

IMPACT

December 2017

I AM A HERO

MEET THE HEROES WHO
FIGHT CANCER



آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال

The Aga Khan University Hospital



The Patients' Behbud
Society for AKUH

I AM A HERO!

Help our super heroes - these heroes are children who are fighting cancer. Their lives, at a very young age, are an untold story of courage and resilience. In this issue of Impact, meet Ahmed, the hero of the paediatric oncology section at the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), who has befriended doctors, nurses and technicians and become a source of joy and happiness.

With your help, we can create a lasting, positive change in the lives of the children/adolescents with cancer who are the future of our nation and global society as a whole.

Globally, childhood and adolescent cancer is threatening to overtake infectious diseases as one of the highest causes of disease-related mortality in children. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (2015), the reported worldwide incidence of childhood cancer is increasing, from 165,000 new cases annually to 215,000 cases for children 14 years and younger, and 85,000 new cases for 15-19 year olds. Many more remain unaccounted and unreported due to a lack of childhood cancer registries in a large number of countries.

Barriers to care

Access to quality care, however, remains a major barrier. There is glaring disparity of access to care in most low- and middle-income countries where 80 per cent of children with cancer live. Currently, where one lives often determines one's ability to survive childhood cancer! Many children in Africa and Asia do not yet have access to essential medicines or specialised care for cancer. Another significant problem is treatment abandonment, where patients discontinue their treatment due to the inability of their family to pay for medicines and procedures.

Helping the heroes

The paediatric oncology section at AKUH saves young children suffering from cancer through its technical expertise, as well as its offer of financial assistance. Your donations are channeled towards the most vulnerable and needy patients. Over the last five years, the Hospital has disbursed over PKR 127 million of welfare to support over 4,500 visits of children suffering from cancer. However, the number of children who need assistance is growing.

The number of children with cancer supported by welfare

Year	Patient's visits	Support from the AKUH Patient Welfare Programme (PKR)
2012	905	22.02 million
2013	861	23.62 million
2014	923	25.48 million
2015	1,046	25.96 million
2016	1,148	30.54 million

Why donate to the Paeds Oncology unit at AKUH?

This unit provides treatment for young children suffering from leukemia, bone and muscle cancer and brain tumors. Already more vulnerable and impressionable than adults, children undergo a great deal of trauma and pain when they suffer and are treated for these complex illnesses. AKUH provides compassionate, advanced and sophisticated medical care in a child-friendly environment that enables these children to heal and return to living a normal life.

Whereas charity hospitals tend to have a criteria for cases they will assist and can favour those cancer cases with better expected outcomes, AKUH accepts all cancer cases, no matter how complex and advanced. Furthermore, the families of the patients are supported through zakat and welfare.

Cancer treatment requires close monitoring of the affects on other organs, as well as a strong collaboration between sub-specialities. At AKUH, young patients are offered a range of paediatric sub-specialities such as paediatric cardiology, paediatric neurosurgery and paediatric infectious diseases, under one roof, which helps their survival and recovery. For the treatment of brain tumours, for example, not a single facility in Pakistan besides AKUH offers a complete treatment package that includes all the potentially required services such as neuro-surgery, neuro-oncology, neuro-radiology, neuro-pathology, rehabilitation, genetics/genetic testing and psychiatry. The paediatric oncology unit also holds regular tumour boards, at which the most complex cases are discussed with specialists in Canada and their advice sought for the best solutions.

On average, the paediatrics oncology team at AKUH treats 120-150 patients a year. However, each year another 50-60 patients who are seen and diagnosed at AKU fail to continue treatment due to barriers such as cost of care. With the help of donors, many more of these children and their families could be encouraged to complete the course of treatment.

Make them smile

As the year comes to a close, we appeal to you to donate your zakat to children suffering from cancer. Your zakat helps save children who have a limited hope for survival due to the complex nature of their illness. This call to action also supports the Sustainable Development Goal 3, indicator number four, to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.

THE HERO

Ahmed Imam Baksh was a 6-year-old resident of Hyderabad, when he arrived at the Aga Khan University Hospital with complaints of continuous fever and bruises. The day he arrived at the Emergency Room, he also developed bleeding from the nose. On investigation, he had severe anemia and low platelets and his peripheral blood showed abnormal cells. A bone marrow test revealed that Ahmed was suffering from Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL).

Ahmed's father worked as a labourer and was often without employment. However, he was adamant that his son would receive the best care at the University Hospital, even though the cost of treatment was beyond their means. He had faith and confidence that the Aga Khan University Hospital could cure his son. He applied for welfare and the Patients' Behbud Society for AKUH and patient welfare programme stepped in and supported the family financially, so that Ahmed's treatment could be initiated. Ahmed's father rented a space in Karachi close to the house of their family friend and started paying regular visits to Karachi for his son's treatment.

"We were very worried about Ahmed. He had to leave school because his health was so bad. All the time his younger brother and sister would fear for him and pray: 'God, make our brother okay. We don't want anything else from you.'" Ahmed's mother

Ahmed received a total of five cycles of intensive chemotherapy and was then shifted to a maintenance phase of chemotherapy with oral medications. The total duration of chemotherapy was for two and a half years, which he completed in July 2016.

Ahmed is now 9 years of age and has been off therapy for a year and a half. He is a warm, bubbly child who loves playing with his siblings and his friends. He has started going to school again and is doing well. His best friend's name is Faizaan, and they study together at Fatima Public School in Hyderabad. Ahmed says that he no longer has fever and feels much better. He says that the treatment and therapy at the Hospital did not cause him much pain and all the doctors and nurses were very helpful and kind.

Ahmed was very brave through his ordeal. It is thanks to donors who support the welfare programme and The Patients' Behbud Society at AKUH, that children like Ahmed receive a lease of life and a chance to live normally again.

Help children like Ahmed smile again!



ENJOY THE COLOURS OF LIFE: A PARTY FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER

In February 2017, the Aga Khan University Hospital invited children who have or are battling cancer to an annual party held just for them. The party is used as a platform, to encourage the brave children and offer support to their parents and families as they go through this difficult journey. In line with this year's theme 'Enjoy the Colours of Life', the party area was lit up with many balloons of different bright colours.

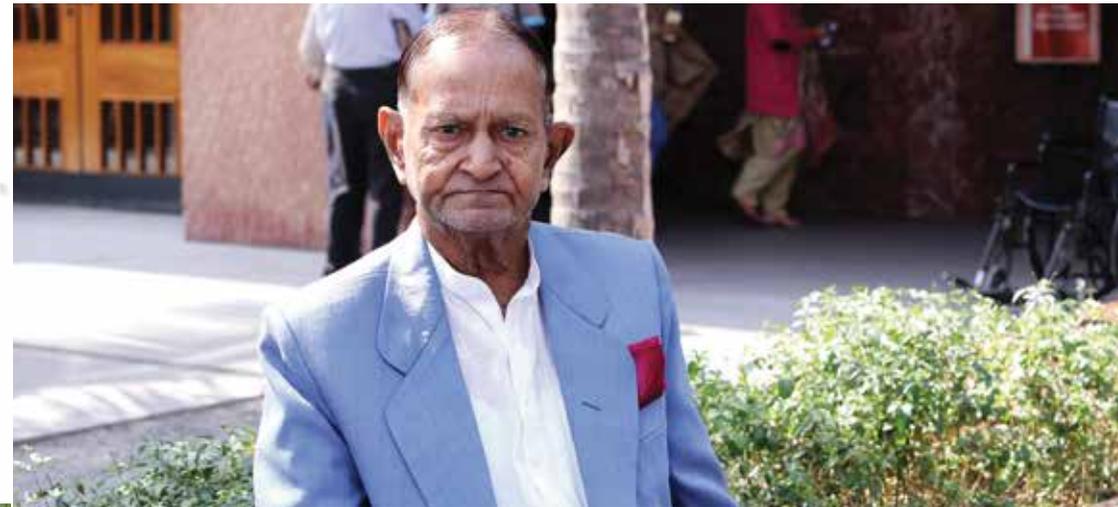
There were many activities for children such as a zumba session, clowns, magic show, puppet show, sand art, rides and face painting. Parents and families visited the various stalls set up by the Hospital to provide information and an opportunity to speak with our doctors, nurses, radiologists, physiotherapists, pharmacists and dieticians in dealing with this difficult disease. Doctors and their teams mingled with the children and families, appreciating them and letting them know just how special they all are.



"HONEST. SYSTEMATIC. WELL-MAINTAINED."

Haji Ibrahim, a donor and supporter of the Aga Khan University Hospital, is full of praise for the institution. His support for the Hospital is based on his own excellent experience here as a patient and his giving nature.

Haji Ibrahim hails from a family of traders, originally based in Nawabshah. He has worked in his family business from the age of 17 years. In 1972, Haji Ibrahim moved to Karachi and continued to grow his business of consumer and baby products. Six years ago, Haji sahib started losing weight rapidly. His health deteriorated to the extent that he was no longer able to walk. Finally, he sought medical expertise at the Aga Khan University Hospital. He was diagnosed with Hepatitis and treated for the illness for four years at AKUH. Today his health is restored and he enjoys a normal, busy life. He provides guidance to his sons, who are managing the family business, and devotes much of his time to prayer and charitable causes.



Haji Ibrahim was so impressed by the cleanliness and quality of care at the Aga Khan University Hospital, that he has been providing financial assistance to other patients at this hospital for the last two years, particularly those needing emergency care or treatment for hepatitis. He also feels that compared to many other charities and non-profits, AKUH has a very transparent system for channeling donations to the most needy patients. On the basis of his own good experience, he recommends AKUH to other donors.

"There are many patients who urgently need the high-quality medical expertise provided at AKUH, but cannot afford treatment. The welfare system at the hospital provides access to the poorest patients. By donating to AKUH, it is possible to save countless lives," he says.

EVENTS

Breast cancer campaign

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is commemorated in October across the globe. In this context, the University Hospital ran a campaign “Let’s Defeat Breast Cancer Together”, which focused on both increasing awareness about the disease and raising funds for women who cannot afford treatment for breast cancer.

The AKUH’s Let’s Defeat Breast Cancer Together campaign ran from October 1 to October 31, 2017. During this month, the Hospital offered subsidised screening mammograms, breast cancer clinics with opportunity to get early appointments (if identified as high risk), breast cancer health awareness sessions, a breast cancer awareness walk, self-breast examination information and support groups. Employees in particular were encouraged to protect themselves from breast cancer through screening.



Walk for children with cancer

A charity walk for children with cancer was held at the walking track of the Sports Complex at the AKUH on November 12, 2017. The walk was organised by the Karachi American School and helped spread awareness about the challenges faced by young cancer patients.



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I wish to contribute PKR/USD _____ *as zakat to
The Patients' Behbud Society for AKUH.

Mode of Payment: Cheque Wire Transfer

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Bank: _____ Date: _____

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Please make your zakat contribution in favour of "Patients' Behbud Society for AKUH" and send to:

Resource Development Department,
Room # 13, Pink Office, Aga Khan University Hospital, Stadium Road, Karachi
Tel: +92 21 3486 3000; Cell: +92 300 072 3000
Email: patients.behbud@aku.edu Website: <http://pbs.aku.org/>
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