



## Medical Education in Pakistan- APPNA MERIT vision for the next decade

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Building on the success of the last decade, we have a vision to invigorate the training of physicians in the Pakistan. By coaching the physicians of tomorrow, we can bring about a change in how clinical care is delivered, how future generations will be trained and the way Research will be done in Pakistan. This can be achieved with specialty-based focus and collaborating with other APPNA initiatives and committees like RESA and specialty networks. We would like to share our progress in chalking out a road map for the future and how you can help. On behalf of MERIT we had a detailed visit to brainstorm our vision and find the right partners in health care leadership in Pakistan. Shahid Rafiq MD, Chair MERIT and Danish Bhatti MD, co-Chair MERIT Neurology met with leadership of Pakistan Society of Neurology (**PSN**) at the annual Neurology conference in Lahore including Prof. Arsalan Ahmad, President of the society and many Executive council members. Discussions on collaborations in Neuroscience had a major focus on Education and training in Neurology. We reviewed the modern teaching methodology of blended learning – the hybrid model of interactive online distance learning and face-to-face teaching with a program of visiting faculty from USA under a curricular structure. We also explored observer ship/externship rotations of 3-6 months for the trainees from Pakistan with-in USA that can add highly valuable experience and enhance clinical care and research in Pakistan. These ideas were further explored in various settings including Neurology workshop in Benazir Bhutto hospital, Rawalpindi by Shahid Rafiq and 2-day teaching clinic on Movement disorders by Danish Bhatti in Shifa International Hospital, Islamabad. Another meeting took place in Pakistan Institute of Medical Science (**PIMS**) with the PSN leadership including president of Pakistan Stroke Society (**PSS**) and Head of Neurology at PIMS, Mazhar Badshah.

This vision was shared with Leadership of Pakistan International Neuroscience Society (**PINS**) during the annual neurology meeting in Boston. APPNA MERIT will collaborate with the education committee of PINS on Neurology Education projects in Pakistan. As a first pilot project Danish Bhatti is working with PSN and Movement Disorder Society of Pakistan (**MDSP**) under their leadership in developing a Movement Disorder course for Neurology residents in Pakistan using Blended learning. This will be a national course, vetted and owned by PSN and MDSP under full direction of Movement Disorders Faculty in USA. This will be a pilot project to explore possibilities of similar educational programs not only in Neurology but other specialties for Pakistan and has a potential to change the face of education.

Drs. Shahid Rafiq and Danish Bhatti vis also held meetings with the Surgeon General/ DGMS General Asif Sukhera at armed forces medical services in Rawalpindi and learned that they have signed an MOU with university of Birmingham for similar collaborations outside neurology. They appreciated APPNA's efforts and for reaching out to uplift for medical services in Pakistan. Our plan is to explore a similar MOU with APPNA MERIT program. Again a hybrid of digital distance learning and hands on training ideas were discussed and agreed upon. Dr. Shahid Rafiq had a follow-up meeting with assistant surgeon General/ DDMS Maj General Khawar Rehman, who agreed on visiting faculty program and promised to provide assistance to MERIT members in Rawalpindi region. In addition the IT facilitation for digital distance learning will be provided.

Shahid Rafiq visited the Neurology program in Army Medical College at Military Hospital with Brigadier Waseem Alamgir HOD of Neurology program and the Armed Forces Institute of Bone Marrow Transplant (**AFIBMT**) with Colonel Mehreen Gull. In addition to the tour of facility, a meeting was held with the head of AFIBMT, General Asif Satti and Head of AFIP. This is the first and largest state of the art center in the Pakistan. Col Mehreen has had an opportunity of three months

rotation in MD Anderson and feels that more options like these for her and other colleagues will help fine-tune this center of excellence. Again the common theme of hybrid model of distance learning through digital media and the hands on workshop emerged as the best cost effective strategy.

Among other efforts, we had a videoconference meeting with College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan (**CPSP**) leadership including Senior Vice President Dr. Khalid Gondal, Vice President Dr. Mehmood Ayaz and Council member Dr. Abrar Ashraf. We gained much insight into fellowships and training programs in Pakistan that could be an exploration down the road, however will require a lot of teamwork and strong close collaboration. We are also exploring Stroke education in Pakistan starting with building the coalition of interested and respective physicians and working with PSS. One aspect of this will be PSN collaboration to identify potential tertiary care centers to establish the Stroke Units. We also met with the Leadership of Higher Education Commission (**HEC**) of Pakistan and newly formed National University of Medical Sciences (**NUMS**). Both institutions have a very optimistic forward looking vision for the next decade and seem very excited to work with APPNA MERIT on Medical Education in Pakistan.

The Child Psychiatry certification for adult psychiatrist in Pakistan will start on-line in July under program director and APPNA MERIT co chair, Waqar Azeem MD. Neurology and child psychiatry are piloting what will become a specialty-focused partnership between educators in US and Pakistan to enhance medical education and health care in Pakistan in next decade. We hope to soon bring in more specialties one by one over the next few years. While the weekly lecture on Monday morning in Pakistan will continue this year, it eventually will be replaced with more impactful specialty focused programs on-line.

APPNA MERIT is organizing a special symposium, "Spot light on Medical Education in Pakistan" with a panel of education Leaders from Pakistan including Gen Imran Majeed Vice chancellor of NUMS. We will be working closely with thought leaders to finalize the vision and direction of APPNA MERIT with special focus on sub-specialty education initiatives for the next decade during APPNA summer convention in Orlando. We need and request your help and input. Please attend the MERIT symposium as detailed in the program. We welcome all specialty leaders to contact us so that the initial steps taken for Neurology and Child Psychiatry can be replicated and made even better with your input.