

# OBITUARY

## Prof. Syed Ali Haider

### (1962 – 2013)



On a bright morning of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013 we lost a renowned and talented vitreo retinal surgeon Prof. Syed Ali Haider along with his younger son Murtaza Haider from the crown of Pakistani Ophthalmology. Nobody even, who met him once, can forget the energy and sincerity in handshake of this handsome man. He was an intuitive leader, excellent ophthalmic surgeon and exquisite medical teacher.

Born in 1962, he belonged to a family of accomplished physicians. His mother, Prof. Tahira Bokhari; a professor of Anatomy, while His father Prof. Syed Zafar Haider; a renowned general surgeon and teacher of innumerable doctors placed around the world. After his schooling at Multan he joined King Edward Medical College, Lahore, in 1981. His father paid special attention towards his grooming and asked Ali to either push bicycle or use public transport to the educational institute, despite couple of vehicles in the portico.

After graduation he decided to specialize in Ophthalmology and moved to United Kingdom, where he got through his professional examinations with laurels. He completed 4 year training in Britain and was the first Pakistani to have Fellowship training in Vitreo-Retinal surgery from Oxford, UK.

With distinguished credentials he could have reached pinnacle of success in any rich country, but he was a patriotic Pakistani and moved back to motherland in 1996. He started service in Government Sector at Mayo Hospital, Lahore and gradually moved up the ladder. The highlight of his professional career was when he became Associate and later Professor of Ophthalmology at Postgraduate Medical Institute / Lahore General Hospital. There initially he received a couple of ruined wards, few medical officers and broken equipments. He took up this challenge and showed utmost qualities of leadership. He invited trained medical faculty to join hands with him. He raised millions of rupees to acquire expensive electro-medical ophthalmic equipment. He motivated the NGOs to repair building, fund investigations and support treatment, not only for Ophthalmic but also other disciplines.

He was an institution maker and played pivotal role in development of Dr. Ameer Din Medical College, Ophthalmic Oncology service of Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital, Postgraduate Medical Institute Lahore. He was life member and held office as General Secretary, Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan, Lahore Branch (2006-07). He was secretary of Vitreo-retinal Association of Pakistan (VRAP) and supervisor/examiner of FCPS Vitreo-Retina (*College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan*). He was Editor in Chief of PJO 2011-12 and Editor PPMJ 2009-12. Based on his scientific publications (23), presentations (*approximately 60*) and tireless services to thousands of needy patients seeking cure from vitreo-retinal disorders he was awarded Prof. M Lateef Chaudhry OSP Gold Medal in 2009.

He was kindhearted towards patients and would go to any extent to help them out. His professional manners were praised equally by his patients, students and colleagues. His enthusiasm towards teaching was unmatched and he took part in training of hundreds of postgraduate students in Ophthalmology. He was a popular Vitreo-retina trainer and at the time of his demise, Fellowship training slots for him were booked for 2 years. His special personality attribute was to speak his mind, even in the highest office. His inside was even shinier than the grey hair on his head. He was polite in etiquettes to everybody. However, he could enter into a

hot debate where interest of deserving person is at stake. Ali had quite a broad knowledge of English / Urdu literature. He was an eloquent speaker and could articulate at length on any topic. He loved riding bicycle and travelled through European mountains with friends on push – bikes.

He was married to Dr. Fatima Haider, who herself is very compassionate and runs a free Medical Centre for the needy persons at Lahore. He was a loving father of two sons and a 6 month old daughter. He was role model as a father to groom the children. Despite all his engagements, Ali was unique, as he found time to accompany his sons while at work or would join them at riding lessons etc.

He is separated from the medical fraternity but his legacy would always prevail and will be beacon of light in any moments of darkness.

May Allah SWT rest his soul in eternal peace.

**Zahid Kamal Siddiqui**