidates who have shown commitment towards research. **Two PhD candidates will be funded as part of ECRA-A track over a period of 5 years.**

**Selected candidates will join the Department of Medicine as Instructors and will have 100% time protected for research for 4 years.** They will also develop individualized career development plans, receive close mentoring from faculty at AKU, Duke and Program director, and compete for funding research project independently. The research projects will be based on surveillance or implementation studies in CVD, leveraging data science/ E-health. Table 1 summarizes the requirements of ECRA-A

<b>Table 1. Requirements for Early Career Research Accelerator –A (ECRA-A) in NCD</b>	
<b>Number of trainees</b>	2 candidates (2021-2025)
<b>Training Objective</b>	The objective of the PhD program is to produce experts in cardiovascular disease /risk factor research who can do impactful research in the developing world.
<b>Training Institution</b>	AKU
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant with a minimum of 18 years of education including a Master’s/ MPhil or equivalent degree.</li> <li>• A minimum CGPA of 3.0 (out of 4.0 in the Semester System) in MPhil / MS /FCPS /FRCP / equivalent degree</li> </ul>
<b>Selection Process</b>	<p>Interested candidates will be assessed for their commitment to research and learning in NCDs. The assessment will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal statement</li> <li>• One-page research objective on the NCD area they wish to work on</li> <li>• Interview</li> <li>• <i>All candidates will have to go through the standard admission process of AKU. Please visit <a href="https://www.aku.edu/admissions/phd-hs/">https://www.aku.edu/admissions/phd-hs/</a></i></li> </ul>
<b>Didactic Training</b>	PhD course work, Departmental Journal Clubs, Research Seminar Series, Career development program
<b>Mentoring Structure</b>	Mentoring committee: 1 primary mentor from AKU, 1 primary mentor from Duke and a PhD supervisor
<b>Duration</b>	4 years
<b>Research Practicum</b>	Develop and execute a surveillance or implementation research project focusing on cardiovascular disease, stroke, or their risk factors...
<b>Research Grant</b>	\$20,000/candidate project subject to approval by Training management committee
<b>Deliverable</b>	1 original manuscript, 1 national presentation, 1 local/ international grant submission
<b>Program Director</b>	Dr. Aysha Almas
<b>To Apply</b>	<p>Interested candidates should apply through online AKU admissions portal <b>latest by April 28, 2022</b>. The stream for PhD will be “Population and Public Health”.</p> <p>Link: <a href="https://www.aku.edu/admissions/phd-hs/Pages/home.aspx">https://www.aku.edu/admissions/phd-hs/Pages/home.aspx</a></p> <p>For queries, please contact <a href="mailto:safia.awan@aku.edu">safia.awan@aku.edu</a></p>