

Shazra Abbas

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Melbourne, Australia

Health systems specialist

A trained obstetrician and gynaecologist, and a passionate health systems specialist with more than ten years of clinical and programming experience with international organisations and health departments in maternal health, HIV, tuberculosis, and at-risk populations. Played a key role in the development of innovative healthcare initiatives and national guidelines and strategies on maternal health and communicable diseases. Arranged and led training programs in Pakistan, Nepal, and Saudi Arabia.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Analysed health system gaps in low-middle income countries impeding their progress to attain their health-related targets.
- Co-authored national guidelines on emergency obstetric care, PMTCT (Prevention of Mother-to Child Transmission of HIV) and Paediatric AIDS, and communicable diseases in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- Conducted monitoring and evaluation of healthcare services in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- Analysed data for various health projects in Pakistan and Australia, making it available for evidence-based programming.
- Co-designed and implemented a district healthcare model for disadvantaged communities in Pakistan.
- Supervised the first national PMTCT clinic in Pakistan to provide obstetric and sexual health services to HIV positive women, families, and at-risk populations.
- Facilitated training programs on HIV, emergency obstetric care (EmOC), and personal protective equipment for health staff, at-risk adolescents, young mothers, sex workers, and drug users in Pakistan, Nepal, and Saudi Arabia.

EDUCATION

1. The University of Melbourne, Australia – **PhD**, 2022

This research project examined health system gaps impeding countries' progress to achieving the End-TB targets. More specifically, a healthcare model providing treatment and care to drug-resistant tuberculosis patients in Pakistan is assessed through one year of ethnographic fieldwork. The study findings revealed peculiar system gaps often overlooked in traditional approaches used in monitoring and evaluation of such healthcare initiatives. Based on the findings a proposal is developed to improve patient experience and their treatment outcomes.

2. The University of Melbourne, Australia – **Master of Public Health**, 2014

The weighted average mark was 82.16%. The key subjects in the course included: Systems for Global Health, Primary Healthcare in Developing Countries and Health Inequalities.

3. College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan – **Fellowship of College of Physicians and Surgeons (FCPS)** Obstetrics/Gynaecology, 2005

4. College of physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan – **Membership of College of Physicians and Surgeons (MCPS) Obstetrics/Gynaecology**, 2004
5. The University of Punjab, Pakistan - **Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)**, 1998

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Associate and Teaching Assistant | The University of Melbourne, Australia

October 2021- April 2022

In this role I am responsible for marking the MPH students' assignments and giving them feedback on their proposed healthcare models, including monitoring and evaluation tools. In addition, I am conducting rapid literature reviews and data analysis for various research projects with the Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne.

Public health/Infection control officer | Al-Noor Specialist hospital, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia,

Jun 2015- Oct 2016

1. Devised three research proposals of public health significance and supervised data collection.
2. Developed two prevention and management guidelines for communicable diseases prevalent in the region.
3. Co-organised training workshops for healthcare workers on infection control practices and universal precautions.
4. Co-organised two national conferences on tuberculosis and HIV in the region.
5. Carried out documentation and reporting on infectious diseases including tuberculosis, HIV, Coronaviruses (MERS-CoV), and Hepatitis to directorate of health affairs.
6. Arranged regular health promotion sessions for public on prevailing health issues.

Health Officer | UNICEF, Pakistan

May 2009- Dec 2012

1. Analysed data on HIV among women, children, and at-risk populations such as sex workers and injecting drug users and making information available to local and international counterparts for evidence-based programming.
2. Collaborated with health department and UN counterparts to design healthcare initiatives for women health and at-risk populations including during humanitarian crises.
3. Conducted field visits to monitor HIV and maternal health programs across country and participated in periodic program reviews with government and UN counterparts.
4. Organised evaluation of several healthcare initiatives including MNCH, PMTCT and Paediatric AIDS and emergency preparedness response in Pakistan.

National PMTCT Coordinator | National AIDS Control Program, Pakistan

Sep 2006- Apr 2009

1. Provided obstetric and gynaecological care to general patients and women living with HIV.
2. Supervised inpatient and outpatient obstetric clinics and conducted independent Emergency Ward rounds for general patients.

3. Co-organised and facilitated trainings on maternal & newborn health, family planning and infection control for healthcare staff, and community outreach workers.
4. Led training programs on voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT), and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for NGO staff working for at-risk communities.

Post graduate resident, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad

Dec 2000-Aug 2004

1. Provided inpatients and outpatient obstetrics and gynaecological care and supervised emergency department for adequate and timely provision of emergency obstetric care.
2. Visited basic health units (BHUs) and rural health centers (RHCs), to provide obstetric care and conduct teaching sessions for community on basic health, family planning and sexually transmitted infections.
3. Performed minor and major obstetric and gynaecological surgeries under supervision and independently.
4. Supervised junior healthcare staff to perform emergency obstetric and gynaecological procedures.
5. Facilitated training workshops on maternal and newborn healthcare.

Voluntary work experience

Global Vision International, Pokhara, Nepal, Nov 2014.

1. Designed training material on sexual health for adolescents and young mothers.
2. Facilitated training sessions on sexual health for school children and young mothers.

Teaching experience

Taught maternal and newborn health at School of Nursing and Midwifery, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Islamabad from Jan to June 2005.

Contributions to the development of key national documents

1. **National Paediatric AIDS Guidelines 2012**
National AIDS Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan.
2. **National PMTCT (Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV) Guidelines 2011**
National AIDS Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan.
3. **National Integrated Management of Pregnancy & Childbirth guidelines (IMPAC) 2010-11**
Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Pakistan and Government of Pakistan.
4. **Emergency Obstetrics Care (EmOC) manual- 2004**
Women Health Project, Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan.

Key workshops facilitated

- **“Infection Control Practices and use of Personal Protective Equipment”** 2015-2016, Makkah, Saudi Arabia
- **“District Hospital trainings of Health care Providers on HIV & PMTCT”** 2009- 2012, Punjab, Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan
- **“Maternal health and PMTCT training”** 2008, all four provinces of Pakistan
- **“Emergency Obstetric Care (EmOC) for District Gynaecologists”**, Dec 2006

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

Recipient of

1. Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship (2017-2021) for PhD at the University of Melbourne, Australia.
2. AusAID Scholarship (2013-14) for master's in public health from the University of Melbourne, Australia.
3. Australian Leadership Award (2013-14) given to young leaders from developing countries.
4. Young Gynaecologist Award (2008) on presenting a paper on HIV among pregnant women.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Receiving healthcare for drug-resistant TB: a cross-sectional survey from Pakistan. **Abbas S**, Denholm J, Xiaoguang Y, Kermode M, Kane S. *Public Health Action Journal*. 2021;11 (3):114-119.
2. Strengthening the response to drug-resistant TB in Pakistan: a practice theory-informed approach. **Abbas S**, Kermode M, Kane S. *Public Health Action Journal*. 2020;10(4):147-56.
3. A Prospective Study of epidemiology of central line associated bloodstream infections at a tertiary hospital in Makkah Saudi Arabia. Al-Gethamy M, Hamed A, Hafeez Z, Al-Qatabi D, **Abbas S**. *International Journal of Medical Research & Health Sciences*. 2020;9(12):98-103.
4. Investigating healthcare workers experience after a needle stick injury at a tertiary hospital in Makkah region in Saudi Arabia: A qualitative assessment. Al-Gethamy M, Hamed A, **Abbas S**, Al-Qatabi D. *International Journal of Medical Research & Health Sciences*. 2018; 7(4), 15-21.
5. Assessment of knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) towards hepatitis B, C and HIV among sanitary staff at a tertiary care hospital in Makkah city, Saudi Arabia. Al-Gethamy M, Adetunji H, **Abbas S**, Al-Qatabi D, & Karar H. *European Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research*. 2016; 3(11),116-127.
6. Prevalence of HIV in pregnant women identified with a risk factor at a tertiary care hospital. Mahmud G, **Abbas S**. *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association*. 2013; 63(1), S56-S60.
7. Rescue cerclage: A ray of hope in advanced cervical incompetence. Mahmud G, Tasnim N, & **Abbas S**. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pakistan*. 2011; 1(1), 24-32.
8. Reduction Clitoroplasty: a case report. **Annals of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences**. 2008.

Ongoing research work (based on PhD Project)

1. Lost to follow-up or system failure? A Practice theory informed analysis of (non)-adherence to treatment among patients with a chronic illness (in peer-review).
2. Stigma and discrimination in tuberculosis as understood and internalized by patients and providers: A qualitative assessment from Pakistan.

Languages – English (fluent), Urdu, Punjabi (native speaker).

Membership: an active member of 'Health Systems Global'— an international association promoting health, equity, and well-being of people by strengthening health systems through quality research, and evidence-based policy and practices.