

Department of Surgery | *Edition 1*



Dr Inam Pal vividly capturing the flight of an AKU bird

The Monthly Stitch

New Year's Message

Salaam to all at the start of another year in the Gregorian calendar! Most year end's and beginnings are periods of introspection for people, or at least one where there is a pause and some reflection.

In addition – a new year is also time for new beginnings, and this newsletter is one of those things. For those of you who have been here long enough, it may seem like going 'back to the future', as there was a newsletter a while back, but hopefully this will be different and a nice way to communicate all the wonderful things happening in our department, which are otherwise difficult to have in one place!

In the 4 months that I have been at AKU, my reflections were mostly centered on being grateful and humbled. Grateful for a strong and dynamic department that was handed over by Ather Enam that constantly strives to provide outstanding care, despite many challenges faced that are beyond their control. And humility for being asked to lead and at the realization that we have huge obstacles in front of us to negotiate and grow.

Our ten sections are filled with enterprising surgeons and each one of them having their own dreams and goals. None of us is keen to keep a status quo, rather each of us is wanting to grow personally and enhance the mission of the department.

The year started with the induction of new residents and fellows – ushering in the yearly sense of renewal in our education mission and the sense of duty we have to train, teach, and mentor these excellent young minds and hands. They are all here to help us take care of our patients and to eventually take the torch from us to care for the next generation (which includes us!!).

We will have our Annual Research Day coming up next month, lead by Ather, Fazli, Shariff, Azhar and so many others. It promises to be an exciting time for us to get together and talk about research! With that time, we also need to think about a theme for next year's conference too. In the 40th year of AKU's existence, we will have the time to think and to project the department's strengths in scholarly work and beyond.

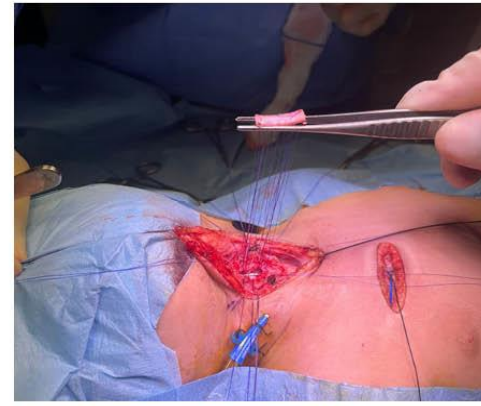
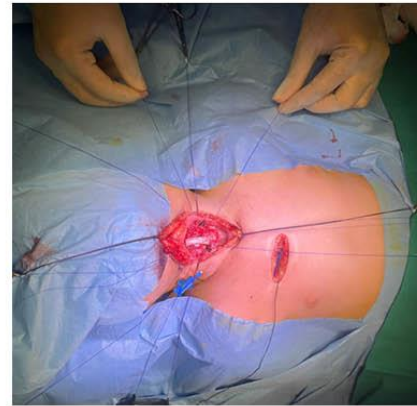
At the end of April or beginning of May, we will plan to have a Strategic vision and goals retreat. This will help us to come up with a collaborative plan that will chart our course for the next 3-5 years and include measurable outcomes. While the patient is always at the center of what we do, having a guidepost is always important to make sure we are in the correct direction and pace.

Let's have a wonderful and productive year ahead – and resolve to work thru every obstacle by doing whatever it takes.

Live long and Prosper!

Saleem Islam
Chair, Department of Surgery

Rare Highlights : Worth Applaud



Dr Moghira Iqbal did the nation's first infant cricoid split and autologous cartilage implant for subglottic stenosis cricoid split laryngotracheoplasty without tracheotomy for a 13-month-old child for subglottic stenosis. The child is discharged and is doing fine. This is the first such case at AKU and Pakistan.

Furthermore, a new technology called coblation is also acquired, which is used for the first time at AKU for another pediatric patient with a laryngeal lesion. Coblation-assisted other procedures will soon be offered at our centre.



A Faculty of Computer Science, GIK Institute delegation visited the Department of Surgery, AKU. MoU was signed between the two parties to promote research collaborations, the exchange of expertise, and joint training programs in AI in healthcare.



One of our patients was packed in Afghanistan and travelled for 48 hours – handbagged in the ambulance (a record in itself). Two others required liver resection and one additional nephrectomy; they required extensive support to maintain hemodynamics intraoperative and in intensive care. All have made an excellent recovery. It is a nice mini-success to celebrate. The Team includes Dr Faisal and trauma fellow Dr Madeeha – with our patient Sikander (Picture shared with patient's consent).



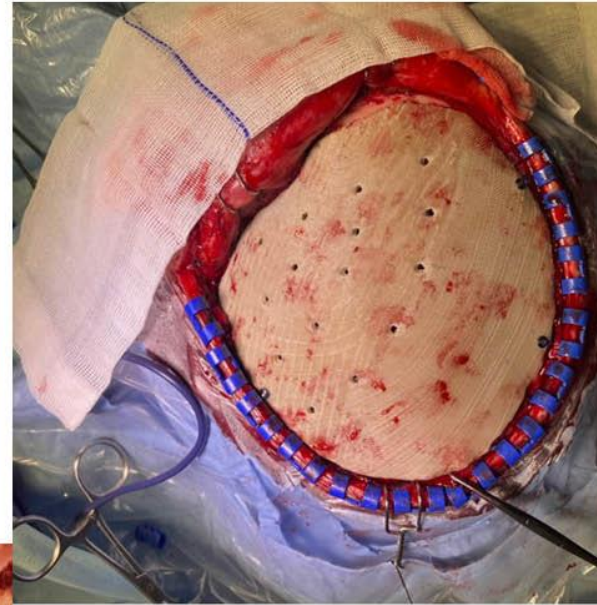
Dr Farhan served as a Judge for the resident / PG students' oral and poster presentation competition at the Pakistan Association of Dental Research annual conference scheduled in Lahore on 12th January 2023. He also gave an Oral presentation on Day 3, 14th January 2023, followed by moderating/ hosting a panel discussion session after the conference on the same day.



Dr Robia completed her fellowship successfully in the field of orofacial pain and dental sleep medicine after fulfilling the requirements by ROSEMAN UNIVERSITY by the credential board (ABOP, AAOP) as a fellow for the practice of TMD, OROFACIAL PAIN & SLEEP MEDICINE after completing 150 hours face to face.



Dr Syeda Sakina Abidi cleared her FCPS Breast Surgery. She is the program's first fellow eligible and passed the exam since CPSP accredited AKUH for Breast Surgery Fellowship in 2020!



First 3D printed PEEK implant cranioplasty with implant

3D printed cranioplasty implants for the first time at AKU. Neurosurgeons at AKU used indigenously made 3D-printed PEEK implants for cranioplasty in one patient and imported 3D-printed titanium implants for another patient. This marked an advancement towards the use of technology and capacity building of locally available resources. We used two different kinds of 3D-printed implants. The above one was made in AKU and of a material called PEEK. The other one was made of titanium but also made through 3D printing.

Diversity in Surgery



'Pilot, Archer, Philozoic and Surgeon- Dr Zia-ul-Islam'

Dr Zia took archery as a sport in Oct 2018 on his 50th birthday. Pakistan is ranked very low in the sport, and players still need to qualify to play in the Olympics. Currently, he is the Captain of the Sind Recurve Archery Team. In the national championship held in Dec 2022, he won the bronze medal in the men's team event. He has an international standard archery range in the KMC sports complex on Kashmir Road, where the Sind Team practices daily. The equipment of every archer, including the bow and arrows, is finely tuned to their physique style and preference.

“As a surgeon, we are used to acting quickly while in archery; every step has to be very slow and deliberate, requiring immense focus and concentration,” says Dr Zia-ul-Islam.

In Oct 2019, I started training as a pilot. Flying requires a very different set of skills and some degree of a dare than we, as surgeons, are used to in everyday life. In Karachi, a pilot training facility is available at Karachi Aero Club near the airport.

The first year was spent on paperwork and ground training. Contrary to my expectation, many studies were involved in the ground school.

After getting the student pilot license, I started flying lessons on Cessna 172 aircraft. During this, I am learning how to fly the plane and navigate and communicate wirelessly with the control tower. We use the same airstrip as the commercial aircraft at the Jinnah International Airport. If you look out the window of your plane, you may spot a tiny aeroplane on the runway or in the air. We do not fly above an altitude of 7000 feet. A typical flying day starts with a startup request to the control tower 'Alpha Mike Quebec position Hamilton Hanger with weather report Juliet requesting startup for circuits. 'Currently, I'm trying to perfect my landings before I can do solo flying.'

Dr Zia is a consultant plastic surgeon who caters to aesthetic surgery needs. He keeps a kind heart for stray animals and wants the generations to be more inclusive towards poor creatures.



Environmental sustainability in *Coffee Jars!!*

A research associate buried in research data has an entirely diverse portfolio and interest in rescuing wildlife and is a member of the Pakistan Bonsai Society. Zia joined this passion 14 years ago and still hinges on this as a true environmentalist and propagates greenery (By re-using empty coffee jars for plants) within the department. His artwork is acknowledged internationally by the Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association (PJCA) and the Consulate General of Japan in Karachi. Zia is associated with the Consulate General of Japan in Karachi.

‘We can reduce carbon footprint by reduce, re-use and recycle policy’, says Mujahid.

Department of Surgery endorses his unique attributes!

Introspected Dialogues



**London from a
Surgeon's Eyes**



'A travel Journal by Dr. Sana Zeeshan'

The steaming hot smell of *doodh patti* chai and flavoursome chicken *biryani* from a Bengali food stall tell the tales of London as a multicultural city where I could taste *kebabs*, sniff the icy air, and spot many nationalities leisurely roaming on the streets of London as a one in a lifetime escapade. In late December 2022, my husband and I along with our kid, planned a 12 day trip to London, and the bonus Christmas festivities and the new year saga doubled the fun of our not so short trip.

We had pledged to embark on the journey after leaving the life's hustle and stresses behind, hence, we disconnected ourselves from all the triggers (only emergency contacts were permitted). We wanted to explore and experience most of the London without any pressure, anxiety, and reservations.

“While we were away from home, we felt at home due to richly diversified culture.”

Walking for hours in the extreme cold can be daunting for a Karachiite, but our hopes were high to witness all the great sightseeing London had to offer. We witnessed the change of royal guards outside Buckingham Palace while drenching in the rain, visited most of the Royal residences including Princess Diana's family home, Spencer House, London Bridge, Big Ben, Natural History Museum, Science Museum, Portobello Road, 10th Downing street, Golden Hinde and so much more were all that could mesmerize me.

We went to the cartoon museum and the London zoo as well, the caricatures and adult jokes at the cartoon museum seemed useless and worthless; however, the zoo was excellent, and we could interact and play with some of the animals such as Nigerian pygmy goats, gorillas, porcupine, healthy lions, tigers and cheetahs. The reptile house and mini beasts showcased a breathtaking collection of creatures from as small as houseflies and common mosquitoes to pythons and boa. It was unlike what we witness in Pakistan, where animals are seen from far and kept in below par conditions.

How would one feel to experience the miseries and clanking chains of British prisoners? The Clink Prison, which dates to 1144, was England's oldest and most infamous prisons before being converted to a museum. The gloom of doom of that era still exists in the museum's air which we felt while walking there. The sights, sounds and smells of prison, various torture devices of medieval times, and tales of misfortune could all be experienced first hand. The Shard, which is the tallest building in London required a pre-booking to visit. It is a 69-storey building with beautiful interiors and exterior was quite an experience to look out at the city from the 69th floor.

The world famous London eye, a humongous giant wheel, was something not to be missed. Its 360 degrees turn in 30 minutes at a snail's pace gave us ample time to view London from a height of 135m giving us yet another bird's eye view of the beautiful city. Sunset in London would take place at 4' o'clock, so it would get dark making it difficult for us to satisfactorily finish the tour and do justice to every place we visited. However, the night life had much more to offer.

Lights, shopping, joy, and laughter on the famous Oxford and Regent streets, gave us a glimpse of our Tariq Road but in a more disciplined and sophisticated manner with a lot less waywardness. Madam Tussauds was on our bucket list too, and we managed to swipe it into our busy days and got some clicks with the oh-so-natural-looking wax statues... The Shrek's World could be the last but most memorable from our trip, where we and our child witnessed the creations, art, performances, and story tales from Shrek's life at a close range and performed to the music letting our artistic stride come out.

All in all, the memories, beautifully etched on our brains, forever to be cherished even when we are back to our routines; I still feel happy and content in my heart after this trip and urge everyone to take this travel expenditure and experience the beauty of London.



THE MIRACLE
SURGEON



"Doctor Kaleem's Inspiring Tale"

In the wee hours of the dark, gloomy night of 13th December 2018 (the same year when Dr Kaleem got inducted in AKU as a resident), an unfortunate road traffic accident changed my life entirely. The incident made my legs numb, and while getting shifted to the ambulance, I prayed its being a mere effect of cold and not more than a spinal shock, but at times we pray, but life keeps hold of different plans for us.

Being a doctor, the sequence of events that followed that accident were torturing as I had severe pain in the back and no sensations below the hip joint.

"After CT Scan at emergency presentation, there is complete cord transection and we have to fix his spine in an emergency," said a chief neurosurgery resident. And at that moment, I couldn't feel the shiver down my spine as it was not giving me support and last nail in the coffin was when one of my friends and senior cardiothoracic surgery resident said about bilateral lung contusions that I may need to be on ventilator support for long term. I could be on of the ventilator support ever. The words easier said than digested by my tethered soul.

At times, we feel that we may go into a deep sleep and our all problems vanish and it isn't more than a nightmare, but it's not always true. In my case, the first part of deep sleep was provided by anaesthesia people and my problems for the second part were also shrouded in utter hopelessness. After 6 hours of long spine surgery, I woke up to the news of life-long wheelchair-bound and unable to stand up again on my feet. I was utterly broken. I travelled from my hometown at the age of 18 years to excel in my dream field of Uro-oncology. After ten years of that long-awaited struggle and on the ICU bed of the largest private hospital country, my mind struggled between "it's a nightmare and acceptance of the bitter truth."

I was suicidal, and I wanted to end my life...

Shattered dreams in less than 24 hours made me feel weak, but I wished to fight and stand up again to achieve the glimmer of life running back in me.

Three days after my surgery, the sensation in my leg fed my hopes and determination to stand back on my legs again. I was working on my emotional health and was never bothered financially and would especially thank Dr Nuzhat, who took a strong stand for me, and I never knew how my bills were being paid.

Also, one of my friends shared the letter of famous tennis player Arthur Ashe which he wrote in reply to a letter by one of his fans, and this letter changed another thing in me about life to count the endless blessings of the Almighty.

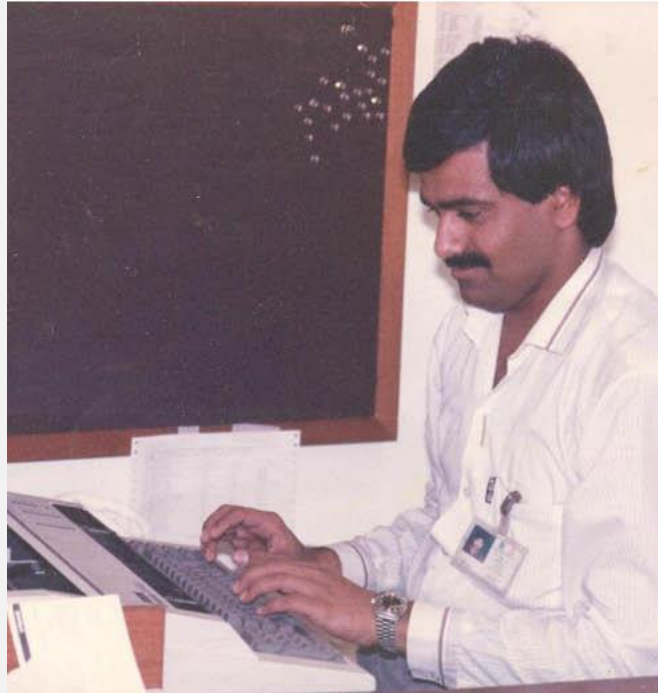
I stayed in a wheelchair for 4 months and walked with the help of a walker/stick for another 6 months. I joined back as a resident urologist at the same institute with more enthusiasm after a gap of more than a year. Some physical disabilities in bilateral foot drop and neuropathy are still there. After multiple investigations, it was concluded by my treating physicians and surgeons it's challenging to recover, but my hope is still alive. I performed Umrah this year and won't need a wheelchair at any stage, and I thanked Allah for this mercy and prayed for His 'Kun' on remaining deficits. I graduated from a postgraduate program at one of the country's most prestigious institutions a few days back, which further strengthened my belief in life and optimism.

Life is a roller coaster, and it has its ups and downs for all of us; what we have to do is to, as Hazrat Ali said, 'Destiny in two days, one for you and one against you, so when it's for you don't be proud or reckless and when it's against you be patient'. Allah doesn't burden a soul more than what he can carry, as mentioned in the last Ayah of Surah Baqrah, 'Allah doesn't charge a soul except (with that within) its capacity'.

This incident helped me to value life one day at a time!!!!



37 Years of Excellence!



"A Journey worth mentioning"

It was December 1985, far back in the past, when Murad Bana joined the red brick premises of AKU as a typist.

“It was a white office, and I was a trainee typist with a 1000 rupees salary and would work till late hours and no benefits, but I loved typing,” recalls Bana with a subtle nostalgic smile. Murad Bana is older than the Department of Surgery itself, and he has been a firm part of AKU since then, wanting to stay and grow with the department because he was determined to give his all to surgery.

“Not long after I joined and on 18th May 1986, the Department of Surgery came into existence, and I am the pioneer of an on-call rota, tumor board, and arrangement of conferences and workshops,” says Bana.

He was a multipurpose staff for the department when there was less staff and more workload. He started the surgery grand rounds as well.

“Many people don’t know that I used to run a gift shop in AKU after 5’ o clock and full time on Saturdays and Sundays as well, which is a pharmacy now, but those were my best days at AKU,” says Bana.

Murad Bana spent his lifetime in its real sense getting married and having kids after joining AKU, and even now, all his daughters are happily settled, and the last one is getting married too before he retires this year.

“Life goes on, and all the work happens, and it would happen in my absence too as I remember a surgeon once said that no work stops because of an absence of someone,” says Bana when asked about his sentiments and his approaching retirement.

Bana accepted many challenges and executed them perfectly; he mentored many people, and the Department of Surgery bears a strong imprint of his name, dedication and hard work for the department. He may leave physically but will never leave the hearts of many he touched during his tenure.

The department pats his back for his dedicated work over the years.

A Surgeon's Quiz



Guess
the
SURGEON?



Guess the Surgeon in the picture and send in your responses to *Fakhra* (fakhra.atif@aku.edu). The winners will be announced in the next edition of "The Monthly Stitch," with a full graph of total responses received. We look forward to your guesses, Happy Guessing!!

Down the Memory Lane



Masood Umer's old archive - The picture from 1987 when Dr Masood Umer went on a cycling trip from Mansehra to Khunjerab - China border in 17 days. He was an AKU med student and he did this adventure on the two wheel

----->> Enjoy Dr Masood's picture from *1987!*

Snippets from the Annual Night



Honoured



Dean Dr. Adil Haider announced a new award "Dr Amir Shariff Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching." [Read More..](#)

Congratulations!

Endowed Professors



Congratulations to Dr Hammad Ather and Dr Shahzad Shamim on being chosen as Endowed Professors. [Read More...](#)



Faculty Promotions!



Department of Surgery extends heartiest congratulations to the faculty who got promoted. [Read More..](#)

Service Awards



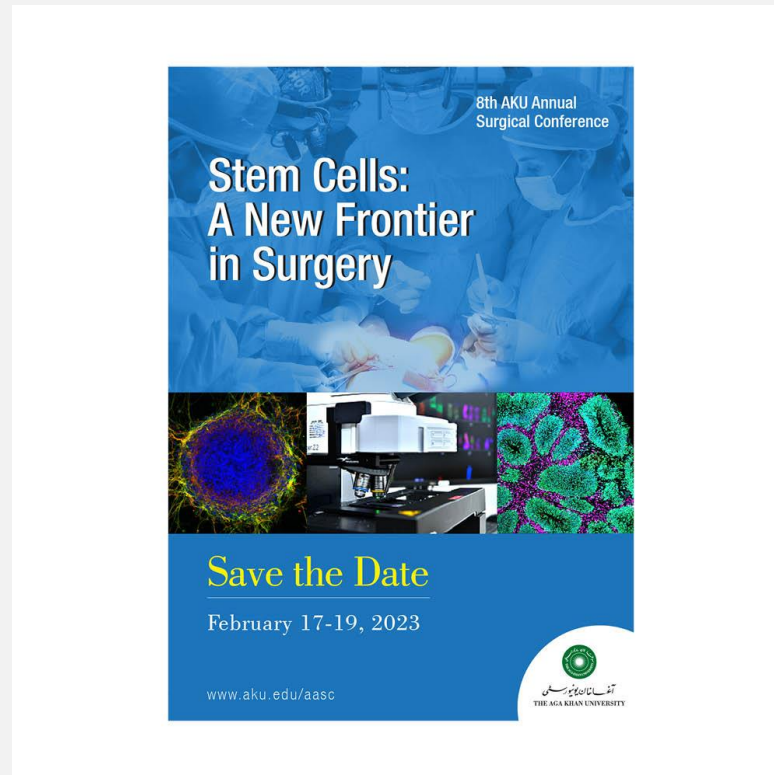
The prestigious Faculty and Staff receiving awards on their outstanding service to @AKUGlobal

Alumni Spotlight!



L: R: Dr Hamdan Pasha received Gold Medal at the CPSP Convocation. He is a surgery Alumni from Otolaryngology: Head and Neck Surgery, year 2019. Dr Areej Saleem, Alumni Pediatric Surgery Resident completed Certification in Health Professional Education (CHPE) University of Lahore. Dr Areej Saleem have just started Certification in Quality Healthcare Provision (CHQP) at Pakistan Institute Of Quality (PIQC). Dr Samira Adnan received certificate for being the best graduate of MPH JSMU, she is Resident alumna of Operative dentistry and Endodontics.

Upcoming Events



Stay tuned for our upcoming Annual Surgery Conference. Do register and attend: <http://www.aku.edu/aasc>

Thanks for Reading!
Follow the Surgery Website: [Click here >>](#)

We will be pleased to receive your comments, feedback, and contributions for the next edition before the 15th of each month.
Happy Next Stitch!
Please write to us at fakhra.atif@aku.edu