



آغا خان یونیورسٹی

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

FONDATION
SANOFI ESPOIR

First Pakistan Pediatric Neuro Oncology Symposium (PNOS) was held on **27th -28th November 2020**. This was also the only other international symposium for Pediatric Neuro oncology apart from ISPNO (International Society of Pediatric Neuro Oncology), which is held every other year. There were 24 international and 5 national speakers who are luminaries in their field.

This was a landmark symposium from the developing world where up until six years ago there was no recognition of pediatric neuro oncology as a sub-specialty. Care of children with brain tumors was done in silos and coordination due to lack of awareness and expertise was not satisfactory. The landscape of Pediatric Neuro Oncology started changing from 2014 after Dr Naureen Mushtaq completed her training from Sickkids Hospital, Toronto. Twinning between Aga Khan University Hospital and Sickkids Hospital was started with monthly tumor boards. This collaboration continued to grow between various disciplines of Neuro-oncology including oncologists, neurosurgeons, pathologists and neuro radiologists.

The successful twinning led to AKUH being the recipient of the Sanofi-Esperir My Child Matters Grant in 2019, for capacity building and infrastructure development of Pediatric Neuro Oncology all over Pakistan. After receiving the grant educational work was ongoing throughout the country. It was halted only briefly when the pandemic started in early 2020. All educational activities were transitioned to virtual platforms within a few weeks. Due to pandemic restrictions PNOS was also conducted on a virtual platform

Since the twinning began in 2014 up until now 448 cases of brain tumors have been discussed. One of the outcomes is changes in management plans at diagnosis, which was 56% of cases at the outset in 2014 and is now 12% until March 2020. At one of the collaborating local institutes there was significant improvement in reduction of treatment abandonment from 56% to 24% (both abstracts presented at the PNOS conference).

The immediate impact of this landmark symposium is that it brought Pediatric Oncology the recognition that it needed particularly in the developing world. All the institutes across Pakistan struggle tremendously to treat children with brain tumors due to the care coordination it requires. At this conference data presented from institutes with similar resources was an eye opener for all. A whole session was dedicated to local data presentation. There were a few International participants as well with similar infra-structure. It was encouraging for the participants to see that with mobilizing the right resources brain tumors can be managed in their centers.

Similar to all international conferences an avenue for developing networking was created. Most centers across Pakistan lack the surgical expertise. Having dedicated sessions highlighting surgical challenges allowed for the participants to learn and discuss unique issues. Challenges of Pediatric Radiation Oncology were highlighted and experts in the field volunteered their expertise for future collaborations. Conducting a symposium of such high standards may also allow for international clinical trials to be brought to the developing world.

Alliances created from this conference will lead to the development of further subspecialties within Pediatric Neuro Oncology such as Pediatric Palliative care. The vision is to develop clinical, academic and research infrastructure in Pediatric Neuro Oncology all across Pakistan and having care provider and researchers present their work at PNOS annually. There will be travel grants and stipends to encourage young investigators and faculty to present to this forum. This conference along with ISPNO can be the platform for Pediatric Neuro Oncology globally and can be the conference alternating with the gap year of ISPNO.

Participants from across the globe are listed in the table below:

Countries	Participants	Countries	Participants
Pakistan	512	Nigeria	8
Saudi Arabia	78	Iraq	7
United States of America	42	Uganda	7
United Kingdom	35	Ethiopia	7
Malaysia	26	Honduras	6
Jordan	25	Mali	6
Singapore	21	Brazil	6
Canada	20	Uruguay	6
South Africa	19	Denmark	6
Tunisia	19	Ghana	6
India	17	Lebanon	5
Argentina	17	Ireland	4
Qatar	16	Netherlands	4
Turkey	15	France	4
Spain	13	Portugal	3
Bahrain	12	Myanmar	3
Colombia	12	Armenia	3
Germany	12	Vietnam	2
Morocco	11	Croatia	2
Kuwait	10	Algeria	2
Oman	10	Romania	1
Egypt	10	Moldova, Republic of	1
Ghana	10	Georgia	1
Czech Republic	10	Taiwan	4
Peru	9	Indonesia	4
China	9	Mauritius	3
Mexico	8	Slovakia	3
Ecuador	8	Sudan	3
		Russian Federation	3

Number of abstracts received was 61, 49 were selected for the conference. There were 9 oral abstract presentations, 14 were moderated abstracts and 26 abstracts were displayed on the AKUH website.

Countries	Oral Abstract	Abstract Moderated Poster	Abstract Picture Poster	Total
Pakistan	3	7	12	22
Canada	1			1
South Africa	1			1
Argentina	2			2
Jordan	1	2		3
China	1	1	3	5
Qatar		1		1
Tunisia		3	11	14
	Total	Total	Total	Total
	9	14	26	49