

WHITE COAT CHRONICLES



2024



Student Affairs



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A MAGAZINE FOR THE STUDENTS BY THE STUDENTS OF THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

A photograph of a man with dark, curly hair and a light beard, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is leaning against a red brick wall and looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery.

THE POWER OF WORDS:

COMBATING MISINFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

By Armaan Din, Journalism Club

In our fast-paced, ever-evolving world, clear and effective communication has never been more crucial. With the rise of social media and artificial intelligence, it's easier than ever to blur the lines between fact and fiction. The healthcare field is no stranger to this issue. While social media can be a powerful tool for promoting health literacy and empowering individuals to take control of their health, it has also become a breeding ground for misinformation and disinformation.

Misinformation refers to inaccurate or misleading information that spreads unknowingly, while disinformation is deliberately false content spread with the intent to deceive. Topics like vaccinations, smoking, and dieting are often hijacked by these falsehoods. The stakes are high: when medical advice is misrepresented or misunderstood, people can make dangerous health choices. In a world where facts are so easily distorted, it's critical that information be verified and shared responsibly to guide people toward healthy behaviors and prevent harm.

At its core, journalism exists to inform, educate, and promote understanding. It's about telling stories that help people make informed decisions and gain a broader view of the world. Much like medicine, it requires empathy, accuracy, and the ability to communicate complex information in a way that's accessible and relatable. Both fields share a profound connection to the human experience, and the overlap between journalism and healthcare is where the magic happens.

As aspiring professionals in the healthcare field, it's our responsibility to not only understand the intricacies of medical information but also to communicate it clearly and effectively. Medical ethics emphasize the importance of justice and well-being, and as future healthcare providers, we must ensure that the public has access to accurate, reliable information. Too often, people struggle to access or fully understand medical resources, whether due to technical jargon or the challenge of deciphering complex health guidelines. Journalism can bridge this gap by simplifying these messages and making them accessible to everyone.

The Journalism Club plays a pivotal role in this mission. By providing trustworthy, evidence-based information, we aim to cut through the noise and offer content that is not only accurate but also engaging. Whether we're covering medical topics, current events, or student life, our goal is to create material that informs and empowers. Our work is not just about writing articles or reporting on events—it's about developing skills that will serve us for life. Through research, critical thinking, and clear communication, we can hone abilities that will be valuable in both healthcare and journalism.

Ultimately, the Journalism Club aspires to prove that words have the power to inform, educate, and even heal. In a world full of noise, we have the opportunity to make a difference by spreading knowledge that is rooted in truth.



TOP SPOTS TO UNWIND

By Jeffrey Barasa, Journalism Club

Medical school is a prestigious journey, filled with purpose and fulfillment, but it undeniably brings significant mental and physical demands. Juggling rigorous academics, demanding practicals, and life's everyday challenges can take a toll. To stay balanced, it's essential to find spaces that offer relaxation, renewal, and a chance to escape the grind. Here, we spotlight some of the best destinations and activities to recharge your spirit and refresh your mind.

PRONTO Restaurant

A favorite among students, Pronto Restaurant combines luxury and affordability to create the ultimate dining experience. Nestled across several locations in the city's capital district, Pronto offers a vibrant menu of local and international cuisines, all crafted with impeccable attention to detail. Beyond the food, the serene atmosphere provides a calming escape, making it the perfect spot to de-stress, catch up with friends, or enjoy a solo treat.

KICC - Kenya International Convention Center

For a breathtaking retreat, scale the iconic Kenya International Convention Center (KICC). This 32-story

marvel in the heart of the capital offers panoramic views of the city from its helipad. The gentle afternoon breeze coupled with the spectacular sights provides a peaceful, rejuvenating experience. At an affordable fee, it's a must-visit for a stress-free afternoon getaway.

Campus events to brighten your year

Life in medical school is intense, but the vibrant events on campus prove it doesn't have to be monotonous. These occasions foster community, joy, and creativity, making your academic journey unforgettable.

Sports Day

The annual Sports Day is a celebration of fun and camaraderie. With events ranging from athletics and swimming to soccer and badminton, there's something for everyone. Faculty and staff join in the friendly competition, making for delightful interactions. With attractive prizes for the winners, this event rivals the spirit of the Olympics and ensures lasting memories for all participants.

Exhibitions

The Aga Khan University's Transformative Vision Exhibition is a landmark event, celebrating 40 years of impactful innovation. Featuring rare photographs, artifacts, videos, and interviews, it chronicles the university's growth into a globally recognized institution. It's a must-see for those eager to understand the legacy they're a part of.

NAICCON - Nairobi Comic Convention

Calling all comic lovers! The Nairobi Comic Convention (NAICCON) is a haven for fans of Marvel, DC, Manga, and African comics. From cosplay to gaming and lively discussions, this annual gathering celebrates creativity and geek culture. Thanks to special arrangements, students enjoy discounted tickets, allowing them to stay connected to their passions amidst the rigors of school.

Gala Night

The Gala Night is the crown jewel of campus festivities, uniting students and faculty from diverse departments in a vibrant celebration. With live music, trivia, dancing, and a dazzling fashion show, it's a night of elegance and entertainment. Delicious food and good company complete this memorable experience, making it a highlight of the academic year.

Outdoor adventures for a fresh perspective

Tree planting

Embrace nature and conservation through the annual Tree Planting Day. Last year's event at Karura Forest was a perfect blend of purpose and fun. Participants planted trees, explored scenic waterfalls and caves, and enjoyed the sights of local wildlife. The day concluded with snacks and photo sessions, leaving everyone refreshed and fulfilled.

Walking challenge

Stay active and energized with the campus Walking Challenge. Designed to promote fitness, these events encourage participants to clock in steps tracked by an app, with prizes for top performers. Similarly, the Stairs Challenge combines cardio and team-building activities, ensuring a fun way to boost health while decompressing from academic demands.



Jeffrey Barasa



DONANEMAB:

A POTENTIAL GAME-CHANGER FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

By Cindy Wadawi, Journalism Club

Alzheimer's disease, a leading neurocognitive disorder, affects millions globally and is the primary cause of dementia. It is marked by a gradual decline in cognitive abilities and intellectual function due to the buildup of *amyloid-beta plaques* between brain cells. These plaques disrupt communication between neurons, leading to symptoms like memory loss, difficulty concentrating, and impaired problem-solving. While patients often retain awareness, these symptoms significantly impact daily life and independence.

Despite urgent need, developing treatments for Alzheimer's has been a significant challenge. Past attempts have faltered due to advanced brain damage caused by amyloid plaques and tau protein buildup before symptoms appear, as well as issues with poorly designed trials and harmful drug side effects.

Amid these challenges, *Donanemab*, a new drug developed by Eli Lilly, has emerged as a promising candidate. This monoclonal antibody medication is designed to target and remove amyloid-beta plaques, potentially slowing the disease's progression.

How it works

Donanemab works by binding to amyloid-beta plaques, prompting their removal through the action of the brain's immune cells. This process aims to preserve cognitive functions and delay the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's.

Clinical trial insights

The effectiveness of Donanemab was tested in a large trial involving nearly 1,800 participants across eight countries. Over 18 months, participants were monitored using two primary scales to measure cognitive performance and overall dementia severity. Half of the participants received Donanemab intravenously every four weeks, while the other half received a placebo. Results showed that Donanemab effectively reduced amyloid plaque buildup and slowed cognitive decline. This translated to better memory, thinking, and daily functionality compared to those who received the placebo.

Safety concerns

While the results were promising, the trial also highlighted some risks:

- Brain swelling, though often without symptoms, was reported in a significant portion of participants.
- Infusion reactions were more common in those receiving Donanemab.
- Mortality: Three deaths occurred in the Donanemab group, raising concerns about the drug's safety profile.

These findings spark an important discussion: do the benefits of slowing cognitive decline outweigh the potential risks?

Looking ahead

Donanemab represents a significant advancement in Alzheimer's research. Its ability to reduce amyloid plaques and slow cognitive decline offers hope in the fight against this devastating disease. However, the observed side effects call for careful evaluation to determine its safety and long-term impact. As the medical community awaits regulatory decisions, the development of Donanemab underscores the importance of innovation and thorough assessment in addressing Alzheimer's. The ultimate goal remains clear: improving the quality of life for those affected by this complex and challenging condition.

A portrait of Prof. Arnold Mwanzu, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and standing in front of a bookshelf.

TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE: PROF. ARNOLD MWANZU ON THE FUTURE OF THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

By Brian Komu, Journalism Club

In East Africa, the Aga Khan University (AKU) Libraries serve as a beacon of academic excellence and innovation. Seamlessly blending traditional library practices with cutting-edge digital advancements, these libraries reflect a journey of growth and adaptation in a rapidly changing educational landscape. This article provides an insider perspective through an interview with Dr. Arnold Mwanzu, the Associate professor and East African Regional Librarian overseeing five libraries across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Dr. Mwanzu is a seasoned library science professional with over 15 years of experience. His career trajectory and qualifications, including a PhD from Moi University and an MBA from USIU, underscore his commitment to advancing library services. Under his leadership, the libraries have preserved a rich legacy of knowledge while embracing digital transformation, solidifying their place as regional leaders in academic and research resources.

Dr Mwanzu spoke to Brian Komu, Journalism Club

Dr. Mwanzu, can you share your background and journey to becoming the regional librarian at Aga Khan University?

At Aga Khan University, we prefer first names, so I'm Arnold. As Regional Librarian, I manage five libraries across East Africa, supported by a team of 23 staff. My primary responsibilities include overseeing library operations, ensuring sufficient resources, and supporting research, teaching, and learning.

My journey spans over 15 years, including eight years in library management. I hold a bachelor's degree in Library Science from Kenyatta University, a master's and PhD from Moi University, an MBA from USIU, and a diploma in information systems from the University of Antwerp. Beyond management, I am actively engaged in research and have published over 20 articles, enabling me to mentor students and faculty in academic publishing.

Could you provide an overview of the library's history and its evolution?

The Aga Khan University Library began in 1995 within the University Hospital in Nairobi. Initially a small space for 10 users, it has grown into a central academic hub. From 2003, the library expanded alongside the School of Nursing and Midwifery before consolidating into a single, modern facility at the University Centre in 2021.

Our resources include diverse collections funded by various schools and external partners. As part of the Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium, we access subsidized subscriptions to over 15 databases. Our lean collection of 13,000 physical books is complemented by a robust digital library featuring over 300,000 e-books and unique tools like UpToDate for clinicians and ClinicalKey for medical research.

What unique collections and tools make AKU Libraries stand out?

Our digital library is the largest in Kenya, with standout tools like Access Medicine and Access Surgery for medical students, and PressReader for media resources. Additionally, we house a significant collection of Islamic studies donated by His Highness the Aga Khan.

Our digital leadership extends to initiatives like AI-based training, an e-commons repository with over 24,000 papers, and advanced systems for remote access. Tools like RFID technology and the EBSCO Discovery Service ensure streamlined library operations and user convenience.

Could you elaborate on the services offered and any upcoming initiatives?

Our library provides extensive services, including reference support, interlibrary loans, and document delivery. We offer training on reference management tools like EndNote and Turnitin, as well as AI tools for research.

Looking ahead, we're launching an Evidence Synthesis Service for systematic and scoping reviews and planning a summer school to train librarians in advanced research methods. Events like Authors Day and participation in Open Access Week continue to promote a culture of academic excellence.

How has the library adapted to the shift toward digital resources?

Our digital initiatives have positioned us as leaders in library innovation. While digital libraries offer unparalleled access, cost-efficiency, and search capabilities, traditional libraries remain important for those who value physical books. Balancing these elements allows us to meet diverse user needs effectively.





HEALING THE HEALERS:

STRATEGIES FOR MEDICAL AND NURSING STUDENTS TO PROTECT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

By Mburu wa Maina, AKUSA Representative

In the rigorous world of higher education, medical and nursing students occupy a uniquely demanding space. Their journey is driven by an internal motivation to help others, often in a world that feels increasingly overwhelming. Yet, in the act of giving, they risk neglecting themselves—a conflict that underscores the urgent need for balance and mental health preservation.

As aspiring healthcare professionals, the foundation of our capacity to serve lies in our own mental well-being. An empty cup cannot nourish others; we must first replenish ourselves to effectively give back. This article explores practical strategies to help budding medical and nursing professionals nurture their mental health while preparing to serve their communities.

At the heart of this conversation lies the concept of balance. It's a term I once dismissed as cliché, but over time, I've come to see its profound connection to mental health. The balance we seek is not just between work and rest but within the interplay of life's competing demands—a delicate dance of yin and yang.

The challenge of balance

For medical and nursing students, life can feel unrelentingly demanding. Academic and professional responsibilities often clash with personal and social needs, creating a constant tug-of-war. Navigating this landscape requires mastering a resource we often overlook: time.

Time, though finite, is a powerful asset. Managing it effectively can transform our lives, and tools such as Time Blocking, Prioritization, and the Pomodoro Technique offer pathways to doing so.

Tools for time management

Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix provides a simple yet powerful framework for prioritization. By categorizing tasks as Important and Urgent, Important but Not Urgent, Not Important but Urgent, or Neither Important nor Urgent, we gain clarity on what truly deserves our attention. This system empowers us to focus on what matters most, while recognizing that not every task is equally urgent—or even necessary.

Once priorities are clear, scheduling becomes key. This process should extend beyond academics to include activities that recharge us: sleep, exercise, hobbies, meditation, and socialization. These are not luxuries but essentials that support our mental health and overall well-being.

The power of SMART goals

Goal-setting is another critical component of finding balance. Vague intentions lead to vague outcomes, while clear, actionable goals set us up for success. The SMART framework—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely—helps us define and pursue objectives with purpose.

Community and support systems

Beyond personal strategies, community plays a pivotal role in mental health. As healthcare professionals, we operate in teams that not only amplify our skills but also provide mutual support. Friends, family, and colleagues form the backbone of our resilience. When challenges arise, turning to these networks can make the difference between persevering and burning out.

Putting theory into practice

While these strategies sound straightforward in theory, applying them in the high-pressure reality of medical and nursing school is far from easy. Yet, it is within our control to harness the tools available and shape our experiences. By prioritizing mental health and cultivating balance, we can rise as a generation of healthcare professionals who care deeply for ourselves and, by extension, the world around us.

The journey is not without its difficulties, but neither is it insurmountable. By focusing on what lies within our power, we can redefine what it means to give—starting with giving to ourselves.



Mburu wa Maina



MUSIZ ZONE

KENDRICK LAMAR VS. DRAKE—HIP-HOP'S NEWEST RIVALRY

By Nicole Muga, Journalism Club

Hip-hop fans have been buzzing with excitement over what's arguably the most electrifying feud in recent memory: *Kendrick Lamar vs. Drake*. What began as a creative collaboration has spiraled into a lyrical showdown that has the music world picking sides.

From collaboration to competition

The relationship between these two rap titans kicked off harmoniously in 2011, when Kendrick Lamar featured on Drake's album *Take Care*. Drake returned the favor by appearing on Kendrick's critically acclaimed *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City*.

However, things took a competitive turn in 2013. Kendrick's iconic verse on Big Sean's track "Control" called out several rappers, including J. Cole and Drake, challenging them to elevate their artistry while staking his claim as the dominant force in the rap game. Drake, seemingly unbothered, dismissed the verse, but the seeds of a feud had been planted.

A feud reignited

Fast-forward a decade, and the rivalry exploded once more. Kendrick's verse on Metro and Future's track "Like That" reignited the flames, dismissing the notion of the "big three" (Drake, J. Cole, and Kendrick himself) and asserting that there's only one true king: Kendrick Lamar. This jab came alongside criticisms

of Drake's *For All the Dogs* album, which Kendrick appeared to mock in the track.

When diss tracks take flight

The feud escalated quickly with the release of a flurry of diss tracks, including *Push Ups*, *Euphoria*, *Family Matters*, *Meet the Grahams*, and *Not Like Us*. Both artists traded sharp lyrics, showcasing their mastery of wordplay while taking direct aim at one another.

The fallout: Who won?

Although the feud seems to have quieted down since the release of *Not Like Us*, the debate over "who won" rages on. The numbers tell part of the story: according to Billboard, Kendrick's back catalog streams surged by 49%, while Drake's saw a 5% dip. Beyond the numbers, the feud has undeniably boosted both artists' visibility and kept fans captivated.

Student opinions on the feud have been mixed.

- "Kendrick had bars," one student remarked, a sentiment shared by many who felt Lamar had the lyrical edge.
- Others found the feud unnecessary, questioning the need for such competition between two of rap's greatest.

Despite differing views, the consensus leans toward Kendrick Lamar as the winner, with many fans heralding his artistry and bold declarations.

A Feud for the ages

Whether this rivalry rekindles or fades into hip-hop history, one thing is clear: both Kendrick Lamar and Drake have pushed each other to new creative heights. And for fans, the real winner is the music.

Sources: BBC Entertainment and Billboard Music



Nicole Muga



NEURALINK

THE FUTURE OF TECH MEETS THE ETHICS OF TOMORROW

By Brian Komu, Journalism Club

Neuralink, the groundbreaking biotechnology venture spearheaded by Elon Musk, is pioneering brain-computer interface (BCI) technology. Its flagship innovation, the *N1 Implant*, aims to bridge the divide between human cognition and digital systems, promising transformative benefits for individuals with neurological impairments.

A testament to its potential is Noland Arbaugh, a 30-year-old Arizona resident who became Neuralink's first human recipient. Paralyzed from the neck down after a swimming accident in 2016, Arbaugh credits the chip with enabling him to "reconnect with the world." His journey, detailed by Lauren Leffer in *Scientific American*, showcases the profound impact of BCIs while highlighting the ethical dilemmas they present.

The ethical landscape of Neuralink

While Neuralink's technological advancements inspire awe, they also raise pressing ethical and legal questions. These revolve around autonomy, privacy, psychological implications, and regulatory standards.

1. Informed consent and autonomy

One critical concern is ensuring patients like Arbaugh provide informed consent. The complexity and novelty of BCIs necessitate a clear understanding of both benefits and risks, including potential malfunctions, maintenance requirements, and psychological consequences.

Autonomy must also extend beyond implantation. Patients should have the right to manage, modify, or remove the device without undue barriers, raising questions about long-term accessibility and Neuralink's commitment to lifelong support.

2. Privacy and data security

Neuralink's device processes immense amounts of neural data, making data security paramount. Breaches could lead to identity theft, surveillance, or manipulation, underscoring the need for robust safeguards.

Moreover, transparency about how neural data is used, stored, and shared is essential. Users must know who accesses their data and for what purposes, ensuring compliance with privacy laws and ethical norms.

3. Psychological and social implications

The psychological effects of living with a brain chip are significant. While Arbaugh describes a seamless experience, others might struggle with altered self-perception or existential anxieties.

Socially, the potential for BCIs to exacerbate inequality is a concern. Access to such advanced technologies could create a divide, with BCIs possibly conferring enhanced abilities, leading to new forms of discrimination or societal stratification.

4. Legal and regulatory frameworks

The regulatory environment for BCIs is still in its infancy. Bodies like the FDA must ensure rigorous oversight, particularly during clinical trials, to protect patient welfare and uphold safety standards.

Additionally, intellectual property and patent frameworks must balance innovation with accessibility, preventing monopolies from limiting the technology's reach.

Conclusion

Neuralink represents the cusp of a technological revolution, promising to transform lives while raising profound ethical, social, and legal challenges. Arbaugh's experience exemplifies the potential of BCIs but underscores the need for thoughtful navigation of these complexities.

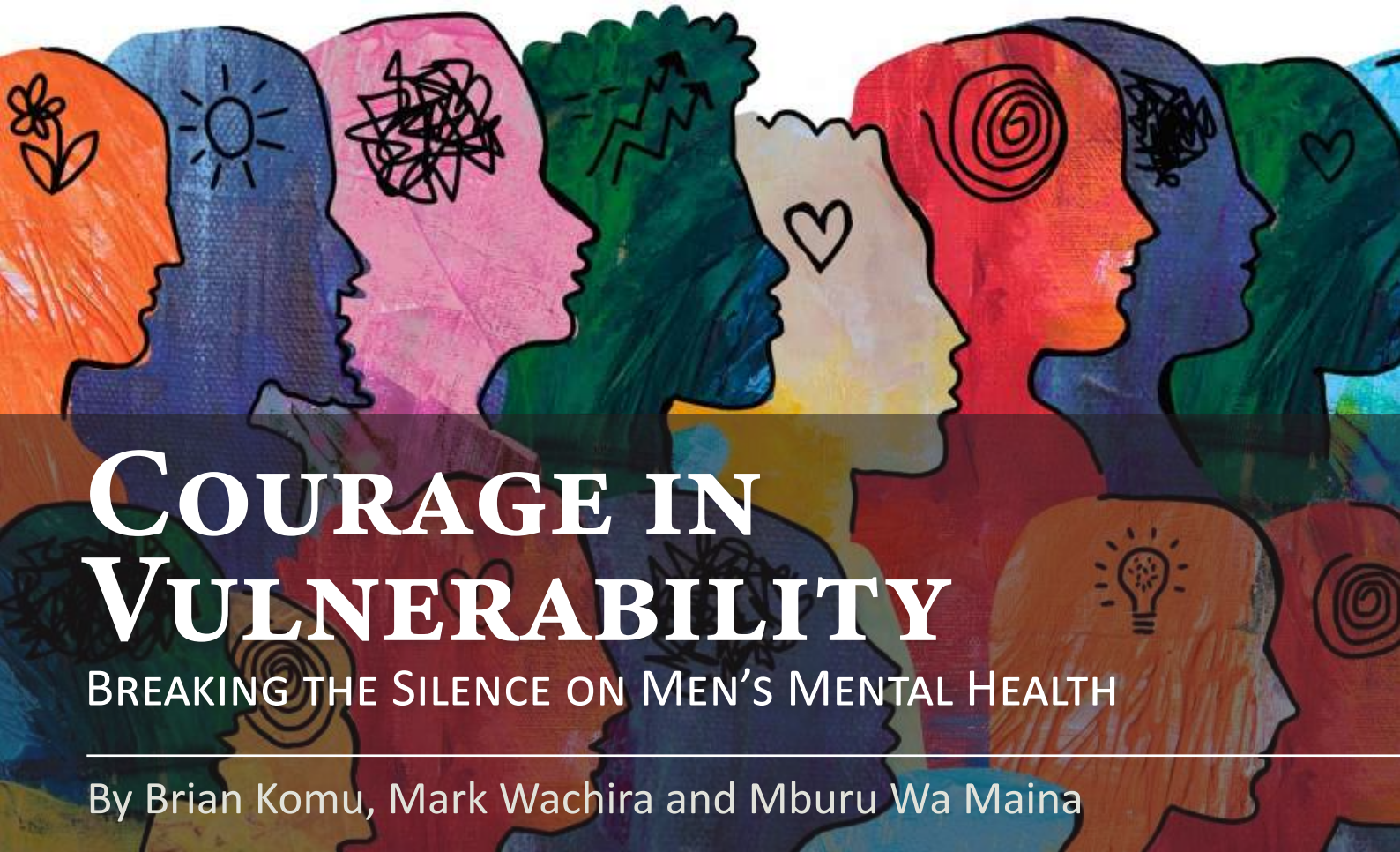
As we blur the lines between human cognition and digital technology, a commitment to ethical integrity, comprehensive regulation, and respect for human dignity will be critical in shaping a future where these innovations serve humanity inclusively and responsibly.

Acknowledgment:

Special thanks to Lauren Leffer for her illuminating article:

Leffer, L. (2024, June 7). *What It's Like to Live with a Brain Chip, According to Neuralink's First User*. *Scientific American*. Read it [here](#).





COURAGE IN VULNERABILITY

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

By Brian Komu, Mark Wachira and Mburu Wa Maina

Courage in the face of vulnerability: A phrase often perceived as an oxymoron. Vulnerability, the willingness to expose oneself to the world with raw courage, is a double-edged sword. It demands immense bravery to reveal one's innermost thoughts and emotions, particularly in a society that often glorifies stoicism over sensitivity. The recent Men's Mental Health Symposium, hosted by MSAKE-SCOMH representative Mark Wachira and AKUSA MBChB representative Mbürü wa Maina, illuminated this delicate balance between strength and emotional openness.

At the symposium, distinguished speakers Dr. Levi, a leading psychologist, and Dr. Gitau, a renowned psychiatrist, delved into the complexities of human emotionality. They drew a compelling analogy between human behavior and that of a stallion: while a horse's actions are outwardly obvious and predictable, human emotions are far more intricate, shaped by both overt and subtle influences. For example, a man raised in a challenging family environment may adopt a facade of toughness to mask internal vulnerability, reflecting the multifaceted nature of human emotional expression.

Creating a safe space for emotional expression is vital in fostering an environment where individuals feel free to share their struggles without fear of judgment. Such spaces advocate for total freedom,

allowing those typically closed off to express their feelings openly. However, it is essential to recognize boundaries when dealing with sensitive or deeply personal topics. Clear lines should be drawn between how much information one can reasonably process, particularly in intimate exchanges.

One key issue discussed was the prevalence of atypical attachment styles in many men, often the result of childhood conditioning that discourages emotional expression. These maladaptive attachment patterns—marked by avoidance or anxiety—can hinder the formation of healthy relationships, exacerbating isolation and mental distress.

The symposium also explored the societal pressures that shape male behavior. Traditional gender norms often dictate that men suppress their emotions and maintain an image of unwavering strength. This cultural expectation not only fuels emotional repression but also discourages men from seeking help when they need it most. The speakers advocated for a shift in understanding masculinity—one that embraces vulnerability as a form of strength, rather than a weakness.

Furthermore, the symposium underscored the importance of mental health education in dismantling the stigma surrounding men's mental health. Initiatives that promote emotional intelligence

and resilience can empower men to navigate their emotions and seek support when necessary. By fostering a culture of openness, society can cultivate an environment where men feel safe discussing their mental health challenges without fear of judgment.

1. The uncomfortable nature of touch for men: A critical exploration

The discomfort many men feel with touch is deeply rooted in societal, psychological, and cultural influences. A striking example shared at the symposium highlighted this unease: boys, particularly in resource-scarce environments, were discouraged from sharing beds—an activity deemed more appropriate for girls due to their perceived emotional closeness. This early conditioning exemplifies the stark gendered differences in how touch is interpreted and experienced.

Society teaches men to engage with the world through visual stimuli rather than tactile experiences, which cultivates a significant disconnect. Touch, rather than being viewed as a comforting or meaningful expression of connection, becomes awkward or uncomfortable. In contrast, women are often socialized to view touch as a natural extension of emotional expression. This dichotomy underscores the profound societal forces shaping gendered experiences from an early age.

2. The detrimental impact of toxic masculinity

Toxic masculinity—the rigid adherence to traditional male roles that stress dominance, emotional suppression, and aggression—takes a heavy toll on men’s mental health. The symposium highlighted several ways in which toxic masculinity manifests and harms:

- **Substance Abuse:** Men may turn to drugs or alcohol as a means of coping with the emotional strain created by societal pressures to conform to masculine ideals.
- **Depression and Emotional Distress:** The stigma surrounding emotional expression often leads men to suppress their feelings, resulting in isolation, sadness, and depression. This reluctance to seek help further exacerbates mental health issues.
- **Relationship Strain:** Toxic masculinity negatively impacts relationships, where emotional

unavailability and aggression erode trust and communication, pushing men further into isolation.

3. Seeking help: A necessary step

Acknowledging the toxic effects of masculinity is the first step toward healing. The symposium urged men to reach out for help when overwhelmed by the demands of traditional masculine norms. Therapy, support groups, and open discussions about mental health are vital in navigating emotions and breaking free from toxic stereotypes.

In conclusion, the discomfort with touch in men is a direct result of societal conditioning, compounded by the damaging effects of toxic masculinity, which can lead to substance abuse, depression, and strained relationships. Challenging traditional norms and encouraging open conversations about mental health will help create a more supportive and understanding environment where men can freely express their emotions and seek help when necessary.

4. Debunking the myth: Therapy is not just for big problems

Therapy is often wrongly viewed as a last resort, only necessary for those facing severe mental health crises. However, this misconception overlooks the value of therapy for everyday struggles. While friends can offer valuable perspectives, there are limits to how much one can share with them. Professional therapy provides a structured, safe space for deeper exploration and healing.

Therapy is not only about addressing crises—it aids in developing coping strategies, enhancing emotional intelligence, and providing insight into one’s life. Seeking therapy early can prevent issues from escalating and promote long-term mental well-being.

5. Men’s role in toxic masculinity

Toxic masculinity is perpetuated by traditional gender roles, where men are conditioned to view their worth through their ability to provide. As societal roles evolve and women increasingly become providers, this can create internal conflict for men who feel pressured to uphold traditional ideals, while women face challenges related to societal expectations of submission despite their financial independence.

The pressure to conform to these roles can lead to significant stress and anxiety. A balanced approach, where both partners share responsibilities, fosters healthier relationships. Open communication and mutual support are key to navigating these dynamics and reducing tension in relationships.

6. Finding happiness alone

One common therapy question is how to rediscover personal happiness after feeling disconnected. The process begins by reflecting on what once brought joy before depression took hold. Therapists can help individuals reconnect with past passions and interests, guiding them toward happiness as a personal responsibility.

Journaling, for example, can be a powerful tool for self-reflection, offering peace of mind and emotional release. By engaging in activities that foster joy, individuals can cultivate a more positive outlook and improve their overall well-being.

7. Navigating a breakup without closure

Breakups are difficult, especially without closure. Accepting the end of a relationship, and focusing on personal growth and self-care, is essential for healing. While seeking closure from an ex might seem tempting, it is important to assess whether this would genuinely aid in healing or potentially cause further harm.

Instead, individuals should focus on activities that foster self-discovery and emotional healing, such as spending time with loved ones, pursuing hobbies, and setting new goals. By shifting focus from the past relationship to personal growth, individuals can navigate the breakup with greater resilience.

8. Male emotional processing in healthy outlets

Effective emotional processing is essential for mental well-being. Healthy outlets such as therapy, physical activities, and journaling can help reduce stress and facilitate emotional release. Physical activities like running or cycling not only improve physical health but also offer mental clarity and stress relief.

9. Overcoming an “almost something”

The aftermath of a relationship that almost blossomed can be tough to handle. Reflecting on why it didn't work out can provide clarity, helping individuals

understand their boundaries and emotional needs as they move forward.

10. Building healthy boundaries

Establishing healthy boundaries is essential for emotional well-being. It involves understanding personal values and maintaining balanced relationships based on mutual respect. Avoiding infatuation helps maintain objectivity, ensuring healthy dynamics in relationships.

11. The concept of covert contracts

Covert contracts, unspoken expectations based on fear of rejection or low self-esteem, undermine communication and lead to misunderstandings. In relationships, clear and honest communication is vital to avoid these hidden agreements and ensure mutual understanding.

12. How women can support men in mental wellness

Women play a pivotal role in supporting men's mental health by providing unconditional support and encouraging open expression. However, it's important to maintain healthy boundaries—being a supportive ally without taking on someone else's emotional burdens.

13. The influence of religion

Religion can profoundly impact mental health and gender roles. While it offers a sense of community and purpose, it can also reinforce traditional gender norms. Navigating these influences is crucial for fostering mental wellness and balanced gender dynamics.

14. Addressing the great concern

A prevalent concern raised by radical feminists and gender absolutists is that masculinity is inherently toxic. This perspective overlooks the distinction between toxic masculinity and healthy masculinity. Toxic masculinity fosters emotional suppression and aggression, while healthy masculinity embraces emotional expression, empathy, and respect. Recognizing this difference is key to building a more inclusive, supportive understanding of gender roles.

Special thanks to Dr. Levi, consultant psychologist, and Dr. Gitau, consultant psychiatrist, for their invaluable insights. Gratitude also goes to MSAKE, the Standing Committee of Mental Health, and school representatives Mark Wachira and Mbũrũ wa Maina for organizing this important event.



QUIZ AND TRIVIA

By Cindy Wadawi, Journalism Club



Think you're a pop culture buff AND a future medical or media whiz? Put your knowledge to the test with our Medical and Media Mashup Trivia!

1. Which bone is sometimes known as the "funny bone"?

- a. Humerus
- b. Fibula
- c. Phalanges

Explanation:

The answer is A, the humerus. Despite its name, the humerus isn't funny—it's the bone in the upper arm. The term "funny bone" refers to the odd, tingling sensation that happens when the ulnar nerve (running along the inside of the elbow) is bumped, sending a shockwave of discomfort through the arm. It's a sensation felt along the pinky and ring fingers.

2. "Anybody can gerriit. You can gerriit. I can gerriit..." This famous quote was uttered by: _____

Explanation:

Mutahi Kagwe, former Cabinet Secretary for Health, famously coined this line during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya. He was stressing the widespread nature of the virus, which can affect anyone, emphasizing prevention methods like mask-wearing and social distancing. Fun fact: Before his political career, Kagwe worked in advertising at Standard Media Group.

3. In which year was the Aga Khan University established?

- a. 2004
- b. 1983
- c. 1984

Explanation:

Founded in 1983, the Aga Khan University has long been a leader in providing high-quality education and producing professionals who have contributed significantly both locally and globally.

4. I am a 12-letter word belonging to the news anchoring room. I am _____.

Explanation:

The answer is Teleprompter (also known as an Autocue). This essential tool in the news industry

helps anchors read their scripts while maintaining eye contact with the camera, keeping the connection with viewers alive.

5. Match the four pillars of ethics to their correct definition:

- a. Autonomy - The ability to act and make decisions without being controlled by anyone else.
- b. Non-maleficence - Doing no harm.
- c. Beneficence - The quality of giving help or being kind.
- d. Justice - The quality of being fair or reasonable.

Explanation:

As outlined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, these four pillars guide ethical practice across fields:

- Autonomy – The ability to make independent decisions.
- Non-maleficence – Doing no harm to others.
- Beneficence – Acting in ways that benefit others.
- Justice – Treating people with fairness and equality.

6. What is the primary cause of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)?

- a. Hormonal imbalance
- b. Genetic factors
- c. Autoimmune disorder
- d. Lifestyle factors

Explanation:

The answer is A, hormonal imbalance. In PCOS, the ovaries produce excess male hormones (androgens), leading to irregular periods and symptoms like acne, weight gain, and excess body hair. Genetics and lifestyle factors can also play a role, but the hormonal imbalance is the root cause.

7. Are these the symptoms of a Cardiac Arrest or Heart Attack?

- Chest pain
- Pressure and tightness in the chest
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Pain radiating to the arm, jaw, or back

Answer:

These are the signs of a Heart Attack. A heart attack occurs when a coronary artery is blocked, preventing

blood from reaching part of the heart. It requires immediate medical intervention. In contrast, Cardiac Arrest occurs when the heart stops beating due to an electrical issue, requiring CPR and defibrillation to restart the heart.

8. Florence Nightingale, a trailblazer in modern nursing, greatly enhanced hospital cleanliness during the Crimean War. However, what unexpected common item did she utilize to transform wound care for soldiers?

- a. Silver nitrate solution
- b. Sterile bandages
- c. Laudanum
- d. Lint

Explanation:

Lint was the answer! Florence Nightingale revolutionized hospital hygiene by using lint, which was highly absorbent, to treat wounds. While sterile bandages weren't widely available at the time, lint served as a critical tool in preventing infection.

9. Which of the following medical series is the most accurate to real-life evidence-based medical practice?

- a. House M.D.
- b. Grey's Anatomy
- c. Scrubs
- d. E.R.

Explanation:

Scrubs is regarded as the most accurate medical TV series. While it still had dramatic elements, it depicted the reality of daily life for medical residents and offered a more relatable and humorous take on the profession compared to the high-stakes drama of Grey's Anatomy and ER.

10. Can you transfer understanding from one person to another?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe

Answer:

No. You can only communicate signals, codes, or messages, but understanding is personal and cannot be directly transferred from one person to another. It's something each individual must process and internalize on their own.

11. Here's another quote from the media. Can you guess which iconic duo said this?

"Should we do this again, next week... same time, same place?"

"We have no choice..."

Explanation:

This was the signature sign-off from Jeff Koinange and Victoria Rubadiri on Sunday Live on Citizen TV. The catchphrase, originally a light-hearted joke, became a staple of the show before Victoria left for CNN in 2024.





A THOUSAND TIMES OVER

By Michelle Mwasha and
Maheer Admani, The Book
Club

Human error is an inevitable part of our existence, yet the consequences of our actions linger long after the deed is done. In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini explores the deep, often painful repercussions of these errors, diving into the human psyche to question what drives us to seek redemption. As the novel reminds us, “a man who has no conscience, no goodness, does not suffer.” This quote encapsulates the essence of the story: a man’s quest to reconcile with his past mistakes and, ultimately, find peace.

Set in 1975 Kabul, Afghanistan, Hosseini’s world feels both foreign and familiar. The narrative immerses the reader into the rich cultural backdrop of a country on the brink of monumental change. Amir, the son of a wealthy Afghan businessman, grows up with Hassan, the son of his father’s servant. Despite their deep bond, an unbridgeable divide separates them: Amir is Pashtun, and Hassan is Hazara, a marginalized ethnic group. Their friendship is complex, as Amir’s privileged position clashes with Hassan’s unwavering loyalty.

Hassan’s devotion to Amir is unconditional, and the phrase that encapsulates this loyalty, “for you, a thousand times over,” resonates as the book’s emotional core. Hassan’s loyalty and goodness are unwavering, even in the face of betrayal. Amir, on the other hand, is flawed. He is consumed with jealousy, seeking his father’s affection above all else, and betrays Hassan in an unforgivable way. Despite

his faults, Amir is not dishonest about his mistakes. As the protagonist, he acknowledges his betrayal and spends the entirety of the novel atoning for it.

Hosseini expertly weaves a tale not just about betrayal and guilt but also about Afghanistan’s tumultuous history. As Amir’s search for redemption unfolds, we witness the collapse of his homeland, overtaken by political extremism and war. This backdrop deepens the novel’s exploration of what it means to seek redemption amidst suffering.

The Kite Runner is a poignant reminder of the power of remorse and the possibility of change, no matter how grave the sin. Through Amir’s journey, we learn that redemption is not only about forgiving others but also about forgiving oneself. Hassan, who remains a symbol of goodness and selfless love throughout the novel, embodies the hope that exists even in the darkest times. His loyalty to Amir, “for you, a thousand times over,” serves as a testament to the purest form of devotion.

This book is a visceral, moving exploration of the complexities of guilt, forgiveness, and the enduring belief in redemption. It urges us to remain hopeful and inspired by those like Hassan, who teach us that the capacity for kindness and sacrifice can survive even the harshest of trials.



THE SEREIN SOCIETY

A STUDENT-LED HAVEN OF UNITY AND CONNECTION

By Faith Agan, Zipporah Gatambia, Antoinette Mabeya, Michelle Mwasha, The Serein Society

In the vibrant corridors of Aga Khan University, a group of passionate students came together with a simple yet profound vision: to create a space where unity, connections, and serenity could not only coexist, but thrive. This vision was realized through the birth of The Serein Society (TSS), a student-led organization that has rapidly blossomed into a beacon of community and camaraderie on campus.

Inspired by the rare meteorological phenomenon where fine rain falls from a clear sky, just before dawn—an event described as a mystical drizzle or mist—Serein perfectly embodies the Society's ethos. The name, derived from the French word for “evening dew,” symbolizes peace, calm, and serenity. Much like this phenomenon, TSS aims to create an environment where unexpected connections and moments of tranquility can emerge out of the clear sky of university life.

“We sought to create an organization that unites students, celebrating the beauty in our diverse

backgrounds and experiences,” says Faith Agan, the Founding Chairperson and Event Coordinator. “Serein happens in the quiet hours when the world is still asleep, representing the beauty in moments we often overlook, just as we aim to highlight the unique contributions of each of our members.”

The journey began in 2023 with a simple idea: to host a movie night for the students. What started as a humble event quickly evolved into a vibrant and welcoming community, offering a space for personal growth, social connection, and a much-needed break from academic pressures.

“As university students, the demands of our studies can be overwhelming,” explains Michelle Mwasha, the Founding Program Coordinator. “We realized how important it was to create a space where we could unwind, reconnect, and simply have fun together.”

The Society's inaugural event, a movie night held on October 27, 2023, was an overwhelming success,

setting the stage for many more unforgettable experiences. Despite early challenges, such as securing funding and building awareness, the society continued to grow, fueled by the unwavering dedication of its leaders and the enthusiastic support from students.

“Initially, we faced many hurdles,” recalls Britney Ngeno, the Founding Logistics Coordinator. “But our passion and belief in our mission pushed us forward. Each challenge was an opportunity to learn and grow, and it only strengthened our resolve to build an inclusive and welcoming community.”

As the Society’s reputation expanded, so did its impact. Through a series of dynamic events—from movie nights to sip-and-paint sessions, secret Santa exchanges, and more—The Serein Society has garnered praise from both the administration and students. It has proven itself to be a vital source of support, creating a nurturing environment that promotes both well-being and academic success.

But the impact of The Serein Society reaches beyond just social connection. It has played a crucial role in fostering personal growth and developing vital skills for its members.

“The Serein Society has become a sanctuary for students, a place to escape the stress of daily life and find comfort in the company of like-minded peers,” shares Tamara Lucas, the Founding Marketing and Promotion Coordinator. “Our goal is to create a serene atmosphere, one that promotes well-being and personal development.”

Michelle Mwasha reflects on the society as a home away from home for many students: “It has taught us the value of embracing diversity, forming lasting relationships, and finding beauty in the simple, unexpected moments life offers.”

Rita Gitonga, the Founding Sponsorship and Fundraising Coordinator, emphasizes the importance of the networking and social skills developed within the society. “Through organizing and attending events, we learn how to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and build meaningful relationships that will benefit us personally and professionally.”

Zipporah Gatambia, the Founding Student Association Coordinator, agrees, underscoring the importance of

these skills, particularly in the healthcare field. “As future healthcare professionals, strong interpersonal skills and a supportive network are essential. The Serein Society provides the perfect environment to cultivate these skills while making lasting connections with peers.”

Looking to the future, the leaders of The Serein Society are filled with both ambition and practicality. “We want to maintain our grassroots essence as we grow. Quality over quantity is key,” says Tamara Lucas. Sheila, the Society’s Secretary, points out that the Society is now an integral part of university life and envisions expanding its reach by offering more diverse events to cater to the varying interests of students, all while continuing to promote personal growth and skill development.

Antoinette Mabeya, the Founding Attendee Services and Technical Coordinator, emphasizes the importance of community service: “While creating fun and engaging events is our primary focus, we also believe in giving back. In the future, we hope to include service-oriented initiatives that allow us to make a positive impact beyond the university.”

In ten years, Faith Agan envisions The Serein Society as a permanent fixture of university life, fully integrated into the fabric of campus culture. “I see leadership passing on to new generations who will carry forward our vision,” she says. “But above all, I hope it remains a place where fulfillment is found through community.”

As The Serein Society enters its second year, its future is brimming with promise. With increased funding and a proven track record of successful events, participation is expected to grow. But beyond mere numbers, the true gift of the Society lies in its ability to bring strangers together as friends. As Britney Ngeno notes, “This experience has shown us that joy can arise from unexpected places when we open our hearts to one another.”

As the sun sets on another eventful day at Aga Khan University, members of The Serein Society look forward to the serene mornings ahead—where the fine rain of unity, connection, and tranquility will continue to nourish the hearts and minds of all who call this community their own.



TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE AND MEDIA

By Jeffrey Barasa, Journalism Club

Technology is swiftly reshaping the landscapes of both medicine and media, bringing innovations that were once the stuff of science fiction into everyday life. With advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and other cutting-edge technologies, the way we approach healthcare, entertainment, and communication is being transformed. Here's a look at some of the most exciting developments:

Artificial intelligence in healthcare

AI is revolutionizing healthcare, helping to deliver more accurate diagnoses, personalized treatments, and efficient patient monitoring. Through powerful machine learning algorithms, AI analyzes massive amounts of medical data, uncovering patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. This allows clinicians to make better-informed decisions and ultimately improves patient outcomes.

For instance, AI tools are being used to detect early signs of diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's, enabling timely interventions. Robotic surgeries, powered by AI, are now able to perform intricate procedures with unmatched precision. In the future, AI could streamline administrative tasks, coordinate patient care, and enhance the overall efficiency of healthcare systems.

Virtual and augmented reality in medicine

The immersive capabilities of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are transforming medical

education and patient care. VR simulations allow medical students to practice complex procedures in a risk-free, lifelike environment before ever treating real patients.

In clinical settings, VR and AR are used to manage pain, reduce anxiety, and enhance the patient experience. For example, patients undergoing medical treatments can be immersed in calming virtual environments that help ease discomfort and promote relaxation. Meanwhile, AR is enabling surgeons to visualize anatomy in three dimensions, guiding them with pinpoint precision during operations.

Beyond the hospital, VR and AR technologies are enabling remote monitoring and telehealth consultations, making healthcare more accessible and efficient than ever before. As these technologies evolve, their integration into everyday medicine will only deepen.

Simulation technologies in medical training

Innovative simulation tools like TacMed's waterproof simulators are providing valuable training for healthcare professionals in all conditions. These simulators can be operated remotely, offering real-time monitoring for medical interventions. Whether performing a pressure bandage application or managing a gunshot wound, these systems allow trainers to evaluate medical responses with remarkable accuracy, even from a distance of up to 200 meters.

Simulation stations, such as the Simulation Essential Gen II video system, help optimize medical training by integrating high-fidelity simulators, additional cameras, and monitoring tools. These setups simplify the training process, automating routine tasks and allowing the healthcare team to focus on refining their skills. This equipment can convert any environment into a fully operational simulation and debriefing space.

The rise of AI hospitals

China's Tsinghua University has introduced an innovative concept with its "Agent Hospital," a facility that trains AI "doctor agents" in a simulated environment. These AI agents evolve over time, improving their diagnostic and treatment capabilities. While promising, the AI hospital model also faces challenges, such as navigating medical regulations and ensuring that AI works in tandem with human doctors to provide compassionate care.

In the future, such AI-powered facilities could revolutionize healthcare delivery, offering more affordable and efficient care, especially for remote or underserved populations. But as AI grows in capability, it will remain essential to remember the irreplaceable value of human empathy in medicine.

Digital media transforming patient experiences

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the integration of digital media tools into healthcare. Virtual doctor visits, telemedicine consultations, and personalized health apps are reshaping the way patients interact with healthcare providers. These digital platforms not only enable patients to access health information and track fitness metrics, but also foster communication with their healthcare team from the comfort of home.

Social media and online communities are empowering patients to share their stories, build support networks, and advocate for their health needs. This shift toward digital, patient-centered care is likely to grow, as technology continues to enhance the healthcare experience.

The impact on media and entertainment

Technology is also reshaping the media and entertainment industries. Streaming platforms have disrupted traditional broadcasting, offering on-demand access to movies, TV shows, and documentaries. Emerging technologies like 5G and edge computing are making these experiences faster and more seamless, while AI-powered algorithms personalize content recommendations for viewers.

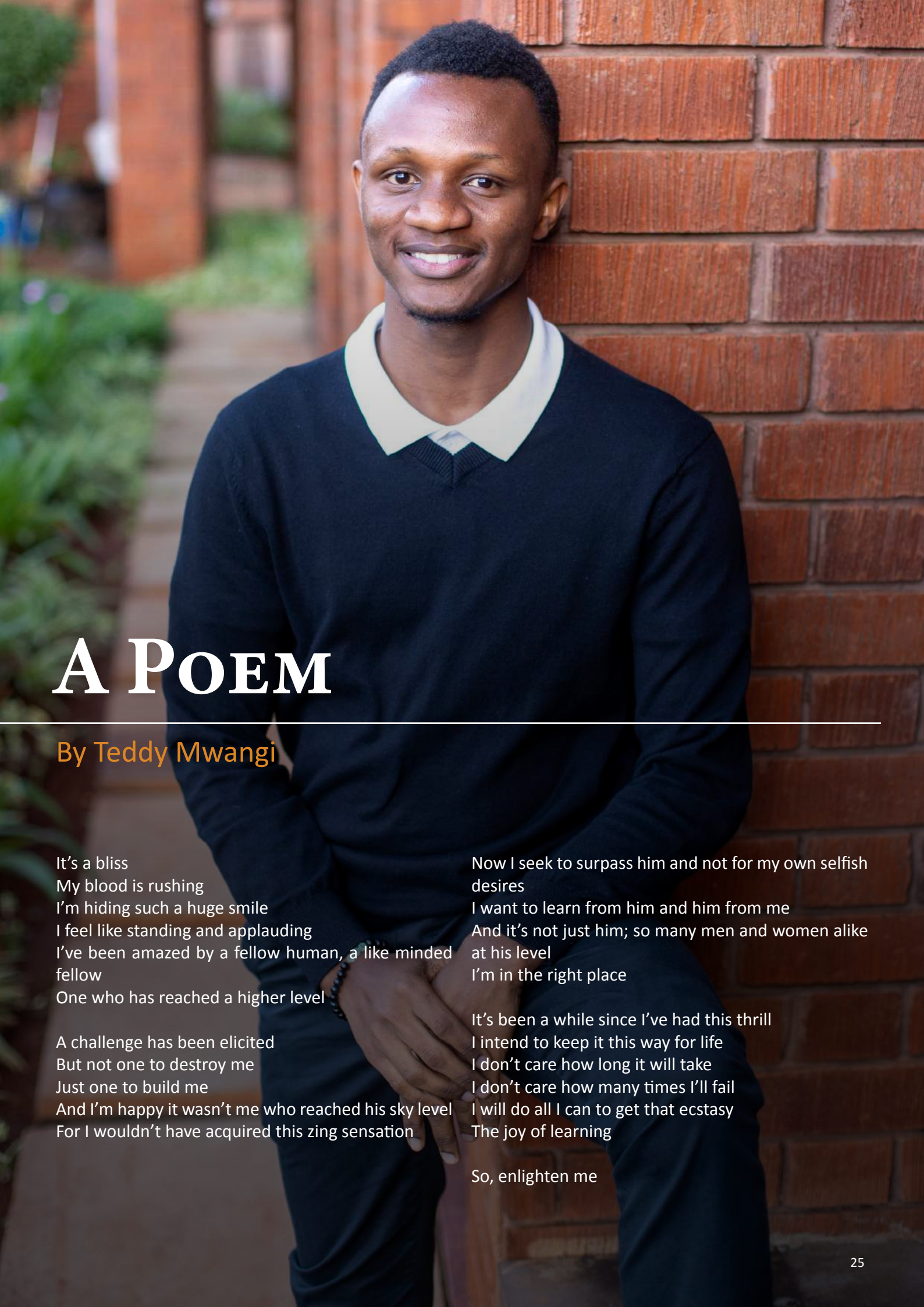
In the realm of content creation, AI, VR, and AR are pushing the boundaries of storytelling. AI-assisted video editing is streamlining production, while VR and AR are allowing creators to craft immersive, interactive experiences that captivate audiences in new ways.

As technology continues to evolve, the media landscape is becoming more personalized, interactive, and data-driven. The future promises a media world where we can engage with content in ways that are more immersive and tailored to our preferences.

A bold new future

The rapid advancements in technology—whether in medicine or media—are transforming our world in ways that were once unimaginable. As these innovations continue to unfold, we can expect smarter healthcare, more engaging entertainment, and a future where technology works to enhance our daily lives. Though these changes may seem overwhelming, the potential benefits are vast, offering new ways to connect, heal, and entertain.



A photograph of a young Black man with short hair, smiling and leaning against a red brick wall. He is wearing a black V-neck sweater over a white collared shirt. His hands are clasped in his lap. The background shows some greenery and a wooden fence.

A POEM

By Teddy Mwangi

It's a bliss
My blood is rushing
I'm hiding such a huge smile
I feel like standing and applauding
I've been amazed by a fellow human, a like minded
fellow
One who has reached a higher level

A challenge has been elicited
But not one to destroy me
Just one to build me
And I'm happy it wasn't me who reached his sky level
For I wouldn't have acquired this zing sensation

Now I seek to surpass him and not for my own selfish
desires
I want to learn from him and him from me
And it's not just him; so many men and women alike
at his level
I'm in the right place

It's been a while since I've had this thrill
I intend to keep it this way for life
I don't care how long it will take
I don't care how many times I'll fail
I will do all I can to get that ecstasy
The joy of learning

So, enlighten me



DATA CLUB: CHESS BATTLE

By Sarah Wambugu and Gideon Nyoike, Data Club

Photos: [Link to Photos](#)

When I think about chess, I'm reminded of its profound complexity. With more possible games than there are stars in the universe, it's a game that demands foresight, strategy, and adaptability. But the question lingers: is chess a battle of sharp minds or just a matter of sheer probability? Though chess and data might seem worlds apart, I believe they share more in common than one might think, as explored in this article.

This parallel was brilliantly showcased during the recent chess duel hosted by the Data Innovation Club, where our very own grandmasters, Prof. Lukoye and Prof. Gatiti, faced off. Both players brought their best strategies to the board, each fighting to outwit the other. Much like navigating the complexities of data, chess requires critical analysis and careful decision-making.

On the chessboard, the player is a warrior, armed with a full army — queens, rooks, bishops, knights, and pawns — as they defend their king. Every move

is calculated, a step forward or backward, all while maintaining strategic vision to protect their honor and pride. Similarly, in the realm of data, a data scientist is equipped with programming languages and algorithms, using them to navigate the vast complexities of big data.

The tension on the chessboard is palpable: a racing heart, indecision, and the feeling of powerlessness when facing an important move. This mirrors the pressure felt by data scientists as they race against time, looking for the single line of code that could make all the difference. Just as a chess player can't remember every possible move, even the most seasoned data scientists can't recall every line of code. Both fields rely on patterns, analysis, and strategy to navigate unknowns.

Despite their long histories, both chess and data science remain shrouded in mystery. Supercomputers continuously analyze chess moves without solving it completely, just as data experts dive deep into massive datasets seeking answers to global challenges. But what about healthcare?

With infinite possibilities, like the countless moves on a chessboard, how can we leverage these tools to illuminate the path forward in the healthcare sector?

At first glance, chess, data, and healthcare might seem worlds apart. Yet, they are interconnected in profound ways. The lessons we learn from chess, such as anticipating moves, recognizing patterns, and executing strategies, are equally valuable in the dynamic field of healthcare. Anticipating trends, predicting outcomes, and adjusting strategies are key to navigating the complexities of healthcare. This is where data analysis becomes essential: understanding healthcare patterns through data is the cornerstone of sustainable research, development, and infrastructure in the sector.

We can't overlook the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in this evolution. Just as chess engines can predict millions of possible moves and suggest improvements, AI in healthcare can help predict patient outcomes, suggest treatment options, and even reduce medical errors. Imagine a world where similar systems in healthcare institutions could streamline procedures, improve training, and drastically cut costs — a game-changer for the healthcare industry.

The fusion of chess, data science, and healthcare represents a new era. While chess has existed for centuries, its integration with data science is pushing the boundaries of innovation, driving sustainable development, and revolutionizing industries far beyond the chessboard.



Gideon Nyoike





EMPOWERING VOICES IN HEALTHCARE AND MEDIA

By Theo Sharon,
President, Aga Khan University Public Speaking Club

The Public Speaking Club plays a vital role in bringing together students from diverse disciplines, including nursing, medicine, and media, to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and develop essential communication skills. By encouraging students to engage across fields, the club promotes a holistic understanding of healthcare issues and inspires innovative approaches to address them.

The club's initiatives, such as workshops, events, and community outreach projects, provide students with the tools to improve their public speaking, presentation, and communication skills. This empowerment allows them to effectively convey critical healthcare information to a variety of audiences and advocate for health promotion and disease prevention. Moreover, by facilitating

collaboration between healthcare and media students, the club explores the powerful role media plays in shaping health behaviors and spreading health information.

Through these interactions, the club also fosters media literacy among healthcare professionals and promotes strategies for effective health communication. This dynamic environment enables students to not only enhance their personal communication abilities but also contribute to the broader goals of healthcare education, advocacy, and community impact.

In essence, the Public Speaking Club provides an invaluable platform for students to refine their communication skills, leverage interdisciplinary perspectives, and drive positive change in healthcare communication and education, both within our institution and the wider community.



THE BOOK CLUB:

WHERE STORIES COME TO LIFE

By Michelle Mwashu and Maheer Admani

Are you a book lover eager to connect with fellow literature enthusiasts? Look no further—our Book Club is the perfect place for you! Whether you're a lifelong reader or just beginning your literary adventure, we offer a welcoming space to dive into captivating books, engage in dynamic discussions, and explore new worlds together.

The concept is simple yet enriching: we choose a book to read individually, then gather three times a semester to share our thoughts, reflections, and insights in a relaxed, informal setting. From timeless classics to contemporary gems, our selections span a variety of genres and themes, ensuring there's always something for every reader to enjoy.

But our Book Club isn't just about reading—it's about making an impact. We believe in the transformative power of literature to inspire change, foster empathy, and create connections. That's why we integrate community service into our activities. Whether it's reading to children in hospitals, donating books to underserved communities, or organizing literary-themed events at local schools, we're passionate about using our love of books to uplift and inspire others.

By joining our club, you'll not only explore a wide array of literary works and engage in thought-provoking conversations, but you'll also have the opportunity to give back and make a difference. Our Book Club is open to people from all walks of life. Whether you're a seasoned reader or someone eager to rediscover the joy of reading, you'll find a warm, inclusive community waiting for you.

Join us today and experience the magic of books, the power of community, and the joy of giving back. As Helen Exley said, "Books are a uniquely portable magic." Let's spread that magic together through the pages of our books and the bonds of our shared passion.

Join the Book Club!



LOVE AGAINST ALL ODDS:

THE HEART-WRENCHING STORY OF *ME BEFORE YOU*

By Blessings Jael Elvira, Journalism Club Member

Me Before You (2016) is not your typical love story. It's a beautiful and heartbreaking exploration of love, loss, and the pursuit of a meaningful life. Louisa Clark (Emilia Clarke), a quirky and effervescent young woman, takes on the role of caregiver for Will Traynor (Sam Claflin), a wealthy man left paralyzed after a tragic accident. Initially, their interactions are a clash of cynicism and optimism. But as Louisa injects her zest for life into Will's world, their connection deepens in unexpected ways.

Clarke and Claflin deliver powerhouse performances, their on-screen chemistry crackling with undeniable tenderness. Despite the harsh reality of Will's condition — his unwavering desire for assisted suicide — their love story unfolds with a quiet beauty.

The film dives deep into the complex issue of euthanasia, portraying the emotional toll it takes on Will, Louisa, and their families. Will's depression, stemming from his accident, is depicted with brutal honesty. Confined to a wheelchair and stripped of his adventurous spirit, he grapples with isolation, hopelessness, and a loss of purpose. Louisa's arrival is a lifeline — her optimism challenges his negativity, and slowly, Will begins to rediscover moments of joy. This highlights the profound power of human connection in combating depression.

Louisa is forced to grapple with letting go of the love she has found, while also respecting Will's desire to control his own fate. For many viewers who have experienced mental health struggles in loved ones, this dilemma can feel intensely personal. **Me Before You** offers no easy answers, but it gently emphasizes the importance of seeking help. While Will ultimately makes a different choice, the film underscores that depression is a treatable condition.

Me Before You is far more than a tearjerker. It sparks important conversations about disability, euthanasia, and the meaning of life. By confronting the harsh realities of Will's situation, the film invites viewers to challenge their own beliefs and values. While some criticize its portrayal of suicide, it undeniably raises awareness about mental health struggles.

Ultimately, *Me Before You* is a love story that stays with you long after the credits roll. It's a film that makes you laugh, cry, and reflect on the complexities of life, love, and the tough choices we face in times of loss.



EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH FITNESS, MINDFULNESS, AND COMMUNITY

By Abbigael Awilly and Luckiey Muteshi

In today's fast-paced world, where pressure, stress, and anxiety have become the norm, finding a haven that nurtures both physical and mental well-being is more important than ever. Enter the concept of a Wellness Hub — a global youth health and hope hub. This isn't just a club; it's a community, a safe space created to support young people as they navigate the challenges of modern life, fostering resilience, joy, and holistic growth.

The struggles of “adulting” and the need for support

Adulting comes with its fair share of challenges — academic pressure, social expectations, and the constant comparison on social media. With these pressures, mental health issues among young people are on the rise. Research shows that nearly half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14, underscoring the need for supportive communities like the Wellness Hub.

The AKU Wellness Hub: A platform for growth

The AKU Wellness Hub aims to provide a platform for individuals passionate about personal development, helping them form a community that fosters both personal and professional growth. By integrating services such as fitness programs, mindfulness workshops, and academic support, the Hub offers a holistic approach to well-being.

Fitness for mental health

Physical activity plays a vital role in improving mental health, elevating mood, and reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. The Wellness Hub incorporates fitness programs that cater to a variety of interests and skill levels, encouraging young people to engage in sports, yoga, dancing, and more. With access to the Aga Khan Sports Centre, students are able to participate in these activities at their convenience.

Counseling services and building community

While the Hub currently offers peer counseling, there are plans to expand by collaborating with other organizations within the school and hospital, inviting mental health professionals to provide guidance on topics ranging from academic stress to self-esteem. The hospital also offers counseling services, with a welcoming staff that creates a comfortable environment for students to open up and share their emotions.

More than just a support service, the Wellness Hub fosters a sense of community. By connecting young

people who have experienced similar struggles, the Hub promotes empathy and understanding. Social gatherings and peer-led groups strengthen this bond, reducing feelings of loneliness and helping to build lasting relationships. The involvement of both nursing and medical students further enhances these connections.

Looking Ahead: Building a resilient, optimistic generation

As we look to the future, initiatives like the Wellness Hub are essential in providing young people with a space to grow, thrive, and find solace. By supporting each other, we can create a healthier, happier generation ready to face the world with resilience and optimism.

Teamwork: where the sum becomes greater than the parts, and high-fives are endless. Enter The AKU Wellness Hub — a community working together to improve the self. No prerequisites required to join.

Some of the Hub's Activities:

Open Let's Talk Forums: A space for members to share personal experiences and life lessons. We also discuss topics related to mental health and well-being.

Growing Healthy Habits: Members pick an area of focus, brainstorm challenges, and create an action plan. At the end of the month, we gather to discuss experiences.

Accountability Partners: Members pair up to motivate and support each other in following through with their action plans.

External Speakers: The Hub welcomes mental health professionals to offer expert advice on stress, relationships, and self-esteem.

Mental Health Campaigns: Members will organize talks in local schools to raise awareness about mental health.

Group Self-Care Activities: We engage in walks, meditation, and physical activities together to strengthen our community.



THE BLACKLIST:

A THRILLING RIDE THROUGH CRIME, SECRETS, AND LIES

By Nelson Kalama, Journalism Club Member

The Blacklist, a gripping ten-season series by NBC, has proven itself to be one of the best action-thrillers of our time. With a 91% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, it's clear that this show has captivated audiences. Right from the pilot, it hooks you, and each episode leaves you on the edge of your seat.

The show follows Raymond "Red" Reddington (James Spader), a career criminal who has spent over two decades expanding his empire. Known as "The Concierge of Crime," Reddington is one of the most wanted men in the world, infamous for his treason, weapons trafficking, and other heinous crimes. But one day, he surrenders to the FBI without warning. Why? No one knows. In exchange for his surrender, he offers the FBI a deal: he'll help them catch some of the world's most dangerous criminals, criminals who have operated under the radar for years — but only if they allow him to work with rookie profiler Elizabeth Keen (Megan Boone).

Elizabeth, fresh out of Quantico, is stunned. Why would a notorious criminal want to work exclusively with her? Do they share a history? Is she who she claims to be? And who exactly is Raymond Reddington?

As the FBI captures criminals one by one, the show unravels these mysteries, but not without leaving some questions unanswered. Elizabeth's world is turned upside down as Reddington reveals that everything she thought she knew about herself is a lie.

The show is brought to life by an exceptional cast, including Harold Cooper (Harry Lennix), Aram Mojtabai (Amir Arison), and Donald Ressler (Diego Klattenhoff). James Spader's portrayal of Reddington is nothing short of brilliant, capturing the character's complexity, vulnerability, and undeniable charm. His performance makes Reddington more than just a criminal mastermind — he's someone you can't help but watch, fascinated by his every move.

The series' cryptic storytelling style keeps viewers hooked, as big questions are answered in deliberately ambiguous ways, staying true to Reddington's elusive nature. It's a must-watch show that forces us to rethink our perceptions, proving that not everything is as it seems.



THE ART CLUB:

A CANVAS FOR CREATIVITY

By Ivy Mwaura, Art Club Leader

The Art Club is a vibrant community of creative individuals passionate about visual arts. Open to all skill levels, it provides a welcoming space where members can express themselves through painting, drawing, sculpture, crafts, and mixed media. The club also aims to host exhibitions to showcase members'

work and engage with the broader community through art outreach programs. Whether you're looking to improve your skills or simply enjoy the creative process, the Art Club is the perfect place to unleash your artistic potential.

THE USE OF PSYCHEDELICS IN MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT:

A NEW FRONTIER-

DR. CATHERINE MBAKA, PSYCHIATRIST



By Teresa Ndung'u , Journalism Club

In recent years, psychedelics have moved from the fringes of medical research to the forefront of mental health innovation. Speaking with Dr. Catherine Mbaka, a psychiatrist, revealed the potential of therapies like ketamine to transform lives, offering hope to those grappling with severe mental health challenges.

Therapeutic Benefits of Psychedelics

Psychedelic-assisted therapies are proving transformative for conditions like treatment-resistant depression and PTSD. Ketamine, initially an anesthetic, has shown rapid relief compared to traditional antidepressants, with some patients reporting improvement after just a few sessions. Administered via intravenous, oral, or intranasal routes, it offers a versatile and critical alternative to invasive treatments like electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).

Legal and Regulatory Landscape

In Kenya, the integration of ketamine therapy faces challenges due to skepticism and limited access, especially in rural areas. Despite legal approval for clinical use, cost and availability remain barriers. Institutions like AKU and Chiromo are pioneering its use, though broader acceptance is still evolving.

Safety and Ethical Considerations

Dr. Catherine underscored the need for thorough patient assessments to minimize risks, such as addiction and dissociative symptoms. Balancing risks and benefits involves careful selection, ethical practices, and transparent communication with patients about treatment options.

Future Prospects

The future of psychedelics in Kenya's mental health care looks promising. Over the next decade, advancements in research and public awareness could lead to greater acceptance of these innovative therapies. Dr. Catherine envisions a mental health landscape that embraces these treatments, dismantling stigma and expanding access to effective care.

Conclusion

The exploration of psychedelics in mental health treatment is an exciting journey with immense potential. By prioritizing safety and education, we can create a more inclusive, effective approach to care, offering healing and hope to those in need.



Nairobi, Kenya – Founded in 2024, SPIE Nairobi, a brother to SPIE Karachi, under the Aga Khan University's Center for Innovation in Medical Education (CIME), is making waves in the realm of innovative education. This student-run organization is dedicated to promoting a culture of innovative learning and teaching across academia, community, industry, and beyond, with a special emphasis on simulation.

A. Multifaceted Approach

SPIE Nairobi is structured into several distinct wings, each contributing uniquely to the organization's mission:

- 1. MedTech:** This wing focuses on empowering students with skills in data science, statistical workshops, engineering, artificial intelligence, robotics, and programming languages like Python. By providing these technical skills, MedTech helps students appreciate and engage with advanced fields of study.
- 2. Socials & Marketing:** The team relays information about SPIE's projects through social media campaigns and content production. They also train students in software and hardware use for video/photo editing and social media strategy development.
- 3. Education:** Aiming to enhance learning experiences, this wing sets up self-learning and peer-to-peer learning sessions, making the Center for Innovation in Medical Education (CIME) more accessible to students.
- 4. Community:** Focused on improving health awareness, this wing uses innovative tools like healthcare simulation to engage the public. They design custom awareness programs targeting diverse groups, from school children to working professionals.

Building a Strong Community

SPIE Nairobi's holistic approach ensures that it not only fosters innovation within the academic sphere but also bridges gaps between different disciplines and generations. The organization continues to be a beacon of progressive education practices, setting a benchmark for student-led initiatives worldwide.

Through these structured wings, SPIE Nairobi promotes a culture of collaborative learning and innovative thinking. By engaging with various facets of technology, education, and community outreach, SPIE Nairobi stands at the forefront of transforming educational practices and impacting society positively.

SPIE NAIROBI:

INNOVATING EDUCATION AT
AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

By Ciano Wanyoike and Ruth
Buruchara, SPIE leaders



AI IN MEDICINE:

INSIGHTS FROM DR. KENDI MUCHUNGI

By Ciano Wanyoike, Journalism Club

Interviewer: Could you share your career trajectory?

Dr. Kendi Muchungi: My journey has been nonlinear. I excelled in Mathematics and English at Loreto Limuru but doubted my abilities despite ranking third.

After high school, I pursued Computer Science at Africa Nazarene University, where a colleague and I developed administrative software. I later earned a postgraduate diploma in E-commerce in Canada, gaining practical experience at CIBC in E-development.

I then pursued a Master's in Information Systems and a PhD in Computational Neuroscience at the University of Surrey. My research involved building models to understand retinal functionality, aiding retinal implant design.

After completing my PhD in 2015, I returned to Kenya as a lecturer at Africa Nazarene University. I also worked on transformative learning projects in East Africa. Later, Professor Zul Merali recruited me to the Brain and Mind Institute as an instructional designer.

Interviewer: What does instructional design involve?

Dr. Kendi Muchungi: Instructional design is about enhancing learning through strategies that emphasize critical thinking and effective outcomes.

Interviewer: How has it impacted the Brain and Mind Institute?

Dr. Kendi Muchungi: It's been vital. We've organized Resilience Boot Camps, launched the Mental Health First Response Program, and are developing the Mindfulness Dynamics program to boost workplace resilience.

Interviewer: How do you view AI's role in neuroscience?

Dr. Kendi Muchungi: AI has long been used in neuroscience but is now more accessible. Its potential is vast, but contextual expertise is essential. For example, medications effective in one demographic may not work similarly in others, underscoring the need for diverse data representation.

Interviewer: How can healthcare professionals contribute to these advancements?

Dr. Kendi Muchungi: They should embrace AI as a tool to bridge knowledge gaps and improve service delivery. AI can also help address physician burnout by managing workloads.

Interviewer: What advice do you have for undergraduates?

Dr. Kendi Muchungi: Be curious and resilient. Curiosity fosters innovation, and resilience helps manage stress while maintaining mental health.

STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE OFFICE

A close-up portrait of Rachel Baldwin, a woman with curly brown hair and black-rimmed glasses, looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Greetings students,

Please let me take a moment to congratulate our Journalism Club for their successful launch of the first student publication at our Nairobi campus! It was envisioned and created for students, by students, and it's a great privilege for me to contribute from time to time.

It's been an exciting time for our Student Affairs team. We recently hosted our first Global Student Affairs retreat in Karachi, and we are happy to share some of the outcomes from our time together, which was primarily focused on our strategic priorities for students and the future of student affairs. Our retreat provided an invaluable opportunity to reflect on how we will better support your academic success, personal development, and overall well-being throughout your university experience.

We are committed to creating an inclusive, supportive, and engaging environment for all students. Several key priorities were discussed during the meeting, including enhancing mental health and well-being support, expanding community engagement, adopting innovative technology for student engagement, and developing more diverse and inclusive spaces where students can connect, learn, and grow.

We also focused on ensuring that our student affairs programs are responsive to the evolving needs of our growing community. We are dedicated to increasing accessibility, while creating and strengthening our programs and resources that promote and cultivate personal growth, leadership development, and overall student involvement on campus.

Moving forward, we will continue to maintain open communication with you and we will actively seek your input regarding our strategic priorities. Your feedback is essential for us to build accountability and ensure that our programs and support functions continue to meet your needs and interests. Whether through surveys, focus groups, or direct conversations, we want to hear from you about how we can enhance and better support your campus life experience.

Together, we will create an environment where every student feels empowered, supported, and engaged. Thank you for your dedication to your educational journey and university community. We look forward to working alongside you as we bring our strategic priorities to life!

Rachel Baldwin
Vice Provost, Students



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

By Faith Agan

In this section, we discuss the inspiring journeys of students at Aga Khan University, showcasing the unique experiences, challenges, and passions that shape their academic and personal lives. From their motivations for choosing their fields of study to the extracurricular activities they pursue, these students are not just building their careers—they're making an impact on their communities.

Chepkirui Winny

Hello, my name is Chepkirui Winny, and I'm currently a first-year student at Aga Khan University, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. One fun fact about me is that I'm passionate about vegetarian food and storytelling. Whenever I start sharing a story, everyone around me stops to listen!

1. What inspired you to choose your current field of study, and how has your passion for it evolved during your time at the university?

Nursing has always been my dream career. I didn't have the chance to pursue it immediately, so I first studied Tourism and later Accounting. However, fate had a way of leading me back to nursing. My first job was in a hospital's finance department, and it was there that I grew deeply admiring the nurses' work. I yearned to be part of the team, interacting with patients directly. When I finally got the opportunity to pursue nursing at Aga Khan University, I was thrilled! Now, as my first year draws to an end, my passion for nursing has only deepened, and I'm eagerly looking forward to starting my clinical rotations next semester.

2. Beyond academics, are you involved in any clubs, organizations, or activities on campus?

Yes! I'm involved in two clubs: the Data Club and the Environmental Club. I'd love to participate in more extracurricular activities, but balancing academics, family, and clubs is quite a tightrope walk.

3. Can you share a significant activity or project you're particularly proud of? What impact has it had on your learning journey?

I'm especially proud of my involvement in the 2023/2024 President's Climate Change Challenge at the university. Initially hesitant to join, a close friend convinced me, and it turned out to be an incredible experience. We conceptualized an entire product from just an idea—identifying a problem, brainstorming solutions, and refining our best idea. The challenge taught me to approach problems with a more critical and creative mindset, a skill I know will be invaluable both in my nursing career and beyond.

4. How do you balance your academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities or personal interests? What strategies have you found most effective?

It's easy to get consumed by academics, but I've been very intentional about setting aside time for myself. Every Friday is my "me-time," where I relax, watch movies, and recharge. Saturdays are dedicated to finishing assignments, and Sundays are for spending quality time with family. Monday through Thursday, I focus on studying and revising for upcoming exams. This routine has really worked for me in keeping a healthy balance.

5. Tell us about a challenge you are facing or have faced during your university life and how you overcame it. What did you learn from this experience?

One of the toughest experiences I've faced was my first trip to the morgue for gross anatomy practicals. Coming from a community where the dead are not typically approached, it was a real challenge to learn from and even touch cadavers. The first lesson was a struggle—I was gagging almost the entire time and couldn't even look at meat for a while afterward! But with time, I overcame my discomfort, and now I actually look forward to these visits. It taught me the power of resilience and how a determined mind can overcome even the most difficult obstacles.

6. Can you describe a memorable moment or experience that has shaped your university journey?

There have been so many memorable moments, but the one that stands out the most is winning the AKUSA representative seat for my class. It was a proud moment, as it affirmed that my peers believed in me to represent their interests and voice.

7. How has your time at the university prepared you for your future career goals? Are there any specific skills or knowledge you've acquired that you believe will be particularly valuable?

My time at the university has opened my eyes to so many opportunities I wasn't aware of. At first, I just wanted to become a nurse, but now I'm exploring how medical professionals can contribute to solving climate change and how data analysis might play a role in health care. There's a lot to discover, and I'm excited to narrow down my interests as I move through my studies, particularly as I approach my third year.

8. What advice would you give to incoming students based on your experiences at the university?

My advice would be to live a balanced life. I like to think of university like a tree—your degree is the fruit, while extracurricular activities are the leaves. A tree with fruit and no leaves would be incomplete, so make sure to enjoy the leaves along the way, but always stay focused on your fruit—your degree.

9. What's your hidden gem study spot on campus that not many people know about?

My hidden gem would be the group study rooms in the library. They offer a quiet, collaborative space for focused group discussions. I wish there were even more rooms like this on campus for group work!

10. If your university was a signature scent, what would it smell like and why?

If my university had a signature scent, it would be a blend of fresh-cut grass, blooming flowers, and a hint of coffee. The fresh grass represents the vibrant campus life and new beginnings, the blooming flowers symbolize the growth and transformation I'm experiencing, and the coffee scent represents the hard work, dedication, and late-night study sessions that are part of the journey. This scent would perfectly capture the dynamic, inspiring atmosphere where I'm pursuing my dream of becoming a nurse.

Theo Sharon

Hi! I'm Theo Sharon, an MBChB student at Aga Khan University. Aside from being a student, I'm a sister, daughter, and friend. I have a deep love for poetry and music, especially the guitar, though I'm also keen to explore pipe instruments like the saxophone.

1. What inspired you to choose your current field of study, and how has your passion for it evolved during your time at the university?

My passion for medicine began when I witnessed firsthand the lack of adequate healthcare in my village. I was deeply moved by the impact of poor medical care, which pushed me to pursue a career in medicine. In high school, I excelled in mathematics and sciences, which further encouraged me to follow this path.

Since starting university, I've realized that being a great doctor isn't just about memorizing textbooks. It's about effective communication, teamwork, and empathy. Understanding patients holistically—listening to their stories and not just focusing on their ailments—has become a cornerstone of my approach to medicine.

2. Beyond academics, are you involved in any clubs, organizations, or activities on campus?

Yes, I'm actively involved in several clubs. I'm the chairperson of the Public Speaking Club, manage events for the SPIE Club, and I also serve as one of the leaders in the Fellowship Society. These three clubs have been instrumental in broadening my campus experience and developing leadership skills.

3. Can you share a significant activity or project you're particularly proud of? What impact has it had on your learning journey?

One project that stands out was an event we planned with the SPIE Club—an Anki event in collaboration with the AKU SPIE club in Karachi. Unfortunately, it got canceled due to ongoing demonstrations, but the planning process itself was a rewarding experience. It gave me the opportunity to collaborate with individuals across borders, and it strengthened my belief in the growth potential of the SPIE Club. We started small, but I'm optimistic about where the club is headed!

4. How have you balanced your academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities or personal interests? What strategies have

you found most effective?

Finding balance between work and relaxation is key. I've learned to listen to my body and mind to determine the best times for studying and when to take breaks. I try to schedule my day around my energy levels, asking myself if I focus better during the day or at night.

Of course, there are moments when schoolwork demands more attention, but I always make time to recharge. It's all about striking that balance between productivity and relaxation.

5. Tell us about a challenge you are facing or have faced during your university life and how you overcame it. What did you learn from this experience?

Procrastination has been a major challenge for me. To overcome it, I've adopted a "1-2-3" technique: I count to three, and by the time I reach three, I force myself to get up and do something productive—whether it's related to studying or just tidying up.

I've also created a "sacred" study space to minimize distractions. My study table is now exclusively for studying, so I can't sit there and scroll on my phone. This has helped me stay focused.

One more challenge I've been working on is learning to say "no" to others. I'm a naturally honest person, but I often struggle with turning down requests from friends. I'm getting better at setting boundaries, but it's definitely something I'm still working on.

6. Can you describe a memorable moment or experience that has shaped your university journey?

The mentorship I've received has been one of the most transformative aspects of my university experience. Dr. Gathu, our first-year coordinator, and my personal mentor have been guiding forces in my development.

I remember a moment when my mentor challenged me to track my expenses for a month and categorize them as needs, wants, and luxuries. It helped me cut down on unnecessary spending and prioritize what truly mattered.

Dr. Gathu's advice on improving my interpersonal skills and seeing things from different perspectives has been invaluable. Mentorship has played a pivotal role in shaping my character, and I am truly grateful for it.

7. How has your time at the university prepared you for your future career goals? Are there any specific skills or knowledge you've acquired that you believe will be particularly valuable?

University has taught me the importance of understanding people as individuals, not just as patients. One class that really resonated with me was Society, Ethics, and Law, where we discussed the Hippocratic Oath and the importance of treating the whole person.

This emphasis on holistic care has shaped my approach to medicine. I'm learning that success in this field isn't just about treating symptoms—it's about meeting patients where they are emotionally, mentally, and physically. This perspective will be invaluable as I move forward in my medical career.

8. What advice would you give to incoming students based on your experiences at the university?

My advice would be to embrace collaboration over competition. Unlike high school, where being the top student mattered, university—especially in medicine—is about working together. There's no ranking system here, so helping each other out can only make everyone stronger. Start early, experiment with different study methods, and don't be afraid to change what doesn't work for you. What worked in high school may not work in university.

Also, practice gratitude and build strong friendships. Being a student at Aga Khan University is a privilege, and while it's important to voice concerns, always remember to provide constructive feedback. Your friends will be your support system through the ups and downs—having people you can be vulnerable with is crucial.

Finally, be open to learning and unlearning, and enjoy your first trimester. It's a time to meet new people and embrace new experiences!

9. What's an underrated food combination you've discovered during your time at university that everyone should try?

One food combo I discovered is "mayaicha"—a twist on the popular "smocha" (smokie, kachumbari, and chapati). Mayaicha substitutes the smokie with boiled eggs, and trust me, it's a game-changer. Give

it a try—you won't be disappointed!

Another combo I swear by is fried rice with a cold Coke and shawarma from Diamond Plaza or Caffè Bricks. It's the perfect comfort food after a long day.

10. Your university experience is being turned into a movie. Which movie would it be?

I'm not much of a movie buff, but if my university experience were a movie, it would definitely have to be something like "Keeping Up With Theo." It's a rollercoaster of emotions—just when I think I'm done with one challenge, another one pops up! I imagine it as a reality TV show with elements of action, thriller, romance, and even a bit of horror. University life is never dull, that's for sure!

Mark Wachira

Hey, I'm Mark Wachira, a 2nd-year Medical Student at Aga Khan University. If you hear an unexpected loud laugh and can't spot anyone, it's probably me! I'm passionate about mental health, especially breaking stigma and starting honest conversations. Outside of medicine, I enjoy podcasts, sports, public speaking, and acting. I'm also a movie critic, and while I ice-skate occasionally, I'm known for randomly making animal noises (it's normal, trust me).

1. What inspired you to choose your current field of study, and how has your passion for it evolved during your time at the university?

Like many med students, I started off dreaming of being a neurosurgeon, drawn by the fame and money. But after job-shadowing at a physiotherapy center for stroke rehabilitation, everything changed. Watching elderly patients re-learn simple tasks like walking or holding a spoon made me realize how complex and beautiful the human body is. That experience deepened my compassion for people and solidified my desire to pursue medicine. Over time, through seminars and exposure to various specialties, I've evolved from "This looks cool" to "This is my calling."

2. Beyond academics, are you involved in any clubs, organizations, or activities on campus?

I'm deeply involved in leadership and organizing at AKU. I'm on the leadership committee for the AKU Christian Fellowship and also serve as the Local Officer for the Standing Committee of Mental Health at AKU (SCOMH-AKU). We've done some amazing work, from mental health awareness seminars to symposiums. Outside of that, I play badminton to clear my mind and am currently working on launching a podcast. Stay tuned!

3. Can you share a significant activity or project you're particularly proud of? What impact has it had on your learning journey?

A project I'm really proud of is the Men's Mental Health Symposium we organized at SCOMH-AKU in June for Men's Mental Health Month. We sent out an anonymous survey asking for questions on men's mental health, which were then answered by a panel of experts. The turnout was incredible, and the conversation was powerful. It was amazing to witness how much impact raising awareness about this usually overlooked topic had on the community.

4. How have you balanced your academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities or personal interests? What strategies have you found most effective?

The key word here is "Prioritize." I quickly learned that managing time is crucial. I focus during school hours to free up time for extracurriculars, but it's never a 50/50 balance—especially in med school. There's always more to study, but it's important to also make time for things that keep you grounded. Finding that balance between discipline and enjoying life is crucial, because med school will always be busy!

5. Tell us about a challenge you faced during your university life and how you overcame it. What did you learn from this experience?

Oh boy, procrastination! I learned the hard way by starting to study one week before my end-of-year exams. Med school is tough, but poor habits can make it seem impossible. Thankfully, group study sessions saved me. We would study together late into the evening, covering everything we'd learned all year. I've learned to start studying earlier, build a good study group, and stick to a plan. Don't procrastinate, folks!

6. Can you describe a memorable moment or experience that has shaped your university journey?

There's something oddly comforting about group study chaos. Everyone panicking together before exams creates a sense of unity. It made me realize that I'm not alone—everyone's struggling with the same challenges. That shared experience has helped build lasting bonds that have shaped my med school journey.

7. How has your time at the university prepared you for your future career goals? Are there any specific skills or knowledge you've acquired that you believe will be particularly valuable?

My passion lies in mental health, especially youth mental health and childhood trauma. AKU has opened doors to connect with experts in this field, and the knowledge and networks I've gained are invaluable. I'm working on a podcast focused on these issues, and I hope to make an impact on mental health for African youth. This university has provided me the tools and opportunities to begin that journey.

8. What advice would you give to incoming students based on your experiences at the university?

Get your notes together early—end-of-year exams are no joke. But also, don't forget to enjoy your time here, especially that first trimester. Find people who will hold you accountable, both academically and personally. And remember, life doesn't stop just because you're in med school. Have fun and live a little!

9. If your academic journey was a handbag, what three essential items would always be inside and why?

1. A study group – I couldn't survive med school without it.
2. My Bible – My faith has helped me navigate the stresses of med school.
3. A cup of coffee – Med school and caffeine go hand in hand!

10. If you could host a talk show featuring three guests from any era to discuss your field of study, who would you invite and why?

I'd bring Dr. Gregory House (if he were real), Hippocrates (the father of medicine), and Susan Nakhumicha (Kenya's former Health Cabinet Secretary). This trio would bring fascinating perspectives on the intersection of medical practice, ethics, and healthcare policy.



Maxwell Booker

Hi there! I'm Maxwell Booker, a nursing student at Aga Khan University. Before diving into nursing, I completed a degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Science is my first love, and I'm thrilled to combine my scientific knowledge with compassionate care to improve patient outcomes.

1. What inspired you to choose your current field of study, and how has your passion for it evolved during your time at the university?

I chose nursing because I wanted to take my scientific background and apply it in a more hands-on, human-centered way. I've always admired the incredible impact nurses have on patient well-being. At AKU, this passion has only deepened, especially as I've learned how to blend scientific knowledge with direct patient care. The more I experience, the more I realize just how vital nursing is to the healthcare system.

2. Beyond academics, are you involved in any clubs, organizations, or activities on campus?

Yes! I'm an active member of the Society for Promoting Innovation in Education (SPIE), a student-led organization dedicated to transforming education. Thanks to SPIE, I got the amazing opportunity to attend SIMPACT 2024, an international conference on using simulation-based education to improve healthcare outcomes. It's been a great way to expand my learning beyond the classroom.

3. Can you share a significant activity or project you're particularly proud of? What impact has it had on your learning journey?

Though I haven't had the chance to lead any major projects yet, I'm really excited about the possibility of organizing community health fairs through SPIE. These events will focus on preventive care and chronic condition management, and I look forward to working alongside local health professionals. It's a fantastic way to blend what we're learning in class with real-world community impact.

4. How have you balanced your academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities or personal interests? What strategies have you found most effective?

Balancing academics, extracurriculars, and personal life has definitely been challenging, but it's been manageable. I've learned the importance of prioritization—breaking down tasks into smaller, manageable chunks, sticking to a structured schedule,

and reaching out for support when needed. Most importantly, I've realized the need to keep a balance and not overburden myself.

5. Tell us about a challenge you faced during your university life and how you overcame it. What did you learn from this experience?

One of my biggest challenges was adapting to the technology-focused teaching style at AKU, which was quite different from my previous degree. To overcome this, I familiarized myself with the technology, watched tutorials, and accessed available resources. Through perseverance and support from my peers and faculty, I've learned to navigate these tools efficiently, and I'm now thriving in this new environment.

6. Can you describe a memorable moment or experience that has shaped your university journey?

A memorable experience for me was meeting third-year nursing students from Berry College (USA) who were visiting Kenya for clinical rotations. The chance to share and listen to their experiences really opened my eyes to the global nature of nursing. It gave me valuable insights and helped me feel more prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in my nursing program.

7. How has your time at the university prepared you for your future career goals?

Are there any specific skills or knowledge you've acquired that you believe will be particularly valuable?

My time at AKU has given me a solid foundation in clinical skills, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of healthcare systems. The emphasis on evidence-based practice and interdisciplinary collaboration has been particularly valuable. I know these skills will be crucial as I move forward in my nursing career and as I work to make an impact in the healthcare field.

8. What advice would you give to incoming students based on your experiences at the university?

My advice to incoming students would be to embrace every learning opportunity, build strong relationships with your peers and faculty, and prioritize self-care to maintain balance amidst the academic demands. It's also important to explore different areas of healthcare to discover where your true passion lies within nursing.

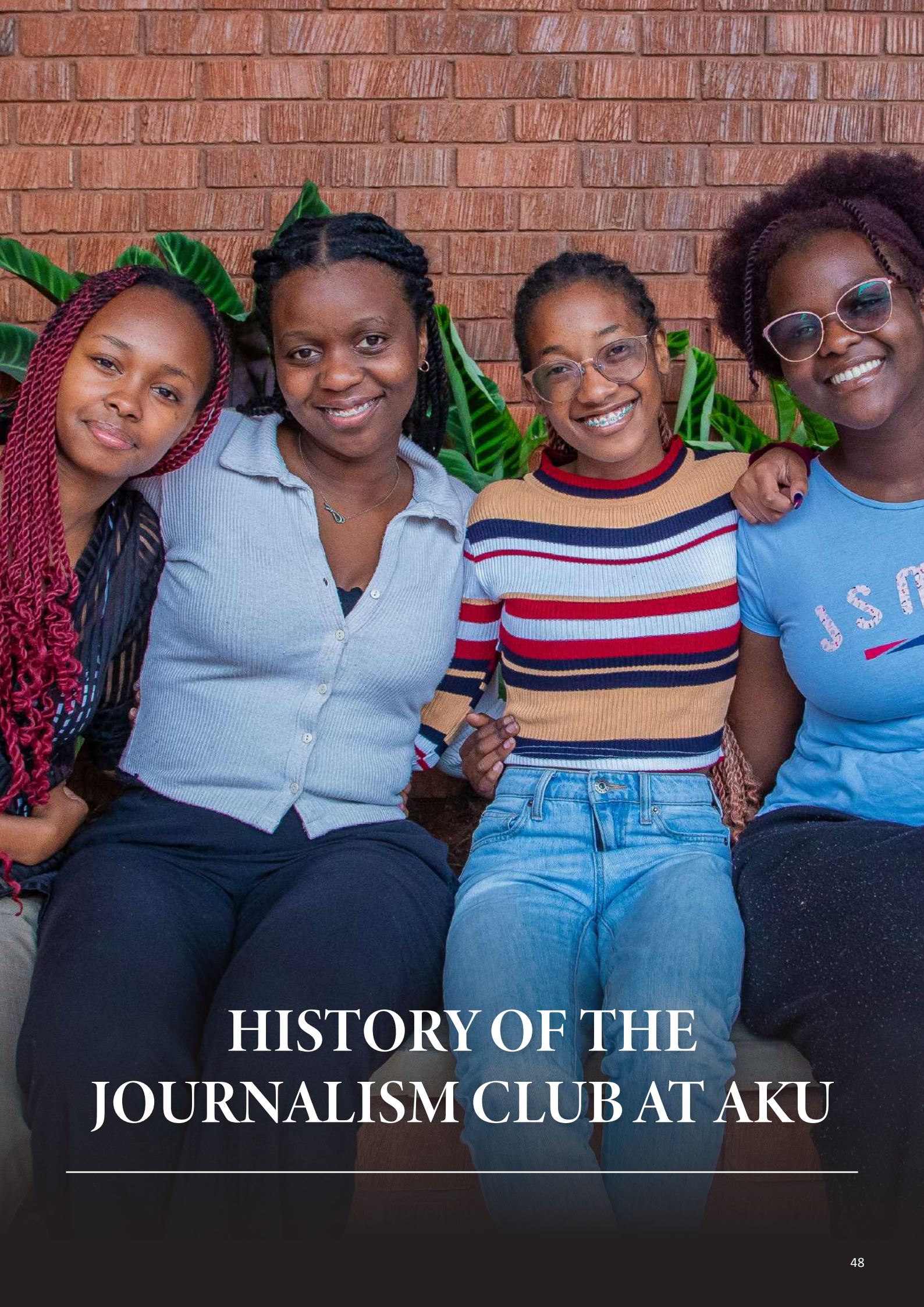
9. If you had to recommend one snack from the tuck shop, what would it be and why?

My go-to snack is Masala Sticks—they're the perfect mix of comfort and nutrition, which is ideal for refueling during busy study days or after a long lab session. They've become my go-to comfort food on campus!

10. If you could add one unusual amenity to the campus, what would it be?

If I could add an amenity, it would be a dedicated relaxation garden. It would include meditation spaces and calming natural elements to provide a serene environment for students. Nursing students, in particular, experience a lot of stress, and having a peaceful spot to unwind and recharge would be incredibly beneficial for mental and emotional well-being.





HISTORY OF THE JOURNALISM CLUB AT AKU

The Journalism Club at Aga Khan University (AKU) began its journey on the 18th of November 2023, born from the shared vision of five pioneering undergraduate students. What started as a modest gathering of like-minded individuals has blossomed into a vibrant community of 21 active members. The club proudly represents both the Medicine and Nursing programs, with a dynamic composition of 15 senior members in their second year and 6 enthusiastic first-year juniors.

From its inception, the Journalism Club has served as a platform for nurturing curiosity, creativity, and the art of storytelling. Its growth has been marked by significant milestones that have not only enriched its members but also underscored its commitment to journalistic excellence.

Milestones And Events

1. Visit to Standard Media Group (8th June 2024)

The Journalism Club's first major event was a visit to Standard Media Group, a powerhouse in Kenyan journalism. This eye-opening experience allowed members to interact with seasoned journalists, explore state-of-the-art newsrooms, and gain firsthand insights into the intricacies of media production. It was a day of inspiration, as the club's

budding storytellers were exposed to the real-world challenges and triumphs of modern journalism.

2. Trivia Night Extravaganza (26th September 2024)

Creativity and camaraderie took center stage during the club's inaugural Trivia Night. Held on a lively evening, this event united members and supporters in a spirited contest of wit and knowledge. Themed around global and local media history, it was an electrifying showcase of teamwork and intellectual prowess, leaving attendees yearning for more.

3. Launch of the Club's Yearly Publication (December 2024)

The pinnacle of the club's achievements to date is the launch of its much-anticipated yearly publication. This momentous event represents the culmination of months of dedication, storytelling, and design. The publication is not just a testament to the members' journalistic talents but also a milestone in the club's history, symbolizing its commitment to giving a voice to AKU undergraduates.

As the Journalism Club looks to the future, its legacy as a hub for creativity, innovation, and advocacy continues to grow. With a foundation rooted in passion and a vision to amplify student voices, this club stands as a beacon of excellence within the AKU community.



PICTORIAL

Students, Clubs and Societies











PICTORIAL

Tasty Meals Within School

Courtesy of Amised Enterprises





PICTORIAL

2025 CONVOCATION NAIROBI







PROF NANCY BOOKER

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN, GSMC

Welcome to the White Coat Chronicles!

In a world where fake news and rumors go viral faster than the truth, White Coat Chronicles dares to be different—bold, thoughtful, and true to its mission. This isn't just a student magazine. It's a space where your voices matter, where ideas come alive, and where the heartbeat of AKU's medical and nursing community finds its rhythm in storytelling.

Led by GSMC and the Journalism Club, this publication proves that storytelling isn't just for writers—it's for future doctors, nurses, and changemakers who know that communication saves lives too. Whether it's asking tough questions, diving into research, or shedding light on hidden truths, and promoting health literacy, this is where critical thinking meets creativity.

To the Journalism Club: Your passion shows us that the pen (or keyboard!) is as powerful as the scalpel. To our student readers: May these pages challenge you, inspire you, and remind you that your voice has power. To the AKU Community: May these stories show what's possible when scientists communicate effectively and with intention.

As Dean, I couldn't be prouder of what you've built. Let this magazine be your megaphone—and may its impact reach far beyond the campus walls. Here's to bold ideas, brave voices, and stories that matter.

Prof. Nancy Booker
Dean, Graduate School of Media and Communications

WHITE COAT CHRONICLES

Statement of Acknowledgment

The Journalism Club extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Graduate School of Media and Communications for their unwavering commitment and invaluable support in the production of our publication, White Coat Chronicles. Your expertise and dedication in assisting with photography, production, and editing have been instrumental in bringing this project to life. This collaboration has not only enhanced the quality of our work but has also inspired us to uphold the highest standards of journalistic excellence. We are deeply appreciative of the time, effort, and resources you have invested in this endeavor. Your guidance has enriched our learning experience and significantly contributed to the success of White Coat Chronicles. On behalf of the Journalism Club and its members, thank you for believing in our vision and helping us achieve it.

**Sincerely,
The Journalism Club.**

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Disclaimer:
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AKU



Student Affairs

