



Editorial

## Encouraging and Empowering Women in Neurosurgery From Pakistan

Dear Readers

I extend my gratitude to Professor Dr. Muhammad Anwar Chaudhary (Chief Editor), and Professor Dr. Saman Shahid (Co Chief Editor) the official journal of Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons, for collaborating and dedicating this first- ever edition titled "Encouraging and Empowering Women in Neurosurgery from Pakistan."

### INTRODUCTION

In this editorial, I will highlight the foundation, aims, objectives, challenges, and strategies of the Women in Neurosurgery (WINS) chapter of the Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons (PSN).

Dr. Deborah Benzyl founded the global WINS movement in 1990 and became its first chairperson.<sup>1</sup>

The WINS chapter of the Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons (PSN) was announced by Professor Dr. Junaid Ashraf during the PSN conference of 2010/2011. Dr. Aneela Darbar emerged as the trailblazer and driving force behind WINS Pakistan, later assuming the role of its chairperson in 2013/2014.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS

When globally, Women in neurosurgery played a vital role in clinical, academics and research during the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>2</sup> at that time, women in neurosurgery from Pakistan started emerging.

For the first time, life time achievement award was presented to Pakistan's first practicing and qualified female neurosurgeon, Dr. Samina khaleeq in 2022 during the PSN annual conference. The Award was conferred by Professor Dr. Fauzia Sajjad, chairperson of WINS, with the support of Professor Riaz Raja, the general secretary of PSN at that time.

In recent years, neurosurgery has undergone a profound transformation, marked by the increasing participation and leadership of female neurosurgeons, which has traditionally been the most demanding and male-dominated field. The Modern Days Female neurosurgeons from Pakistan play a vital role as mentors, pioneers, innovators, educators, and leaders. Which reflects in the rising number of female neurosurgeons across the country, especially in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and Peshawar.

Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons has played a crucial role in the evaluation of WINS by providing a platform for scientific research sessions, workshops, scholarships, and short-term fellowships. It has boosted their confidence, experience, and self-projection in the field.

### CHALLENGES

Still few structural challenges persist, like limited representation in decision-making committees, editorial boards, and facilitating conferences.

## STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT

It is crucial to empower and encourage female neurosurgeons for the better growth and innovation in the field:

1. Introduce mentorship Programs, pairing young neurosurgeons with experienced female mentors.
2. Provide leadership and networking opportunities through conferences, workshops, training courses, and online forums that promote scientific collaboration.
3. Facilitate research funding and resource allocation for WINS initiatives.
4. Address systemic bias by implementing equitable policies, promoting diversity, and providing a flexible working environment.
5. support work-life balance by advocating for flexible schedules and family –friendly institutional policies.
6. Encourage senior female neurosurgeons, whether within or outside of PSN, to actively mentor and support younger colleagues.

## CONCLUSION

By encouraging and empowering women in neurosurgery, we are not only advancing the field

but also enhancing healthcare outcomes and professional standards. It is time to break stereotypes and shape a brighter future for female neurosurgeons in Pakistan.

## REFERENCES

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