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A beacon of dedication and excellence: Dr. Shehla Javed Akram's remarkable journey in medical journalism course at UHS

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In the realm of professional development, it is not uncommon to come across individuals whose unwavering commitment and dedication to their goals set them apart as exceptional role models. Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, a highly successful entrepreneur, nutritionist, and wife of the then-sitting Vice Chancellor of the University of Health Sciences (UHS) Lahore, Professor Javed Akram, has unquestionably proven herself as one of these extraordinary individuals. Undertaking her recent journey through the 6-months certificate course in Medical Editing and Journalism at UHS,¹ Dr. Shehla not only met the challenges head-on but exceeded expectations because of her determination, exceptional dedication, commitment, and the pursuit of knowledge. She was passionately nominated for the course by her own husband, Prof. Javed Akram, who initiated and implemented this training course at UHS during his tenure as the Vice Chancellor under the vision of Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid. Despite her numerous business

ventures and busy schedule, Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, after her enrolment, consistently delivered results that exemplify her strong work ethics and professionalism. She meticulously developed her training portfolio, ensuring it was brimming with precise details and met all necessary requirements for completion of the coursework. Her continuous proactive approach was further evident through her timely submission of all assignments, a feat made even more commendable given her other obligations.

It is worth noting that the commitment to learning and the pursuit of knowledge is not confined to Dr. Shehla Javed Akram alone. Her husband, Prof. Javed Akram, shares equally in this exemplary journey. Together, they form a truly inspirational couple who, despite reaching pinnacles in their respective careers, continue to put concerted efforts into gaining and sharing knowledge, setting a precedent for the importance of lifelong learning. One instance of that I would love to share here with the readers is when Dr. Shehla was flying from the UK to Pakistan alongside her husband, a day before her final examination of the certificate course. Even during this busy travel, she was actively preparing for her viva examination and seeking valuable tips from her peers through a WhatsApp group. While waiting to get on board, the couple's passion was boundless, and she repeatedly called me while being mentored by Prof. Javed Akram side by side, to discuss, rather critically appraise, some of the contents of the viva preparatory booklet for the course. Her plane landed in Lahore, Pakistan, at 7:00 AM, and she ensured that she arrived at the examination center well in time at 10:00 AM, where she was seated in the waiting area with the other candidates and was examined by all the three examiners for more than 20-25 minutes. Her choice to undergo the



Certificate award ceremony of Batch-4 of Certificate Course in Medical Editing at UHS, Lahore presided by Prof. Javed Akram, Minister of Specialized Health Care & Medical Education Department Punjab and chaired by the Patron of the course, Prof. Ahsan Waheed Rathore, the Vice Chancellor of UHS, Lahore.

examination without any special privileges or requests showcases her dedication to earning her accomplishments through merit and hard work. She finally passed the examination, securing 75% marks, and was awarded with the certificate of course completion in a ceremony held at UHS on March 15th, 2023. Quite fortunately, the ceremony was presided over by her husband, Prof. Javed Akram, who had then been appointed as the Minister of Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Department, Government of Punjab, Pakistan.

Beyond her academic achievements, what makes this 8-to-9-month journey of Dr. Shehla with us so special is her utmost humility. Dr. Shehla Javed Akram is known for her pleasant personality, considerate nature, and welcoming demeanor. She embodies the qualities of a true leader who not only excels in her personal and professional life but also uplifts those around her. Her willingness to share insights and seek advice in a collaborative environment fosters a sense of camaraderie among her peers who have had the privilege of interacting with her.

Despite her husband's prestigious and commanding position as the Vice Chancellor, she made no attempt to call for any special protocols, waivers, exemptions, or any kind of special treatment during the sessions. The management of the course, especially Mr. Shaukat Ali Jawaid, the course Advisor, also ensured that she was being treated like any other candidate, thus encouraging a culture of equity and

impartiality among the candidates of diverse statures from different institutes of Pakistan.

To conclude, Dr. Shehla Javed Akram's journey in the field of Medical Journalism is not only marked by her academic excellence but also by her exemplary character. In a world that sometimes equates privilege with success, Dr. Shehla's actions serve as a refreshing reminder that true achievements are built on a foundation of humility, unwavering dedication, and a commitment to the principles of fairness. Her modesty, even in the face of the extraordinary, stands as a testament to her character and values.

We are proud to have such dedicated individuals among us, and she truly is a beacon of inspiration for us all.

List of Abbreviations

UHS University of Health Sciences

Conflict of interest

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The author is presently the Pro-Vice Chancellor of UHS, Lahore, Pakistan, and the Focal Person for the Medical Journalism Courses at the same university. The 6-months certificate courses and one-year Diploma in Medical Writing and Journalism offered at UHS, Lahore, Pakistan, are accredited by the World Health Organization. Since the year 2019, more than 140 medical journal editors have been trained and certified through didactic learning and hands-on skill development.

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