



Editorial

History and Evaluation of Women in Neurosurgery (WINS) Chapter, Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons (PSN)

Dear Readers:

It is an honor to share the history of the Women in Neurosurgery (WINS) Chapter of the Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons (PSN) for the WINS dedicated issue (March 2026) of Pakistan Journal of Neurological Surgery (PJNS). Neurosurgery has always been considered a formidable, male-dominated mountain to climb, but here in Pakistan, a quiet yet powerful transformation is underway. This is a story of grit, mentorship, and a commitment to making our demanding specialty more equitable¹.

Why was it necessary to highlight women in neurosurgery from Pakistan?

While searching for women in neurosurgery from Pakistan, there wasn't a single article about them; instead, the literature is quite full of the history and achievements of WINS from all over the world², which sensitized me to take the initiative to honor them and to write about their achievements. Writing about their stories and achievements can inspire others and bring much-needed attention to their contributions. The global WINS movement, founded by Dr. Deborah Benzil in 1990, gave us a blueprint.^{3,4} Back home, the PSN chairperson (Professor Junaid Ashraf) officially announced our WINS Chapter in 2010/2011. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to **Dr. Aneela Darbar**, the true **trailblazer** who took the reins as chairperson of WINS in 2013/2014, lighting the path for all of us who followed

Celebrating Milestones and Rising Stars

While our international sisters were making strides in the 20th century, a vital group of Pakistani women was simultaneously carving out their space. The momentum we feel today is thanks to their sheer determination.

1. **Dr. Parveen Qadri** (MBBS and MS in neurosurgery). She was considered to be the first lady neurosurgeon from Pakistan. Later on, she didn't pursue her career as a neurosurgeon in Pakistan.
2. **Dr. Samina Khaleeq** (MBBS and MS in Neurosurgery)
Professional Qualification

Dedicated, renowned neurosurgeon and Inspiring

mentor, who inspires young neurosurgeons with her humble and motherly nature. She was the first qualified and practicing lady neurosurgeon and considered to be a pioneer. She graduated from Fatima Jinnah Medical College (1982).

Inspired by Khalida Usmani, She Pursued neurosurgery and qualified in 1995. She started her journey as a senior registrar and became an Associate Professor at PIMS Islamabad. Her area of interest was pediatric neurosurgery.

Expertise

She successfully operated on more than 500 Pediatric cases, over 1000 cases of ACDF, CSF repair, hydrocephalus, and brain and spine tumors.

Achievements and awards

- She was a mentor and board expert. She trained more than 100 neurosurgeons.
- She was nominated to attend the neurosurgery update course for young neurosurgeons of Asia.
- She presented papers at international conferences.
- She attended courses in Japan and was elected as the first Vice President of the Asian Congress of Neurosurgery.
- She also received a lifetime achievement award from WINS-PSN for her services and dedication to the field of neurosurgery.

3. Dr. Faiqa Filza (FCPS)

Leadership

Dr. Filza is currently serving as a Consultant Neurosurgeon and shareholder at Northwest General Hospital and Research Center, Peshawar, Pakistan.

She is also a faculty member at the Northwest School of Medicine.

Qualification

Dr. Filza holds the distinction of being the first female Fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons (FCPS) in Neurosurgery from Pakistan.

Professional Achievements

With over 21 years of private practice, she has been actively engaged in neurosurgical care, medical education, and professional development. She is involved in the training of both undergraduate and postgraduate students, and she has also been a supervisor for FCPS neurosurgery trainees and became the first female CPSP examiner in neurosurgery in 2019. She also serves as an examiner at Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad. Dr. Filza has visited more than 15 countries for academic purposes and participated in a variety of international courses. This includes the Skull base endoscopic course at Frankfurt and Zurich in 2012, the endoscopic spinal course at Kuala Lumpur in 2014, cranial reconstruction courses from Moscow in 2015, and a short-term fellowship from Houston, Texas, in 2007.

Expertise

Dr. Faiqa has extensive expertise in trauma and a variety of general neurosurgical procedures, including endoscopic.

Research and awards

She is the author of more than 20 peer-reviewed articles and a gold medalist for best paper presentation in 2002 at the Lahore PSN conference.

4. Dr. Aneela Darbar (MD, FAANS, FACS)

She is a trailblazer, especially in Pakistan, and a globally recognized female leader in the field of neurosurgery for her achievements and inspiration for women in neurosurgery. She is a globally recognized leader in Neurosurgery. Her achievements are truly inspiring. Her dedication to advancing and empowering female Neurosurgeons is commendable. She is the founder of the Women in Neurosurgery (WIN) chapter under the umbrella of Pakistan Society of Neurosurgery (PSN) and served as the first Chairperson of WIN from 2014 to 2021. She is also currently the chairperson of WIN for the Austral-Asian Society of Neurosurgeons (AASNS) and vice-chair of WIN for the Asian Congress of Neurosurgeons (ACNS). Her expertise includes minimally invasive cranial, endoscopic, and skull base surgery. She regularly conducts educational seminars and workshops in neuroendoscopy worldwide. Her impressive credentials include the American Board of Neurosurgery, Executive Board member for the International Federation of Neuroendoscopy (IFNE), Board member for Federation of International Education for Neurosurgeons (FIENS), member of Neuroendoscopy committee for World Federation of Neurosurgeons (WFNS), and Board member for the Emirates Society of Neurosurgeons. Currently, she is a consultant Neurosurgeon at King's College Hospital, Dubai, UAE, and an associate clinical professor at Gulf University, UAE. She was a former Assistant Professor at Saint Louis University, USA, and at Aga Khan University (AKU), Pakistan. She is also a visiting

faculty at both AKU and at Mukhtar A. Sheikh Hospital, Multan. With over 3000 procedures under her belt, Dr. Darbar is a testament to the power of hard work, passion, and innovation. Her contribution to the field, including authoring 5 book chapters and numerous publications, has earned her global recognition. Her accolades include the Teaching and Humanitarian award at State University of New York at Syracuse, USA, the Outstanding Young Alumnus award by Dow graduate association of North America, and the Ponds Women of the Year award.

5. Professor Dr. Fauzia Sajjad

(MBBS, FCPS, MRCS, FRCS, CMT)

She is a veteran, versatile neurosurgeon, and is leveraging various resources to build new professional competencies. First female Professor and Head, Department of Neurosurgery, Jinnah Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan, also served as the second Chairperson of the WINS chapter PSN (2022-2023). With her efforts, she presented a lifetime achievement award to the pioneering lady neurosurgeon of the country.

Education & Qualifications.

She has an MBBS distinction and completed the prestigious Fellowship of the College of Physicians and Surgeons (FCPS) in Neurosurgery. While serving as a Senior Registrar in Saudi Arabia, she distinguished herself by securing the Membership of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons (MRCS). She later achieved the Fellowship of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons (FRCS) on her first attempt.

Professional Experience

Dr. Fauzia gained extensive expertise under world-renowned neurosurgeons in the spinal, functional, and skull base areas during her 3 years of working experience in Saudi Arabia.

She topped the commission for the post of associate professor after returning to Pakistan.

Pioneering Leadership in Sialkot

She was the first female professor of Pakistan to be appointed in Sialkot, and single-handedly she fully established the neurosurgery department.

She also received the (2025 PSN conference) YNS –PSN shield of collaboration for training young neurosurgeons from all over Pakistan.

Innovative Advancements at Services Hospital, Lahore.

She refines her skills in functional neurosurgery after getting training in Germany. She also got a skull base endoscopic training fellowship, and she became a pioneer of skull base and complex CP-angle and posterior fossa procedures at Services Hospital, Lahore.

Transformative Impact at Jinnah Hospital, Lahore

Dr. Fauzia, with her vision and expertise, elevated the standard of endoscopic skull base and vascular procedures to new heights, and also uplifted the functional neurosurgery.

Current Stewardship

Currently being the professor and HOD of Jinnah Hospital, Lahore, she leads it with unwavering dedication. With the addition of clinical and teaching mentorship, she is also fulfilling the responsibilities of being chairperson and specialty advisory board for the University of Health Sciences (UHS), as well as examiner for the College of Physicians and Surgeons and UHS.

Research & Publications

She has the authorship of more than 25 peer-reviewed articles in leading national and International Journals.

6. Dr Fahmida Arab Mallah (MS, FPNS, FNOCC)

Dr. Mallah is a highly dedicated and emerging lady neurosurgeon and warrior.

She has been actively participating in various hands-on courses, academic activities, and seminars on spina bifida

Over 1500 cases of brain and spine procedures are performed by her, including brain and spine trauma, Congenital anomalies of the brain and spine, hydrocephalus, and brain and spine tumors.

Academic and Certification Excellence

- Graduated with Distinction: PIMS Islamabad (2013).
- Certified in Medical Teaching (ICMT, SEDA, CHPE)

Trailblazing Clinical Career

First Lady Neurosurgeon of Sindh/Nawabshah: Began career as Senior Registrar (2014) to Assistant Professor, providing 24/7 neurosurgical coverage in a remote area, a testament to unparalleled dedication.

Specialized Training & Global Recognition

- Scholarship Recipient: Awarded the First PSN Scholarship for Neuro-
- Oncology training (Queen Square, London, 2018).
- Fellowships: Pediatric Neurosurgery (Acibadem, Turkey, 2017)
- Global Training: Completed the 4-tier International Basic Neurosurgery
- Course (Antalya, Turkey)
- WFNS Scholarship: Received the WFNS scholarship to present research at an
- International conference in 2018 (Turkey) and 2019 (China).

- **Core interest and Expertise:** Skull Base, Vascular, and Pediatric Neurosurgery.

Leadership: Advocacy for Women in Neurosurgery

- Dedicated warrior actively fighting for the legal rights of
- Colleagues and for herself
- WINS-PSN General Secretary (2021-2023) & 3rd WINS Chairperson (2024-2025).
- Elevated WINS Pakistan:
 - Hosted scientific sessions with National and international speakers.
 - Presented the First-Ever Lifetime Achievement Award to a pioneering
 - lady neurosurgeon.
 - Published the first Journal Edition: To Encourage and Empower
- Women in Neurosurgery
- Sensitized the Community: Encouraged female neurosurgeons to publish
- their life stories to ensure their contributions are factually documented and
- recognized.

Academic; Institutional Authority

- Associate Professor, Jinnah Sindh Medical University, Department of Neurosurgery, JPMC
- Prolific Author: 25 peer-reviewed national and international publications.
- Academic Roles: graduate and postgraduate teaching and training
- MS Supervisor and Board Examiner. And Selection Board Expert

Award

Sindh graduates' best achievement award on Women's Day in 2022 for her services.

7. Dr Seema Sharafat (FCPS, MRCS)

Dr. Seema is a brilliant lady neurosurgeon. She started her career as an Assistant professor at Lady Leading Hospital, Peshawar. With her excellent academic performance and dedication, she was later promoted to an Associate Professor. She is a supervisor and actively participates in academics, postgraduate training, and teaching.

Academic qualification and course

- FCPS 2011
- MCPS in 2008
- MRCS 2010
- Arab spine diploma in 2018
- Euro Spine Diploma in 2022 Research publication.

Author of numerous peer-reviewed research articles and presented her research at national as well as international forums.

Leadership Qualities

She started WINS as joint secretary in 2014, progressed to general secretary, and is currently the 4th chairperson of the WINS chapter of PSN 2026

8. Dr. Nadia Banaras (FCPS)

Dr. Nadia is highly daring, talented, and the first female neurosurgeon in the entire province of Baluchistan.

Being a Young female neurosurgeon, she has started her career as an Assistant professor in the civil trauma center Quetta, dealing with 24/7 head and spine trauma cases, which itself talks high about her dedication and enthusiasm for neurosurgery.

Academic Achievements

- FCPS in 2022.
- Won the PSN fellowship in spine 2023.
- YNF skull base fellowship 2024.
- Research publication. Author of peer-reviewed research articles.
- Presented her research at national and international conferences.

Leadership Qualities.

She joined WINS in 2022 as Press and publication secretary, and was elected as General secretary for 2026.

9. Rabail Akbar Kazi (FCPS)

Dr. Rabail's credentials are truly impressive! With fellowships in Neuro Oncology and Pediatric Neurosurgery from renowned institutions, she's bringing cutting-edge expertise to the Jinnah Sindh Medical University department of neurosurgery, JPMC Karachi, as an assistant professor.

Fellowship and training courses

Short-term fellowship training in Pediatric neurosurgery from Turkey and neuro-oncology from the UAE

Leadership

Finance Secretary of WINS Pakistan

10. Dr. Sana Akbar Kazi (FCPS, CHPE, CRCP)

She is currently working as an assistant professor at Hamdard University Karachi. She is multitalented, a clinician, a dedicated educator, and a refined researcher.

Qualification

FCPS and certifications in clinical research and medical education (CHPE, CRCP).

Leadership

WINS-PSN press and publication secretary.

11. Dr. Pireh Azadi Korai, (MBBS, FCPS)

Dr. Pireh is the first qualified lady neurosurgeon from the district of Larkana.

She did her fellowships from Agha Khan and JPMC, currently working as a senior registrar of neurosurgery at King Abdul Aziz Hospital, Jeddah, with experience in complex neurosurgical cases. Dr. Pireh is a passionate educator:

She creates public awareness videos about critical neurosurgical topics and shares presentations, providing information to students and raising awareness in the community.

Compassionate Leader

Volunteer work and surveys point out commitment to improving healthcare services and addressing community needs.

WINS-PSN joint secretary.

Author of multiple articles and award recipient for best presenter.

12. Dr. Sundas Ali (FCPS, MRCS, FRCS)

Dr. Sundas Ali is an eminent lady neurosurgeon, dedicated mentor, efficient supervisor, and researcher. She has notable contributions in the field. Being a solo lady, an associate professor, and head of the department of neurosurgery at Rawalpindi Medical University, she is gifted with exceptional clinical and teaching skills. She has expertise in complex skull base and endoscopic procedures, and she is being recognized as one of the leading neurosurgeons in the region. She owns the authorship of multiple peer-reviewed research articles in national as well as international journals. She has shared her insights and expertise at the global neurosurgical forums. Through her tireless efforts, she has set an example of excellence in the field.

13. Dr. Baynazir Khan (MBBS, FCPS)

Dr. Baynazir is the first qualified female neurosurgeon of the Hazara division; she is unique, like her name, breaking the stereotyped image of female doctors and surgeons of the Hazara division. She is a focused, dedicated, and determined lady neurosurgeon, supervisor, mentor, and accomplished researcher. Working as an Assistant Professor in the department of neurosurgery, Ayub Medical College, Abbottabad. She is a CPSP supervisor and examiner and has authorship of multiple peer-reviewed articles. She is a shining example of excellence and inspiration.

14. Dr. Hafiza Fatima

She is a brilliant lady in neurosurgery. Dr. Fatima is currently working as a Senior Instructor in neurosurgery at Aga Khan University, Karachi, and has an impressive educational background.

Education & Training:

- *Residency in Neurosurgery* at Aga Khan University, Karachi (2019-2022).
- *FCPS Neurosurgery* from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan (2022).
- *Neurosurgical Oncology fellowship* from Aga Khan University, Karachi (2023).

Professional Experience:

Assistant Professor, Neurosurgery, Ziauddin University Hospital, Karachi (Jan-Apr 2025).

Dr. Fatima is actively involved in research and has published her work in reputable journals. She has a profound interest in complex skull base pathologies and minimally invasive procedures. Currently, Dr. Fatima has been awarded the FIENS Mukhtar A. Sheikh Hospital Fellowship to pursue specialized training in skull base anatomy and surgical approaches at Stanford Medicine NeuroTrain Center.

15. Dr. Muzamil Dilbar (MBBS, MS)

Dr. Muzamil's journey is genuinely inspiring. She has gradually climbed the ladder from being a postgraduate to a medical officer, from an assistant professor to her current role as an associate professor at Peoples' University Hospital, Nawabshah. She is currently working as a press and publication secretary of WINS-PSN. Her potential is not limited; she is striving to progress in the field.

Fellowship and Courses

- Epilepsy Mini Fellowship, Agha Khan.
- Neurooncology course, NUH Singapore.
- Pediatric Neurosurgery ISPN Course.
- Micro neurosurgery course, Sambo Beijing Hospital.

16. Dr. Samra Majeed (FCPS)

She is another example of a rising lady neurosurgeon. She has gradually climbed the ladder of success, from her early days as an assistant professor to her current role as an associate professor. Her dedication to neurosurgery and commitment to academic excellence are evident in her impressive track record.

17. Dr. Iram Bokhari (MBBS, FCPS)

She is FCPS in neurosurgery, an author of multiple peer-reviewed articles, CPSP supervisor for postgraduate, and working as an associate professor in the neurosurgery department of JPMC.

18. Dr Sumaira Kiran (MS, MRCS, FACS)

Dr. Sumaira Kiran is another shining star and assistant professor in the field of neurosurgery. With her impressive academic credentials and surgical expertise, she's definitely making a mark at Punjab Institute of Neurosciences.

19. Dr. Madiha Memon (MS in Neurosurgery)

Dr. Madiha Memon is making a mark in neurosurgery! With her MS in Neurosurgery and experience as a Senior Registrar at Indus Medical College and hospital, Tando Muhammad Khan, she's gaining valuable expertise. Her efforts in conducting workshops and seminars on Spina bifida and endoscopic 3rd ventriculostomy are helping spread knowledge and skills among medical professionals.

20. Dr. Mahjabeen Memon

Dr. Memon is a consultant neurosurgeon and senior Oman medical officer at LUMHS Hyderabad. She is the best graduate and a 7-time Gold Medalist in MBBS from LUMHS (Batch 2010-11). Notably, she is the first female Consultant Neurosurgeon of LUMHS. She has been recognized for her academic contributions and is currently serving as Joint Secretary of the Young Neurosurgery Forum (YNF) Pakistan, supporting the growth and development of young neurosurgeons.

21. Dr. Noor-UI-Huda Maria MBBS FCPS (ex PGR PINS)

21 Noor-UI-Huda Maria MBBS FCPS (ex PGR PINS).

- CNS Fellow, Neurosurgical Oncology, & Master's Student, EDSI EDISC, Harvard University.
- Co-Chair Edu & Community Committee AANS CNS Jt. Section for tumors.
- CNS international awardee Mount Sinai Hospital.

She is a gold medalist, brilliant, energetic, and multi-tasking lady, a Neurosurgeon, who hosted multiple national and international webinars.

Author of multiple peer-reviewed articles and one book.

Hidden Gems,

Dr. Sheema Atif, Dr. Sidra, Dr. Hina Anwar, Dr. Almas, Dr. Mehwish Aslam, Dr. Mashal Rasool, Dr. Mehek, and many more, who are striving for excellence, and I am unable to address them.

Conclusion:

Right now, our female neurosurgeons are not just participants; they are surgeons, mentors, educators, innovators, and leaders as well. The fact that we observe rising numbers of women succeeding in major centers like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar is a testament to their brilliance and resilience. You will simply label them as a transformation or requirements of the profession, ask them: they have crossed mountains for it. The Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons deserves immense credit for fostering this growth by providing an essential platform from scientific workshops to scholarship, which has boosted WINS confidence and professional reach. However, the road isn't entirely smooth yet. We still face challenges in the decision-making committee and equal representation and advantages as compared to our male colleagues. To truly nurture

innovation and growth, we need actionable, empathetic strategies that empower the next generation and uplift each other.

Acknowledgements

I appreciate Professor Saman Shahid for her sincere cooperation and dedication in publishing this editorial. It would be worthy to mention that Prof. Dr. Saman Shahid has around 35+ articles related to neurosurgery/neurology. She had done her doctoral research work related to brain cancer and immune gene response. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to all great neurosurgeons for their timely cooperation. I acknowledge the support of Professor Dr. Muhammad Anwar Chaudhary (Chief Editor, PJNS) for the provision of the valuable platform.

Notably

Even though I have tried my best to dig out information and stories of women in neurosurgery, it's not possible to cover all on one page. I address that all information I shared here is through the in-contact person or through social media, and I confess that there are so many hidden talents and gems in people whom I was unable to approach, or they were unable to provide information within a time frame. And I regret any shortcomings on my side.

Source of Information

Contact through cell phone, Hamari website, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Conflict of interest

The author has no conflict of interest.

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