



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

eCommons@AKU

AKU Newsletters

Publications

7-2003

AKU Newsletter : July 2003, Volume 4, Issue 2

Aga Khan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.aku.edu/aku_newsletter

Recommended Citation

Aga Khan University, "AKU Newsletter : July 2003, Volume 4, Issue 2" (2003). *AKU Newsletters*. Book 15.
http://ecommons.aku.edu/aku_newsletter/15



AKU-IED Open Learning Programme Goes International

In response to a need for quality distance education in Pakistan, AKU Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) set up an Open Learning programme in 2002.

The programme aims to make learning more accessible to those in dispersed geographical regions and to those who face job and family restrictions. Open Learning (OL) provides teachers with equal access to quality education and enables them to continue to acquire professional knowledge and skills to build their careers.

Contd. on page 3



Open Learning provides teachers with equal access to quality education and enables them to continue to acquire professional knowledge and skills to build their careers.

AKU Sets Up Science Laboratory to Enhance Nursing Education in Afghanistan

Afghanistan faces serious challenges in the areas of education and health care that demand urgent attention. Long-term recovery and reconstruction programmes by Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) are well under way to assist in addressing these issues. The Network's efforts towards restoring the country's health infrastructure received an impetus in March 2003, with the inauguration of the Intermediate Medical Education Institute's (IMEI) science laboratory in Kabul, developed by AKU, an important component of AKDN.

There are currently nine IMEIs in Afghanistan. These governmental institutions have the primary responsibility of training nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the country. The IMEI in Kabul plays a central coordinating role for the provincial IMEIs in providing standards, policies and curricula.

AKU School of Nursing (AKU-SON) undertook the task of enhancing the operations of IMEI Kabul in order to create an academic centre of excellence that meets the country's needs for quality nursing, midwifery and allied health personnel training. The facility would thereby become a trendsetter for other IMEIs. The goal encompasses setting educational policies and procedures, revising curricula to an international standard, as well as improving the learning environment and providing sustained operational support.

Contd. on page 10

HIGHLIGHTS

Effects of Social Environments on Learning Abilities in Children	2
Medical Research Retreat	2
Mola Dad: First PhD from Northern Areas	3
Faculty and Staff Circle the Globe in 2003	4
Experts Stress Empowerment of Women for Health	5
Endocrinology: An Evolving Speciality in Pakistan	6
Dr. Tanveer Spearheads New Radiological Procedures	7
Patient Welfare Programme	7
Interview: Dr. Abdou Filali-Ansary	8
Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts	9
Syrian Delegation Visits AKU	10
Dr. Laetitia J. King Appointed ANS Regional Director	11
AKU Special Lecture Series	12

Human Development Programme

Effects of Social Environments on Learning Abilities in Young Children

Many children in Pakistan do not survive infancy, while more than 30 per cent become physically stunted before their second birthday, and 40 per cent under the age of five are malnourished. Biomedical research has demonstrated the direct impact of prenatal and early childhood experiences on brain development, and the influence of the early years on physical and mental development later on in life. Understanding the dynamics of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is therefore crucial when designing enrichment programmes for children. In the Pakistani context, not only is there a need for this, but the insights gained through ECD research will also establish the foundation for educating caregivers in the community on child nurturing and rearing practices.

A two-phase action research initiative is presently being undertaken by AKU's Human Development Programme (AKU-HDP). The study will form baseline research for AKU-HDP, which is intended to be a precursor to the Institute of Human Development, highlighted in the 1994 Chancellor's

Contd. on page 11



AKU-HDP aims to enhance survival, growth and development prospects of infants and young children, through culturally appropriate, community-based support that benefits from associated training, education, advocacy and multidisciplinary research activities.

Medical Research Retreat

Problem-oriented Research Focuses on Innovative Solutions

The Department of Medicine of the Faculty of Health Sciences of AKU held its second annual Research Retreat in May 2003, with a series of research papers highlighting the ongoing investigational activities at the University. These included scientific papers covering certain key health sciences areas, such as gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and kidney diseases, hypertension, diabetes, stroke, and infectious diseases: tuberculosis, typhoid, malaria, etc.

In the opening session, Dr. Saeed Hamid, Associate Professor, Section of Gastroenterology, presented results on potential molecular mechanism of progressive liver injury in chronic viral hepatitis. Dr. Shahab Abid, Assistant Professor, Section of Gastroenterology, reported a high prevalence of specific gastrointestinal injuries associated with various types of medicines in Pakistan, and Dr. Aryn Alidina, Acting Chief, Section of Medical Oncology, reported on the local survival data from patients with a certain type of gastrointestinal cancer.

Dr. Fahim Jafary (MBBS, '90), Assistant Professor, Section of Cardiology, made a presentation on factors associated with heart attacks in young adults. He stressed that tobacco control programmes, a decreased intake in clarified butter (ghee), regular exercise, cholesterol screening programmes, and improvement in the level of education are likely to have a profound effect on the trend of premature heart attacks in the

Pakistani population. Dr. Fateh Ali Tipko, Fellow, Section of Cardiology, presented his study showing that outcomes of patients with myocardial infarction treated at the University Hospital are comparable to those in the western world. Dr. Farhan Tirmizi, Research Instructor, Clinical Trial Unit, reported the results of his study demonstrating that relatives of patients with high blood pressure not only have a considerably higher risk of this disease, but that it also affects them at a younger age. Thus, family members of patients with high blood pressure should be regularly screened for hypertension.

Dr. Saad Shafqat (MBBS, '88), Assistant Professor, Section of Neurology, noted the high risk of strokes among patients with hypertension, and Dr. Mohammad Wasay, Assistant Professor, Section of Neurology, presented safety data on the use of heparin (blood thinner) for preventing thrombosis of leg veins in bed-ridden patients with haemorrhagic stroke. Dr. Nadir Ali Syed (MBBS, '90), Associate Professor, Section of Neurology, presented a novel, indigenously developed apparatus that assists patients with certain sleep-related breathing disorders.

In the final session Dr. M. Aslam Khan (MBBS, '94), Assistant Professor, Section of Internal Medicine, presented data on effective, low cost, antibiotic therapy in critically ill hospitalised patients.

Contd. on page 9

AKU-IED Open Learning Programme Goes International

Contd. from page 1

OL allows flexibility in learning and greater access and independence for learners, as courses can be conducted on campus or by distance education. In either case, students are provided with comprehensive learning resources to study and learn in a flexible mode. Learning resources normally include printed materials written by AKU-IED faculty, readings from books or journal articles, audio/videotapes and websites. These resources are carefully designed by faculty, in coordination with the course designer, and include many activities to enhance learning and assist students in applying their learning in the workplace. Occasional face-to-face tutorials are also included in OL courses to assist students in making effective use of the learning resources provided to them.

All OL courses are approved in the same way as face-to-face courses. Stringent quality assurance procedures are applied to ensure that learning resources and support services are of the highest quality.

A 'Certificate in Education' in Environmental Education by distance education is currently under way, with 50 students located in East Africa, Central Asia and Pakistan. Two more distance education certificate courses were scheduled for July and August 2003. A course titled 'Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs', written and developed by Debora Kramer-Roy, Senior Instructor at AKU-IED, will be offered to participants throughout Pakistan.

On being asked what advice she would give to faculty on writing OL course materials and teaching OL courses, Kramer-Roy said, "The main strength is that it is more flexible in terms of when you study and in what sequence you read the materials. It also helps the students to become more independent in their learning - which is not an easy process for most, but very valuable." 'Information and Communications Technology for Educators (ICT)' will be offered to teachers in East Africa, Bangladesh, India, Central Asia and Pakistan. Other courses currently being developed are 'Health Education', 'Educational Leadership' and 'Management and Research Methods'.

The OL website serves as a mini-portal into the OL programme and provides one place where students located in any geographic region can obtain support, information on OL courses and can see how taking an OL course could work for them. The website also hosts password-protected discussion forums and provides students an online forum through which they can submit queries, suggestions or discuss problems they face while taking an OL course.

There are also plans to include a staff development section on the website. This section would contain information for faculty on writing and developing OL courses, teaching

resources and guidelines for copyright. It would also provide a forum where faculty members could share their experiences with OL, voice their concerns and make suggestions. ■

For further information, please visit: <http://www.iedohi.net>.

Mola Dad: First PhD from Northern Areas



Brought up in a small village near Gilgit, Pakistan, Mola Dad Shafa (MED '96) recently became the first AKU-IED candidate from the Northern Areas of Pakistan to complete a PhD.

Dr. Mola Dad undertook his doctoral studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, through a scholarship from AKU-IED. His

research focused on understanding how a government secondary school head teacher in the Northern Areas understood and addressed the challenges of school improvement.

A part of the first cohort of graduates of AKU-IED's Masters of Education programme, Dr. Mola Dad began his career as a primary teacher, and subsequently joined Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P). As a head teacher, teacher educator, and an education officer and programme officer, he disseminated innovative educational insights on multi-grade teaching and co-operative learning to hundreds of teachers at the community level in various rural sectors of the Northern Areas.

His work included assisting teachers from government, community, and AKES,P schools, to improve their instructional skills, as well as increasing parent involvement in school activities, establishing resource centres in schools, and encouraging student participation in school improvement programmes.

Hoping to be able to continue to teach and engage in further research, Dr. Mola Dad anticipates that "the insights gained from my doctoral study will contribute to the uplift of education in general, and the professional development of head teachers in particular, in the Northern Areas and elsewhere in Pakistan." ■

Faculty and Staff Circle the Globe in 2003



At the 103rd annual meeting of the American Society of Microbiology, in Washington DC, **USA**, in May, Dr. Anita Zaidi (MBBS '88), Associate Professor, Department of Paediatrics and Microbiology, participated in a workshop on Molecular Epidemiology of Bacterial Resistance.



Dr. Hammad Ather, Assistant Professor, Section of Urology, Department of Surgery, delivered a talk on "Does Size and Site Matter in the Treatment of up to 30mm Renal Stones in Children Treated by Extra Corporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy", at the 14th European Society of Paediatric Urologist meeting in Madrid, **Spain**, in March.



Dr. Aamir Jafarey, Lecturer and Consultant General Surgeon, Department of Surgery, and Programme Coordinator, Pakistan Bioethics Programme, presented a paper in June on "Pakistan Bioethics Programme: Gateway to the Islamic World", at the Third National Congress of Medical Ethics in Bursa, **Turkey**.



In February, Dr. Pervaiz Hashmi, Associate Professor, Section of Orthopaedics, Department of Surgery, spoke on "Reimplantation in Extremities", and supervised a one-day workshop on suture technique and microanastomosis under magnification loupes, at the Bangladesh Orthopaedic Association Conference in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**.



Dr. Masood Umer, Senior Instructor, Department of Orthopaedics, won the Best Consultant Paper Award at the International Conference of the Pakistan Orthopaedic Association at Faisalabad, **Pakistan**, in January, on "Methotrexate-induced Suppression of Linear Growth in Mice with Folinic Acid".



In June, Dr. Javaid A. Khan, Professor, Section of Pulmonology, Department of Medicine, was invited by the World Health Organization as an advisor to discuss tuberculosis control in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, at a meeting held in Rabat, **Morocco**.



"Advanced Practice Nursing: Perspectives and Challenges", was the topic of the keynote presentation by Madrea Schober, visiting faculty at AKU-SON, at a symposium sponsored by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Authority in **Hong Kong**, in February.



Raisa Gul, Assistant Professor and Director, Diploma programme, was invited as a panellist to share the development of AKU-SON's MScN programme in the session on "New Initiatives and Developments in Advance Nursing Practice and Nurse Practitioner Roles", at the International Council of Nurses Conference, in **Switzerland**, in June. The theme of this three-day Conference was Building Excellence Through Evidence.



Syed Shamim Raza, Senior Pharmacist, Department of Pharmacy Services, spoke at the 23rd International Congress of Chemotherapy on Emerging Threats, Global Solutions in June in Durban, **South Africa**, on "Managing Inappropriate Vancomycin Usage by Hospital Published Guidelines".



In March, at the Comparative and International Education Society Conference in New Orleans, **USA**, Dr. Muhammad Memon, Professor at AKU-IED, gave a talk on "Context Based Professional Development Approaches for Capacity Building of Non-governmental Organizations in Pakistan".



Senior Research Associate Amima Sayeed from AKU-IED, spoke on "Changing Lives Through Professional Development of Teachers: Muneza's Story", and Sadaf Rizvi, Senior Research Associate, on "Strategies for Enhancing Female Participation in Education – Some Achievements and Challenges", at the Comparative and International Education Society Conference in New Orleans, **USA**, in March.



Dr. Nelofer Halai, Associate Professor at AKU-IED, presented a paper on "Munazza's Story: Understanding Science Teaching and Conceptions of the Nature of Science in Pakistan Through a Life History Study", in March at the National Association of Research in Science Teaching Annual Conference in Philadelphia, **USA**.



Farid Panjwani, Senior Instructor, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, travelled to Plymouth, **United Kingdom**, in April to deliver a presentation on "Religious Education in Pakistan: Salvation or Subjugation?" at the Conference on Discourse, Power, Resistance in Education: New Directions, New Moves. ■

Seminar on Women's Health Issues

Experts Stress Empowerment of Women for Health

"In Pakistan, three women die and 40 are permanently disabled during childbirth every hour," said Dr. Talat Rizvi, consultant to UNICEF, at the seminar "Adapting the Training Modules (ATM) for Pakistan", organised by the Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) in May 2003.

Pakistan, as well as much of the region, faces numerous challenges in the field of community health. The critical ones include how to make health service providers more sensitive to the health needs of women, and making women more aware of their rights and responsibilities to seek appropriate health care. To address these issues, UNDP, World Bank and WHO jointly developed two training manuals. The first manual, "Health Workers for Change", suggests ways of making health care providers more sensitive to the health needs of women, and the second, "Towards the Healthy Women's Counselling Guide", assists women in effectively communicating their health needs. These training manuals have already been successfully utilised in both African and Latin American countries.

The seminar aimed at bridging the gap between health providers and the community, by disseminating the findings of a study jointly undertaken by CHS; Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan; Health and Nutrition Development Society; and the Marie Stopes Society. The study sought to adapt the two training manuals to the Pakistani context, providing tools to facilitate a process of empowerment for women to address their own health needs.

Dr. Farhat Abbas, Acting Dean, Medical College, AKU, spoke on the poor social status of women in Pakistan, citing the latest UNDP report, where Pakistan ranked 135th out of the 174 countries in the gender-related Development Index. He said that gender disparity prevented women from seeking adequate health care for themselves. This, he added, led to a

comparatively poorer health status of women in the country. Members of those communities where the manual was tested also shared their experiences, as did the partner NGOs. Dr. Masood Kadir, Acting Chair of CHS, described the study as a prime example of how such private-public partnerships could strengthen health service delivery systems in Pakistan. Dr. Fauziah Rabbani, Head of Health Systems Division, CHS, said, "This is a first step towards initiating a process of empowering women to address their health needs."

The investigation in Pakistan provided many insights on gender inequalities and their effect on women's health. Women were perceived as caretakers of the household while men were the breadwinners. Women were eager to learn more about reproductive health and nutrition. However, their prime, and usually inadequate, source of information remained their husbands and mothers-in-law. Women were also generally dissatisfied with health care services due to their poor quality, high cost and the often non-caring attitude of health care providers. On the other hand, health providers identified lack of adequate management, gender sensitisation training, and inadequate incentives as main impediments to providing quality care. In response to these findings, it was suggested that health care providers reflect on their practices and overcome shortcomings, to improve the quality of medical care.

The approach followed in Pakistan is documented separately in the manual "Initiating Women's Empowerment for Health", and moves a step further to facilitate the process of reflection and analysis amongst community members, related to women's health and empowerment. It also provides strong evidence that the adapted manuals can strengthen the health care system in Pakistan. The areas in focus are provider-client relationships, problem-solving abilities and better informed health seeking behaviour on the part of the client. ■



Pakistan, as well as much of the region, faces numerous challenges in the field of community health. The critical ones include how to make health service providers more sensitive to the health needs of women, and making women more aware of their rights and responsibilities to seek appropriate health care.

Endocrinology: An Evolving Speciality in Pakistan

Endocrinology is a branch of medicine that deals with diseases resulting from hormonal imbalances in the body. In Pakistan, it is increasingly being recognised as an important speciality both among physicians and the general public.

AKU has played a key role in the evolution of this field in the country. The endocrinologists at AKU have taken the lead in establishing a professional body, the Pakistan Endocrine Society, for academic activities and increasing awareness about this field.

Since its inception in 1999, the Section of Endocrinology at AKU has provided quality patient care and education. Presently, with three full-time and one part-time faculty, and with an expected addition of a full-time faculty from September 2003, the section is one of the busiest outpatient care providers among the Hospital's clinical departments. The section also offers numerous sub-speciality clinics, including Diabetes, General Endocrine and Bone Metabolism. Lipid, Thyroid and Obesity clinics are scheduled to start in 2003.



Dr. Abdul Jabber, Associate Professor, and Head of the section.

"With the commitment of our faculty and fellows and full support from nursing and allied services, the Section of Endocrinology has been able to provide the highest standards of outpatient care to those with complex diseases, such as diabetes and thyroid disorders," says Dr. Najmul Islam, Associate Professor. Dr. Islam, a graduate of Dow Medical College, did his postgraduate training from UK before joining AKU. He subsequently went for further training in clinical work and research to the Department of Endocrinology, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London.

Dr. Abdul Jabber, Associate Professor, heads the section. He had been away on a one-year training leave at Sheffield University, UK, for research work and publications since mid-2002. Dr. Naeemul Haque, the first consultant endocrinologist in Pakistan to be trained in USA, is an active member of the section, providing full support and advice from his extensive experience in this discipline. After

completing her training in USA, Dr. Lubna Zuberi, an AKU graduate (MBBS '88), recently joined the section as Assistant Professor.



Dr. Najmul Islam, Associate Professor.

The Section of Endocrinology takes special pride in its teaching programmes, which train medical students and residents.

The first to initiate a fellowship programme in Endocrinology in Pakistan, the section provides advanced training to internists who have already completed their post-graduate qualifications such as MRCP, FCPS or Diplomate of American Board of Internal Medicine.

With the objective of producing fully trained endocrinologists, this two-year programme involves rotations at Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) in the sections of Neuroradiology, Nuclear Medicine, Paediatric Endocrinology, Chemical Pathology and Reproductive Endocrinology/ Infertility.

The section is actively involved in imparting Continuing Medical Education to general practitioners in the field of endocrine and diabetes, and has been conducting programmes in Karachi and the interior of Sindh province. Furthermore, it has taken responsibility for educating nurses and patients, particularly in diabetes and thyroid related disorders. A monthly diabetes awareness programme is conducted at AKUH, focusing on the various aspects of diabetes and its care. Additionally, the section is involved in clinical research, as well as collaborating with the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences in basic research.



The comprehensive Section of Endocrinology at AKU incorporates clinical care, postgraduate teaching and research, and has become a replicable model for other national medical institutions. ■ *Dr. Lubna Zuberi, Assistant Professor, is a recent addition to the section.*

Dr. Tanveer Spearheads New Radiological Procedures in Pakistan

The Radiology Department strives to provide the most modern diagnostic and interventional modalities available, and is often the first in the country to offer such services. Most recently, the department has begun neurointerventional radiology. It also performed the first brain aneurysm endovascular coiling procedure in Pakistan.

Neurointerventional radiology is a medical specialty dedicated to the treatment of vascular disease involving the central nervous system using the latest minimally invasive technologies. Tiny flexible catheters from within blood vessels are used to access vessels in the brain and spinal cord to successfully treat numerous disabling diseases without the need for more invasive and traumatic open neurological surgery.

A second new procedure performed at the University Hospital was endovascular coiling on a brain aneurysm. Brain aneurysms are an abnormal ballooning of an artery, and account for about 20 per cent of all strokes. Left untreated, they can cause major damage to the brain, or death. A common treatment is surgery, in which a section of the skull is removed so that the aneurysm can be clipped to stop the flow of blood. This technique has high morbidity and mortality rates. However, endovascular coiling, as a minimally invasive procedure, is an excellent alternative to surgery since it avoids the additional stress of recovery from major brain surgery for the patient.



Dr. Tanveer ul Haq, Associate Professor, Department of Radiology, carried out the first one-and-a-half-hour life-saving endovascular coiling procedure on a 57-year old female patient.

Endovascular treatment involves insertion of a catheter into the femoral artery in the patient's leg, navigating it through the vascular system under X-ray guidance, into the head and into the aneurysm. Tiny platinum coils are then threaded through the catheter and into the aneurysm, obstructing blood flow into the aneurysm and preventing further damage.

In April 2003, Dr. Tanveer ul Haq, Associate Professor, Department of Radiology, successfully carried out the first

one-and-a-half-hour life-saving endovascular coiling procedure on a 57-year old female patient under general anaesthesia. Dr. Tanveer says, "The endovascular coiling procedure offers tremendous benefits to patients, as we can prevent an aneurysm from rupturing." ■

Patient Welfare Programme Sakina Gets a New Lease on Life

Sakina lives with her parents, a younger brother and an ailing grandmother in a small hutment in Muslimabad, Karachi. Her father makes a living by selling rosaries and crocheted prayer caps, earning about Rs. 100 (US\$ 1.66) per day. Along with her parents, four-year old Sakina is also an expert rosary maker.



One evening, while coming home from the market, Sakina was thrown head first on to the hard pavement when a car crashed into her. An unconscious Sakina was rushed to a nearby clinic, where her head wound was treated by a general practitioner and she was discharged after regaining consciousness. However, her fever would not abate, and she complained of a severe migraine, nausea and itching on her head.

At her aunt's insistence, her mother brought her to Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH). Sakina was admitted and diagnosed with a severe skull infection caused by maggots in her wound. This required immediate debridement – a process of cleaning an open wound by removal of foreign material and dead tissue, so that healing may occur without hindrance. The cost of admission and treatment was Rs. 17,781 (US\$ 297). Sakina's physician advised the family to consult the Hospital's welfare officer, who, after reviewing the case, assured the family of all possible support.

The Patient Welfare Programme provided Rs. 8,890 (US\$ 148) towards the cost of treatment. The remaining Rs. 8,891 (US\$ 149) was donated by "The Patient Behbud Society for AKUH", started by a group of the University's well wishers and friends, through which 'zakat' contributions are received and disbursed to the deserving.

Sakina recovered rapidly after the procedure and was discharged three days later, and continues to contribute towards the upkeep of her family. ■

Dr. Filali-Ansary: Contributing to a Better Understanding of Muslim Civilisations

Dr. Abdou Filali-Ansary is the Director of AKU Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC), London, UK. A scholar of Islamic studies and philosophy, Dr. Filali-Ansary was the Director of King Abdul-Aziz Foundation in Casablanca for 17 years, where he helped develop an internationally renowned library and research centre.

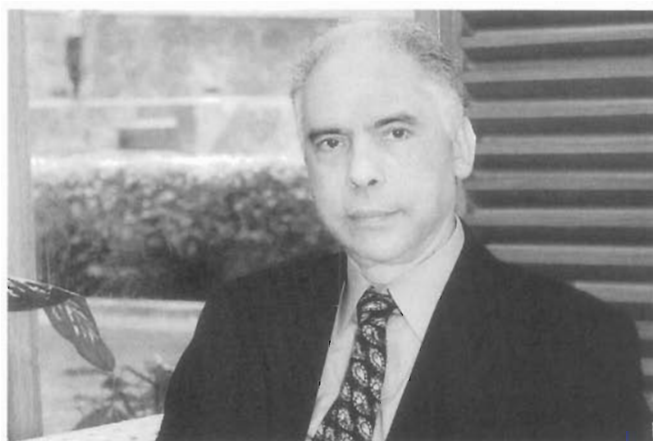
Dr Filali-Ansary obtained his PhD from the Faculty of Letters, University of Dijon, France. His work centred around two important European philosophers, Baruch Spinoza and Henry Bergson. This was part of his lifelong interest in ethics and the foundations of social order. After a brief detour into public administration, he returned to his academic interests with a translation of Ali AbdelRaziq's work, "Islam and the Foundations of Political Power". His present interests span from issues in Muslim education to concerns of global significance such as pluralism, democracy and civil society.

With what objectives was AKU-ISMC established?

AKU-ISMC was established to answer a need within Muslim societies for modern scholarship that takes into account the ideals and aspirations of contemporary Muslims as well as their lived and historical experiences. Muslim thinkers of the twentieth century have all unanimously stressed the critical importance of educational reform as a move towards societal and cultural rejuvenation. AKU-ISMC will attempt to contribute towards filling this gap by offering some practical programmes that may address these needs. It is in this context that AKU-ISMC will seek to strengthen the study and research in all aspects of Muslim societies and their heritage. It will be, at the same time, concerned with the issues of governance, social order, poverty, gender and education.

How will AKU-ISMC serve as a bridge between the East and West, tackling contemporary issues facing Muslim societies? What challenges do you foresee?

Although I understand the purpose of your question, I would like to start by questioning the notions of "East" and "West" as they are commonly understood. The growing interconnectedness and overlapping of different cultures and traditions is an undeniable fact; we are all in conversation with each other. Today, for example, there is a very significant presence of Muslims in Europe and North America, and from that fact alone, we can no longer talk about "East" and "West" as forming separate spheres. By building on existing modern scholarship accumulated by Muslims and non-Muslims and through adopting a scholarly approach, AKU-ISMC will attempt to shed new light on some of the most hotly debated issues in the contemporary "shared" world. In this way, it will act as a crucible that would bring together reasonably minded people who respect ethical principles taught by all world religions. While doing so, we expect to face many challenges, the first and foremost of these being our own desire to be a



creative institution. The second important challenge will be to find adequate ways of communicating with Muslims and non-Muslims in a manner that would show that through seeking knowledge and a better understanding of Islamic traditions, we come closer to the ideals of Islam and universal ethics.

What do you think are the key intellectual, cultural and social challenges faced by Muslims?

It may be fruitful to appreciate that such challenges exist at three levels: the most universal of these is the level at which we confront issues of global significance; these include, for example, developmental and environmental issues and concerns of war and peace. At another level, we face issues which are of particular relevance to us as Muslims; these are to do with meaningful interpretations of the Quran, the rethinking of Muslim legal traditions and a coherent and rational understanding of our traditions. The third level is local, where one has to recognise diversity within the Muslim Ummah itself; and the problems faced by people in their particular geographical contexts. Confronted with these challenges, what we are seeking here is a new way of thinking, which mobilises adequate resources from our cultures and societies and responds to the needs of the time.

What innovative activities and programmes will the Institute provide?

We are currently conceptualising and designing various programmes. Based on the recommendations of the Task Force which provided an overall direction for the Institute, as well as deliberations with various consultative groups, we have identified three areas of intervention. The first of these are educational programmes, where we will seek to offer innovative courses on Muslim civilisations. These courses will cater to the needs of a wide range of audiences including early and mid-career professionals. The second area is that of research and publication where AKU-ISMC will engage in analysing issues of significance, some of which I have

mentioned earlier. The third area of focus will be the dissemination of knowledge about Muslim civilisations beyond the circles of 'formal education'. In this manner AKU-ISMIC will seek to generate discussions among scholarly audiences as well as the general public in various parts of the world.

In the context of the challenges we discussed and the activities of AKU-ISMIC, what emphasis would there be on the notion of pluralism?

Pluralism is an attitude towards diversity and difference of opinions which values the plurality positively instead of "tolerating" it or even rejecting it. It has emerged as one of the most adequate ways of facing realities of human facts and ambitions. Now, in what may be described as a post-ideological era, it is no more possible to stick to monolithic views in situations related to human affairs. How to adopt pluralism as a value is a challenge for Muslims and non-Muslims nowadays. AKU-ISMIC will contribute to the thinking about the benefits as well as challenges of pluralism by harnessing some of the best minds in the scholarly world and organising programmes that will creatively explore the notion of pluralism. Furthermore, all AKU-ISMIC's activities will have the ideals of pluralism embedded within them, which means that they themselves will reflect a diversity of views and interpretations.

What are your future challenges both as Director of the Institute and as a scholar?

One of the most important challenges for me as the Director of AKU-ISMIC is to bring together the best available professionals and have them work together. I will also have the challenge of following the works and debates that are emerging in various fields of relevance to AKU-ISMIC and keeping informed of the intellectual and cultural evolutions in Muslim societies. ■

Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts

In May, 2003, AKU Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMIC) organised the second in a series of seminars entitled "Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts". The seminars aimed to explore the concept of pluralism and issues related to it, particularly in the context of Muslim societies.

Approximately 30 participants, including academics and professionals in the UK, attended the seminar. In his welcome address, Dr. Filali-Ansary, Director of AKU-ISMIC, articulated the Institute's vision of bringing together scholars from various schools of thought to have open and meaningful intellectual encounters. "There is a need for intellectually sound debates that can lead to practical and viable recommendations for promoting pluralism as a value," he said. The seminar speakers, Professor Jonathan Rée and Professor

Ridwan Al-Sayyid, approached the topic from a philosophical and historical perspective, respectively. Professor Rée, a writer and philosopher based in the UK, examined some of the theoretical constructs underpinning the concept of pluralism. He traced its intellectual genealogy through the works of Locke, Voltaire and Berlin, arguing that pluralism is very hard to distinguish from relativism. He supported his argument through a historical survey of the notion of tolerance and truth as understood in the western intellectual tradition, particularly in modern times.

Approaching the topic in an empirical fashion, Professor Al-Sayyid from Beirut, described the trends and movements within twentieth century Muslim intellectual discourse, grappling with the question of plurality, tolerance and the status of 'the other'. His presentation provided a glimpse of the dynamism with which Muslims have dealt with the issue of pluralism and how they continue to do so today.

The two presentations were followed by a discussion where participants shared their views about academic institutions and the role of intellectuals in Muslim societies. A discussion ensued about the causes of a lack of creative thought in Muslim contexts and the catalytic role that Muslims in Europe and North America should play in reviving critical and creative thought in societies with majority Muslim populations. Two more seminars are planned for 2003. ■

Medical Research Retreat

Contd. from page 2

Dr. M. Irfan, Fellow, Section of Pulmonology, presented results on drug susceptibility patterns of mycobacterium causing disseminated tuberculosis, and Dr. Aasima Yawar, Fellow, Section of Endocrinology, presented findings on the elevated risk of bone disease in patients with diabetes. An additional forty research projects were displayed in a poster exhibition during the conference, highlighting various clinical problems relevant to Pakistan. Drs. Fahim Jafary and Nadir Ali Syed received the award for best oral presentations, and Dr. Tazeen Jafar (MBBS, '90) for the best poster presentation. Dr. Tasleem Akthar, Chairperson, Pakistan Medical Research Council, delivered the Retreat's keynote address on "Clinical Research and its Impact on Population Health in Pakistan". Dr. Tazeen Jafar, Chair of Research Committee, Department of Medicine, highlighted the significant contribution of the Department of Medicine to the research productivity in South Asia, and the recent strategic measures taken to further increase collaborative research with institutions within Pakistan and abroad.

Commenting on the day's proceedings, Department Chairman, Dr. Wasim Jafti, said, "This meeting represents Aga Khan University's, and the Department of Medicine's commitment towards research and innovation. Original research of high calibre was presented by the faculty of the Department of Medicine. Such a conference is unique in its nature in Pakistan and the Department of Medicine is proud to maintain the lead in such research endeavours, which would lead to advancements in medical science and improved health of our population." ■

Enhancing Nursing Education in Afghanistan

Contd. from page 1

Dr. General Soheila Sediq, Afghanistan's Minister for Health, chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of the science laboratory at IMEI Kabul, noted that "The government recognises the role of IMEI as a focal point in capacity building of health care professionals in Afghanistan." She also alluded to the challenges set for the School of Nursing in January 2003, when her delegation, comprising officials from WHO and IMEI administrators, sought AKU's assistance in the rebuilding of IMEIs across Afghanistan.

In her welcome address, Dr. Yasmin Amarsi, Dean, AKU-SON, said, "Already in three months, several milestones have been achieved in our work in Afghanistan. These include the initiation of curriculum review of nursing and midwifery programmes, setting up of a computer laboratory and computer and English classes for administrators, faculty and students. Today is certainly another high point." The laboratory will offer state-of-the-art technology to teach science to nursing, midwifery and allied students, with the opportunity for them to enrich their education with practical laboratory experiences. Dr. Amarsi acknowledged the assistance of several donor agencies such as WHO, USAID and UNICEF, that have served as staunch partners in AKU's efforts towards the reconstruction of IMEIs.



Intermediate Medical Education Institute's science laboratory in Kabul, developed by AKU-SON, was inaugurated by Dr. General Soheila Sediq (2nd from right), Afghanistan's Minister for Public Health.

The event was also attended by US Ambassador to Afghanistan, Robert Finn; Director for Policy and Planning, Ministry of Health, Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah Sherazi; and other senior representatives of international agencies.

In his address, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan announced USAID's commitment of US\$ 100 million over a five-year period for the health sector in Afghanistan, "primarily for health clinics in the rural areas to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rate." The President of IMEI, Dr. Khalil Musadiq,

appreciated AKDN's work in Afghanistan as well as AKU for its work with the IMEIs.

Over the next five years, AKU plans to extend technical assistance and institutional capacity building support to several regional IMEIs, to further strengthen human resource development in Afghanistan. ■



The laboratory will offer state-of-the-art technology to teach science to nursing, midwifery and allied students.

Syrian Delegation Visits AKU

The Syrian Government, which regards AKU School of Nursing (AKU-SON) programmes as a model for quality nursing service and education, sent a five-member delegation to the University in April 2003, with the objective of acquiring a better understanding of AKU and its existing programmes.

The delegation included Dr. Riwa Dahman, Director of Nursing, Syrian Ministry of Health; Aleem Walji, AKDN Programme Coordinator and Dr. Shahira Deebeh, AKDN volunteer and liaison to the Minister of Health.

Expressing her views, Dr. Riwa Dahman said, "Our time in Pakistan was indeed valuable and laid the foundation for continued partnership between the Syrian Ministry of Health and AKU. She said that collaboration would begin in the field of nursing, "...where we feel we have much to learn from efforts to improve the quality of health care by investing in nurses". Aleem Walji stressed that AKU was an intellectual resource, and should be seen as an important instrument to facilitate the effective functioning and optimum utilisation of human resources in the Syrian nursing sector.

Earlier, the delegation met with Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU, who said that AKUH Nursing Services and AKU-SON were looking forward to providing capacity building and technical assistance, with a strong emphasis on quality and with a view to building linkages with the appropriate Syrian institutions, which could carry the development agenda forward. ■

Dr. Laetitia J. King Appointed Regional Director of Advanced Nursing Studies Programme, East Africa



Dr. Laetitia J. King was appointed Regional Director of the Advanced Nursing Studies Programme (East Africa) in June 2003.

She is a Doctor of Literature and Philosophy in Nursing Science from the University of South Africa, where, as Professor, she headed the Department of Advanced Nursing Sciences, and also the WHO Collaborating Centre for Postgraduate

Distance Education and Research for Nursing and Midwifery Development. Dr. King has held faculty and management positions at several other institutions in South Africa.

Dr. King has been an international consultant and advisor for WHO and numerous other international organisations in the fields of midwifery, community nursing science, health services management and nursing education. Her areas of academic interest and expertise include nursing and midwifery education through distance learning, the development of human resources for health as well as community participation in health care delivery. ■

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.aku.edu/son/programmes/intpgindex.shtml>

Human Development Programme

Contd. from page 2

Commission Report as a future programme of the University. The first phase was conducted in 2002 under the auspices of the Department of Community Health Sciences and School of Nursing, and investigated factors in different social environments that affect the learning abilities of children. More than 1,200 children aged 0 to 3 years in an urban and rural population of 35,000 in Sindh, provided valuable baseline data for AKU-HDP's community-based ECD component.

In collaboration with Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan, and the Health and Nutrition Development Society, an all-female field team of 14, including clinical psychologists, physicians, sociologists and community health nurses, collected information over a five-month period, relating to environments, learning abilities and psycho-social development status of the children. Children were assessed through observation of physical growth, social behaviour and language, as well as by a parent questionnaire on health, nutrition, economic conditions, social interaction, stimulation and play. A mixed methodology was used, comprising both qualitative and quantitative components.

Some of the information on child rearing practices was collected in focus groups conducted with mothers, fathers, older siblings and grandmothers. In both rural and urban areas, fathers perceived themselves as providers rather than caregivers, being more attached to their sons than their daughters. The son was seen as eventually taking his father's place, whereas the daughter was expected to leave the family unit after marriage. Adolescent girls caring for younger siblings were also found to be frustrated with this added burden, which often resulted in very poor care of infants and

young children. As an adolescent girl said, "Girls are born to toil." However, it was found that such differentials in the upbringing of children were not significant enough to create a gender bias in terms of developmental delays. The investigation report documented delayed psychomotor development in 27 per cent of children aged 0-2, with the proportion increasing with age, reaching 40 per cent at age 3. This trend was more pronounced among rural children.

Phase Two of the ECD study is focusing on evolving effective community-based parenting and ECD models, and useful monitoring tools, to address children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, language and psychomotor development in a holistic manner.

AKU-HDP aims to enhance survival, growth and development prospects of infants and young children, through culturally appropriate, community-based support that benefits from associated training, education, advocacy and multidisciplinary research activities. While funding for the programme is currently being met by AKU and Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan (AKF,P), for longer term development, proposals are under discussion with the Canadian International Development Agency, under their Pakistan Social Institutions Development Project, managed by AKF, P.

AKU-HDP will work with communities, partners, and national and international ECD specialists in Pakistan and the wider region, to evolve a longer-term programme in human development throughout the life cycle, initially through a focus on the unborn child and the early years. ■

AKU Special Lecture Series Marker, Gulgee and Yusufi Leave Fans Spellbound

The University's special lecture series features talks by prominent personalities, with the aim of providing students with a broad-based education to enrich their understanding and appreciation of the humanities and social sciences. Faculty, staff and the general public also benefit from this interaction with personalities of international repute.

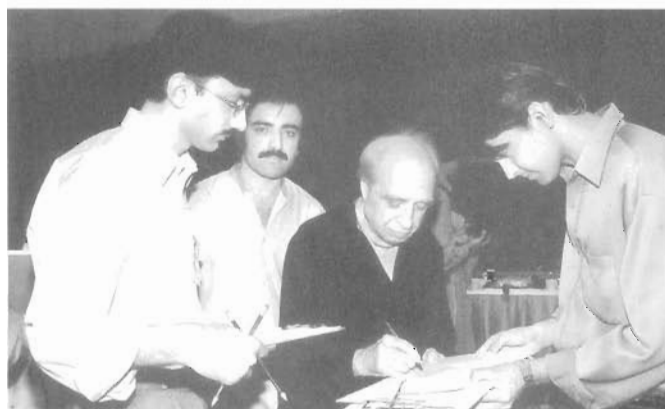
Jamsheed Marker: Pakistan and the UN



Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, former Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General, speaking on "Pakistan and the United Nations" at AKU auditorium.

In January 2003, Ambassador Jamsheed Marker spoke on "Pakistan and the United Nations". During his distinguished career, Ambassador Marker has served as the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General and Pakistan's ambassador to USA, Russia, Japan, Germany and Scandinavia. In his speech, he dwelt on the current political and social situation across the globe and elaborated on the UN's workings and structure, as well as its peacekeeping function.

Ismail Gulgee: An Artist's Tribute to God



Surrounded by students and art enthusiasts, Gulgee signs autographs after his slide lecture titled "Art and an Artist".

At the following lecture in the series, held in March 2003, renowned Pakistani artist Ismail Gulgee spoke on the creative process and his own work as an artist's tribute to God. The

audience, visibly moved by the artist's sincere passion and love for his work and all creative endeavours, enjoyed viewing Gulgee's prolific work through a slide presentation. His works ranged from formal portraits of well-known personalities in lapis lazuli to free flowing calligraphic expressions.

Mushtaq A. Yusufi: A Blend of Humour and Wit



Mushtaq Ahmed Yusufi being greeted upon arrival by (L to R): Munnawar Hamid, member of AKU Board of Trustees; Ambassador Saïdullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman Board of Trustees, AKU; and Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President, AKU.

More recently in June 2003, well-known humorist Mushtaq Ahmed Yusufi entertained over 700 appreciative listeners with his talk, "Dialogue on Humour". Delivering his lecture in Urdu, the wit and natural charm of Yusufi's oration and the immortal punch lines delivered in the form of conversations with colleagues, as well as well-known characters from his book, kept the audience in continuous fits of laughter. ■

*For more information, please visit
<http://www.aku.edu/news/archives/page1.shtml>*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS September - November 2003

Seminars and Conferences

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| ■ National Health Sciences Symposium 2003 | Sep 22 - 23 |
| ■ Third Seminar on Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts, in Karachi | Oct 25 |
| ■ Encyclopaedias in Muslim Societies, in London | Nov 14 - 16 |

Continuing Medical Education

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ■ Workshop on Obstetrics and Gynaecology | Sep 12 |
| ■ Workshop on Typhoid | Oct 29 - 30 |
| ■ Seminar on Management of Common Psychiatric Diseases | Nov 25 - 27 |

'Signs, Symptoms and Care' - Public Health Awareness Programme

- | | |
|---|--------|
| ■ Cancer Care: Early Detection Can Lead to Cure | Sep 6 |
| ■ Gastroenterology | Oct 11 |