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Researcher Spotlight: Professor Amina Abubakar

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It doesn't happen in a day; whether it is becoming a good researcher, or whether it is having impact in the field. You have got to choose a cause and stick to that cause with a lot of persistence. You have to be focused. As a woman many at times you are discouraged by those who try to limit your ambitions. This is something many women will face. People tell you what you can't do, what you shouldn't do. So, I think I have learnt to dare things, to be bold and say, why not?

”

In this researcher spotlight, Director Institute of Human Development, Professor Amina Abubakar, talked about her journey of becoming a developmental psychologist, the challenges and opportunities of conducting research in low resource settings such as rural Kenya, her aspirations of leveraging technology and big data to advance research, and the key lessons she would like to impart to early career researchers at AKU.

“There aren't enough centres of excellence that train you to become a developmental psychologist. Doing research in Kenya means that whenever I need to carry out studies, I have to train the research assistants and data collectors from scratch. The other challenge is funding. High quality and multi-disciplinary research needs a lot of funding. Mostly we depend on funding from the global north and that means there are several hurdles to jump in our settings. We deal with communities that are of low trust. You need a lot of intense community engagement to ensure that your study is properly understood. Most of the time we think we know what are the priorities, but communities know their priorities.”

Professor Abubakar also shed light on her recent most acquired grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, which aims to support children's holistic development in marginalised communities. This project will comprise of three arms. The first arm will build knowledge and raise awareness to policy makers and civil society members on the importance of inclusive and gender sensitive Early Childhood Education. The second arm focuses on mitigating the effects of extreme climate conditions and drought on the well-being of women and children. Whereas the third arm seeks to generate collective impact by convening 139 identified stakeholders who play a direct or indirect role in the holistic development of women and children.

Journal of Asian Midwives Achieves Scopus Inclusion

Marking a milestone for lead editor Professor Rafat Jan and the field of midwifery, the Journal of Asian Midwives (JAM) has now been indexed in Scopus, the world's largest electronic database of peer-reviewed literature. Established in 2014, JAM is the first regional and international peer-reviewed, open access midwifery journal that provides a platform for research papers, theoretical contributions, and policy papers in the fields of midwifery practice, education, maternity care, and related areas.



Notably, JAM's inclusion in Scopus speaks to the journal's growing prominence and impact in the field of midwifery and maternal health. JAM is already indexed in the EBSCO database for Nursing and Allied Health Literature, further contributing to its accessibility and visibility. With an international readership exceeding 47,000 downloads, JAM continues to serve as a crucial platform for midwives, nurses-midwives, women's health clinicians, reproductive health professionals, and social scientists to contribute their research and perspectives. The inclusion in Scopus further elevates JAM's standing in the global academic and professional community, ensuring wider dissemination and recognition of the valuable contributions made in the field of midwifery.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the journal.

Dr. Jamshed Hasnain Shares Grant Writing Expertise

Dr. Jamshed Hasnain, from the Office of Research & Graduate Studies, served as a guest speaker at a research grant writing seminar jointly organized by the United Medical and Dental College and its affiliated Creek General Hospital on May 10th. The seminar aimed to inspire faculty and students to develop and submit research grants to both local and international funding agencies. It also provided valuable insights and practical guidance on various aspects of grant proposal writing. The seminar provided participants with essential knowledge, tools, and inspiration to enhance their grant writing skills and increase their chances of securing funding for their research endeavors.



“Don't be afraid of rejection. You don't lose, you either win or learn”

Sharing valuable takeaways and advice specifically tailored for early career researchers, Dr. Hasnain emphasized on the importance of allowing ample time, at least six months, for the grant writing process. Drawing parallels to the dedication required to study Gray's Anatomy, he highlighted that writing a compelling grant requires plenty of time and attention to detail. He stressed the significance of crafting a compelling story within the grant proposal, using artistic and persuasive language to engage reviewers and funders. Lastly, Dr. Hasnain encouraged early career researchers to seek guidance from experienced mentors who can provide valuable insights and support throughout the grant writing journey.

Dr. Jamshed Hasnain can be reached at jamshed.hasnain@aku.edu for more insight.

Grant Administrators Receive Comprehensive Training

The Office of Sponsored Research organized a comprehensive training session on the PeopleSoft Checklist to enhance the capacity of grant administrators at the entities and streamline grant administration processes. This session was attended by grant administrators and key stakeholders from various entities across AKU, including the Institute of Educational Development, Centre for Regenerative Medicine, School of Nursing and Midwifery (Pakistan), Digital Health Resource Centre, Brain & Mind Institute, and seven departments from Medical College (Pakistan). The training began with a walkthrough of the PeopleSoft checklist, followed by an in-depth exploration of grant administration processes, procedures, and potential areas of improvement using practical case studies. The session aimed to equip attendees with the necessary knowledge and skills to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in grant administration.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the process of extramural grant submission.

