

NEWSLETTER 2019-2020

PEDIATRICS FOR LIFE



A LITTLE ABOUT US

Welcome to Pediatrics For Life! We are an AKU based student interest group that brings together all budding Pediatricians. Choosing a speciality can be a very daunting decision for medical students. PFL is here to help you realize your passion for the field of Pediatrics. This includes providing the resources, exposure and mentorship one needs in order to make the right decision for their future plans. Our members work in association with the Children's Hospital at AKU on various volunteering and research projects which you can read about in this issue.

We hope you enjoy reading; your ideas and suggestions are welcome at peditricsforlife.aku@gmail.com

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MEET THE PFL PRESIDENTS 2019-2020



ASNA SULAIMAN - PRESIDENT

We at PFL internalize and represent core values that every child is worthy of love, care and security, and spread that belief amongst our peers and beyond. We successfully widened interest in Pediatrics amongst the students and provided opportunities for meaningful fulfillment of this interest. I am proud to see PFL grow into what it is today, in a span of only three years. For this I extend the credit to PFL's teamwork, to achieve our goals with a spirit unparalleled. Let us keep this work ethic strong in being the best health care professionals we can be in such dire times.



HUZAIFA ZAFAR - VICE PRESIDENT

Never in my wildest imagination would I have ever been able to conjure an image of the world we find ourselves in today. A world where we find chaos, desolation and misery being reported at every nook and corner, where hope and happiness seem but only a distant blurry dream. But even on the gloomiest of days, we should remind ourselves of the exemplary heroism on display by people some of whom are our very own teachers, mentors and seniors. In these deeply troubling times, the efforts of these frontline heroes serve as a reminder of all that is good and pure in this world. And so does the work of our team at PFL, whose continued and steadfast efforts to spread smiles and positivity despite the ever emerging obstacles as a result of this pandemic, has been truly heartening and a pleasure to watch. The initiatives they have been able to successfully see to fruition during such dystopian times is a true testament to their resilient spirits and their absolute love and passion for pediatrics. But let us still hope and pray that we soon return to some level of normalcy, even though we all know that the world we'll be stepping out in has been changed forever.

OUR CORE TEAM 2019-2020

PHILANTHROPY



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Co-DIRECTOR

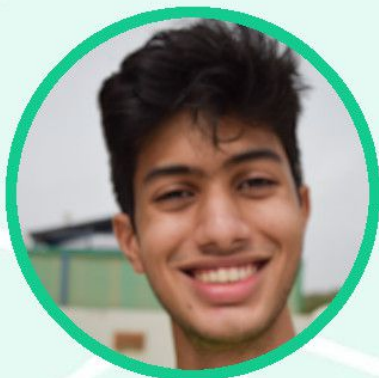


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ZAINAB BHURIWALA
DIRECTOR



SHARMEEN KAMRAN
CO-DIRECTOR

RESEARCH



QURATULAIN MAHA
DIRECTOR



ZEHRA NASEEM
CO-DIRECTOR

FACULTY FEATURE MEET DR MAHIM MALIK

Could you walk us through your journey from med school to where you are now briefly?

So I'm originally from Lahore. I graduated from AKU in 2007, after which I went on to pursue my residency in General Surgery at University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, TN (2014). I then trained in Cardiothoracic Surgery at Ohio State University, Columbus, OH (2016). Finally I did my fellowship in Congenital Cardiac Surgery at Seattle Children's Hospital, University of Washington, Seattle, which I finished in 2017. After this I came back to Pakistan and started working at AKU in 2017. Currently I'm an assistant professor and section chief in the department of cardiothoracic surgery.



Any interesting fact about your journey?

Before coming to AKU, I actually spent two quarters studying at LUMS!

What was your thought process in deciding to do Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery and why did you decide to come back to Pakistan?

While in medical school, I went through all my rotations and somewhere along the line I realized I really enjoyed surgery. I couldn't really see myself doing anything else, so I went for surgery. I went into cardiothoracic surgery because I'd had an interest in that and really enjoyed it, but I always wanted to come back and a lot of my decisions were shaped by that. My family is all here and my husband works in Pakistan as well. As for why congenital heart surgery, in my time here in Pakistan, observing AKU and the community in general during medical school and later, I had realized that there was a real need for more professionals in congenital cardiac surgery in the country as opposed to adult cardiac surgery, so I decided to pursue that with the intent of coming back to Pakistan after my training and serving here.

Do you have any fun anecdotes from your time in medical school at AKU?

Well, we did a lot of fun things. I lived in the hostel which was a great experience, there were people around all the time and there was always something going on. I remember one story that would probably be frowned upon- this one time in the middle of the night, some of my friends and I decided to drag a sign board from the medical college all the way to the girls hostel. We managed to do this, and we just left it in the hostel for fun. Somehow we managed to bypass all the guards, we probably would've been in a lot of trouble if we'd gotten caught!

We heard you like skydiving- any experiences you'd like to talk about?

So during my residency a bunch of us friends just randomly decided to go skydiving one weekend. We all worked at the same hospital, so it was a bit of a risk just running away to do something so risky together, but we did it anyway. We all just disappeared for a weekend without telling anyone, luckily nothing went wrong! It was a pretty fun experience, although my mother probably would've been very upset if she'd found out!

How do you manage raising your child and your career together?

You wouldn't ask a man that! There's two ways to look at this question; I might be inclined to think I'm only being asked this because I'm a woman, but at the same time it's an important question to ask because a lot of women do struggle with their careers and families and it's important for them to know. Anyhow, we should always consider this when we have these conversations to make sure why we're really asking and whether the person on the other end might think of this as a gender-based question. To answer your question, I think the only way to manage this is if you have a spouse and family that supports you. You know how they say 'it takes a village to raise a child', that's kind of how I'm raising mine. There was a lot of help initially from my mom and my mother-in-law who helped take care of him, and my husband is very supportive of this. He understood a long time ago that I won't be fitting into the stereotypical mom role. So I think it's really important to have someone who understands what you do, its importance and is able to support you through it. And of course, where you're working, you need to have supportive people. If you plan to have kids during fellowship you should have that support system there, and not everyone has that. Since I had my baby after my training, I didn't experience any of that.

Did becoming a mother affect how you see your patients?

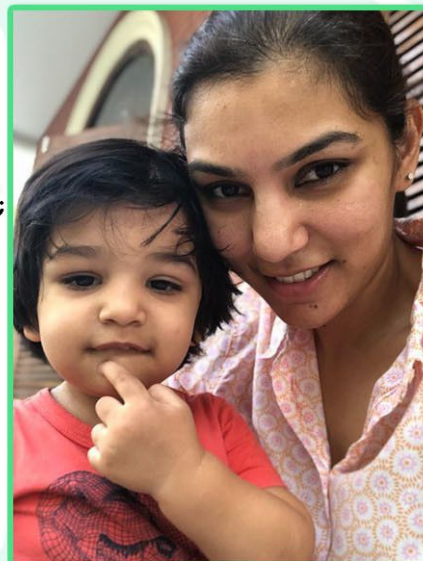
Yes, definitely. It hits a little closer to home seeing children and families suffer and has probably made me a better physician because I'm more invested in my patients.

At some point, every doctor loses a patient- with children this part might be particularly tough. How do you deal with this?

I think I'm still learning to deal with it, I'll let you know when I figure it out. I guess it takes time. It's hard and definitely takes a toll on you. But it's important to keep going, because when you lose a patient you might have emotions to deal with, but you still have to go on and take care of all of your other patients who are also depending on you. So it's important to be resilient for the sake of your patients and not let it get to you too much.

Would you like to tell us a bit about your son?

Sure, his name is Shehryar, and he's about two years old. He pretty much likes to do everything a regular child would; he runs around the house, plays and does everything he's not supposed to do. One thing I'm very happy about is his love for reading, which I think I did a good job with, because I love reading too and I've been reading to him at night whenever I can, so I'm glad I could pass that on to him.



Since you mainly work with children born with congenital heart disease, do you have any insight about CHD in Pakistan based on what you've seen? Any message for medical students who maybe interested in pursuing this field?

CHD has always been an under-recognized and largely ignored problem. The general attitude about CHD in Pakistan is that it's kind of a death sentence for kids so a lot of times these kids are ignored and not really dealt with by the parents, with a lot of neglect especially in the lower socioeconomic group. The second issue with CHD is that it's usually a complex problem and it requires multidisciplinary care, which is not something a lot of places in Pakistan can offer. So I think there's a lot of potential in CHD for multiple reasons:

Firstly, It's a super specialized field and we don't have many people doing it, so we definitely need more specialists and more people interested in pursuing CHD not just from a clinical standpoint but also from a social standpoint. A lot of the work we do at AKU with Dr. Babar Hasan actually has to do with raising awareness about what CHD is. There's a huge subset of patients, that once they undergo reparative procedures can lead a completely normal life with a great quality of life. People interested in CHD should be aware that there's a lot of potential in Pakistan, primarily because there are very few people doing it. Anything ranging from surgery to cardiology to critical care, to setting up programs from a managerial standpoint even. Whatever you're interested in, there's so much potential for what can be done with CHD that people who come back to Pakistan can do.

The second thing is, about 0.5% of kids every year are born with CHD every year; that's a fairly large population. That percentage actually hasn't changed over time, unlike acquired diseases it won't increase/decrease over time depending on a host of other factors. This percentage will stay the same but the numbers will increase over time as our population increases. So the need will only grow over time and it'll become a bigger problem and probably a more sought after career options in the next 20-30 years. So there's a lot of potential in this field and a big need for more interested people to train and come back to Pakistan.



EVENTS SECTION

OATH TAKING CEREMONY & INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS



The PFL oath taking ceremony was held on 14th January, 2020. It was led by Dr Sadaf Altaf, who graced the occasion and inducted the new Core Crew members into the interest group. The meeting started with the PFL directors and the new members introducing themselves. Asna Sulaiman, President of PFL gave a presentation about the various activities carried out by PFL and how the recruits could play an active role within the group. This was followed by Dr Sadaf leading the PFL oath recitation and pinning PFL badges on the new members.

NEW CORE CREW MEMBERS

Bisma Badr (O21)
Syed Faisal Nadeem (O22)
Waiz Kamran (O22)
Areeb Lutfi (O22)
Hamayail Ansari (O22)
Huzaiifa Rashid (O22)
Arees Bhatti (O22)
Omaima Anis Bhatti (O22)
Ayesha Niaz Shaikh (O22)
Alizah Hashmi (O23)
Rabab Jafry (O23)
Fatima Mughees (O23)
Aiza Abbas (O23)
Areesha Ahmer (O24)
Rafai Babar (O24)



ANNUAL PEDIATRICS ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY PARTY



The annual heme-onc party is held every year for our past and present pediatric patients fighting cancer or hematological illnesses. The hospital staff, doctors, medical students, and nurses volunteer on this day to organise fun games and activities for these children. This year, PFL played the role of recruiting and organising volunteers for the event and running many of the stalls. Two PFL volunteers, Areeba Memon and Ibrahim Sajid hosted the main event. This event included musical chairs, group singing, Zumba dance, drum circle and much more. After the main event the kids dispersed to different stalls for one on one games and activities like face painting and pin the tail. We got to see some incredible talent and creativity at the origami stall. The children were encouraged to participate and given treats and prizes for playing. It was truly wonderful to witness these young warriors rising above their illnesses and just being regular kids. We're happy to have helped lift spirits and provide a day of fun and relaxation for these kids and their families.



CHILDHOOD CANCER DAY CELEBRATION 2020



This Valentine's Day; we at PFL decided to celebrate it a little differently. The team, along with its volunteers from the medical school, flocked the DO ward with bags full of surprises. A rather quiet and mellow ward slowly and steadily erupted into full scale celebration!

Our team dressed in crazy wigs and red clown noses moved from bed to bed and cheered the kids up. We didn't come empty handed and made sure that each child got a little gift. What we were hoping and were glad to see was how the children went out of their way to engage with us. Some shared their stories with us while some recited poems and some even got out of bed just so they could talk to us better.

As the party picked up, more and more students, nurses, staff, and volunteers joined us. Mr. Royal showed up with a guitar in his hand and strummed his way along the corridor. It took us only a few minutes to line up some chairs and gather an audience for our very own in-house concert! Probably, the most heartening sight was to see children who were very sick mustering up all their strength just to get a peek. A lot of them decided to ditch their beds and saved a spot for themselves to view the concert up and close. It was delightful; the air was filled with energy, arms were up, everyone was clapping and while some were busy singing, some were dancing. Giggles and laughter were shared and smiles were shining bright.

Our 14th February celebration is definitely one of our most cherished memories. Keep an eye out for more ward activities

EID AWAY FROM HOME



On 8th August, PFL and volunteers from the medical college gathered in the DO ward with green and pink polka dot goodie bags in hand. With guitar and a few speakers to accompany, and colourful clown wigs on their heads, they were ready to light up the peds ward.

Pediatric ward activities are an essential part of PFL. Our aim is to spread smiles amongst children battling sickness and to make the hospital walls a little less boring. In August, we decided to merge Eid and Independence Day celebrations into one. Wearing green to bring up the festive mood, our volunteers moved bed to bed distributing goodie bags with balloons, bubbles, stamps, and lots more inside. We also applied henna on the girls, and gifted bangles, to make it feel like Eid away from home. A crew was dedicated to singing and Haris, O22, brought his guitar to play some music to add onto the joyous atmosphere, with Dil Dil Pakistan being the most favourite.



Spending time with the kids, listening to their stories, and engaging in fun conversation was worthwhile. In the end, we actually bumped into President Feroz Rusool and managed to get a picture with him. These ward activities are going to become more regular and stay on the lookout!

ST. JUDE'S PANEL DISCUSSION



On 21st April 2019, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital which is based in the US signed a partnership agreement with the Aga Khan University and other specialist centres in Pakistan to improve quality of care for children fighting cancer. Pediatrics enthusiasts from our student body were invited to the panel discussion and got the wonderful opportunity to witness the merger.

PEDIATRIC IMMUNIZATION QUIZ



On 2nd May 2019, a quiz on child immunization was organised at AKU to commemorate World Immunization Week. Six teams participated in the quiz, each team consisting of a medical student, a nurse, a pharmacist and a post graduate trainee.

The quiz competition was led by Dr. Fyezah Jehan and several PFL members represented their society as they took on a variety of stimulating and challenging questions.

AN INSIGHT INTO PEDIATRICS AFTER GRADUATION



Our alumni are one of the greatest gifts that AKU gives us. We had the delightful opportunity to welcome three of our graduates, in different stages of their careers, to talk about their pediatrics journey. They went over why they chose pediatrics, their stepping journey, finding electives, importance of research and navigating the match process. Dr. Ambreen (O15) has completed her pediatrics residency from Arkansas Children's Hospital at Little Rock. Dr. Lubaina (O18) is a research assistant at the University of Virginia studying gut structure and function, including data science and AI, and Dr. Qasim (O18) is doing his pediatrics residency at University of Texas Medical Branch. It was an honor to have them back and give us a well rounded insight into pediatrics research and residency.



AKU STUDENTS VOLUNTEER AT THE KARACHI DOWN SYNDROME PROGRAM CARNIVAL



For a second consecutive year, we had several AKU students serve as lead volunteers at the Karachi Down Syndrome Program (KDSP) carnival.

Our PFL director Anam Noor Ehsan from the class of 2020 described her experience.

“As I sat in the Moin Khan Cricket Academy in the 30 degree weather with the sun blazing down, I contemplated my decision to do this year after year. The mental checklist of things I had to do once I got back home was whirring in my head and I could already feel the migraine coming in.

Yet at 3 o'clock, when the gates of KDSP opened and the kids came rushing through, the hours slipped by and with their smiles and laughter everything else was forgotten.

I've noticed there is always a moment at the KDSP carnival that stays with me. This time it was a little boy with Down Syndrome who came to my booth. He stood there for a good 20 minutes shyly staring at me and smiling. He finally played the game which was a matching memory game:

The boy: "Mai tou I love you match karoon ga" (this was a picture of a heart)

He proceeds to match the pictures.

Me: 'Wah aap ne kis ko I love you bolna hai? Mummy ko?'

The boy with the same shy smile: 'Nahi aap ko.'

And he proceeds to hug me and run off.

And I thought in that moment, this is why I keep doing this. Yes, for those amazing, strong families and for kids who deserve to have the time of their lives, but also for myself. For the warmth that fills my heart to be able to impart this kind of joy and for the reason I chose medicine as a profession. To give back.

I'm sure everyone who was there had one, or many, such moments. So thank you to the brilliant AKU team who as lead volunteers last year as well as this year have helped ensure this festival runs absolutely smoothly - be it by managing games, coupons or food stalls. You are all absolutely incredible! Here's to hoping further AKU batches can continue the tradition!"

27-11-2019

ESTABLISHING CPS

Some of our esteemed pediatrics faculty strongly felt the need for an organisation geared towards raising awareness and taking measures to reduce all forms of child abuse and neglect. Thus, Child Protection Services (CPS) was born, chaired by Dr Kishwar Enam. An introductory session was held for all the students interested, highlighting the goals and how people could contribute. Applications were opened for core positions. The session ended with a fun Kahoot session to consolidate all the new information the audience had learnt



12-12-2019

WELCOMING O24'S

Each year we get a 100 bright new, young minds coming to AKU. This year, they were introduced to all the societies through an open house. At the PFL stall, quite a few expressed interest, and we are certain that some of them will be a key part of PFL in the future





PFL AND RESEARCH

The PFL research department maintains and updates a database of faculty in Pediatrics Department with ongoing research projects that may require student input. We serve as the primary point of contact for students interested in doing research, and help find suitable projects to work on. We also engage with the Pediatrics Department for involvement in the annual Pediatrics Research Day.

Sneak Peak Into 3rd Annual Pediatrics Research Day 5th October 2019



Faculty Mentors



Dr Sidra Ishaque
Assistant Professor
Pediatric Critical Care

It has been an overwhelming experience, indeed a privilege to work with PFL; Being an AKU grad myself, I took this as no less of an opportunity to give back to my alma mater. I have enjoyed every bit working with the students. With each project, there is something new to learn and the learning goes both ways. The commitment and dedication of the students I have mentored and worked with is commendable.

Critical care isn't an easy domain to work, specially research, but it was heartening to see so many of our students approach us. We have completed five projects and three manuscripts all in a year, making it an achievement in itself. I shall totally advocate our students as one of the best resources for our faculty on research projects and like they say, no better place than home, no better people than our very own medical students. Thank you PFL and dear students for all your support.

Wish you all the very best in your endeavors.

Student Experience

PFL played a crucial role for me to get my research titled 'Epidemiology and risk factors of invasive fungal disease in Pediatric Intensive Care Unit of a developing country' and connect with an excellent researcher, Dr. Qalab Abbas.

After applying through an unbiased google form, and then a vigorous selection, I got the opportunity to work on this important topic, and a type of study I had never done before. They ensured a smooth introduction and communication between me, my fellow colleague working on this project alongside me and the PI, and accommodated us to help us get on our feet! This on-going project has really helped enhance my knowledge of how research is conducted in a holistic manner, and I will always appreciate PFL and my PI for this experience!

Shameel Shafqat
MBBS Class of 2021

ALUMNI FEATURE - DR. MAYA ZAHID KHAN

1) Please tell us a bit about yourself and about your plans for the near future.

Hey there! I am a graduate of the Class of 2019 and I hope to complete my residency in pediatrics followed by further training in endocrinology and genetics.



2) What made you choose pediatrics and at what point did you come to know that this is what you want to do?

Whilst exploring the intricacy of the human body in medical school, I vividly remember the moment I decided I wanted to become a Pediatrician. It was when I witnessed the inherent resilience in children; an eight-year-old boy required resection of a brain tumor and in the process lost his vision and had a catastrophic hormonal response resulting in the loss of all hope. The boy however woke up smiling, holding his favorite toy close to his chest, and in the process, he made me believe in the value of practicing Pediatrics. Pediatrics involves not only building a relationship with a patient but with a whole family. Being able to communicate with the parents of a sick child, and offering them insight and comfort, is part of the undeniable beauty of this field. For me, Pediatrics opens up a realm of possibilities. The opportunity to impact an entire generation, with effects lasting a lifetime, is what drew me towards this field.

3) How was your experience being the vice president of PFL?

PFL was initiated by a team of like-minded individuals who wanted to start a society that will help inculcate an appreciation of, and interest in pediatrics amongst the student body and provide opportunities for those hoping to pursue a career in pediatrics. Being the vice-president of this society was everything and more. The team that we have is so inspirational and their zeal to take this society above and beyond has taught me so much. This society is unlike any other society; putting delegation of tasks aside, every team member has come up with such creative initiatives that have allowed a vital and much needed bridge to be formed between the university and the hospital..

4) What are your future hopes for PFL?

I am positive that PFL is currently in good hands and with the right people in the right positions. I can see PFL doing many great things in the near future. More fundraising events and carnivals should be organized on a monthly/quarterly basis to secure the finances required to provide the care needed for our underprivileged patients. I would also like to see our members get more involved with the community as a whole and not just within AKU. This could mean setting up a monthly or quarterly community clinic which could include awareness camps, vaccinations, hygiene education, information sessions and routine screenings.

5) What do you think is important for de-stressing?

Finding the right friends, mentors and partner. Medical school can be very demanding; physically and emotionally. Having a support system for your draining days is vital. I remember even during the toughest of schedules or even a day before an important exam, I wouldn't miss my coffee/chai break with my friends. Pacing busy work days with regular intervals is how I destressed on most busy days.

6) What advice would you give to your first year self?

I would have definitely liked to spend more time with my family. I feel like I met my parents for small intervals every day and they were just part of my late night schedule. I would change that if I could. I would have loved to spend more quality and dedicated time with them during the past 5 years.

Also I would remind myself: ***what is meant to be, will always be :)***

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We have something exciting coming up!

PFL is working with the Children's Hospital at AKU on a new venture.

