



BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE OF PAKISTAN MEDICAL COMMISSION

In the matter of

Complaint No. PF. 8-2033/2021-DC/PMC

Reference from the office of the President of Pakistan

Mr. Ali Raza	Chairman
Dr. Anis-ur- Rehman	Member
Dr. Asif Loya	Member

Present:

Dr. Sheher Bano (55186-P)	Respondent
Hearing dated	15.01.2022

I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND:

1. A petition addressed to the President of Pakistan was forwarded by Director (Petition & Digitization) President's Secretariat (Public) Aiwan-e-Sadr received at the Pakistan Medical Commission on 01.11.2021. In the said petition reference was made to the public notices issued by the Pakistan Medical Commission regarding prohibition to unlawful use of the specialization titles by medical practitioners without having requisite qualifications. In the petition certain medical practitioners were identified who have been granted license to practice basic medicine or dentistry as general practitioners and were allegedly representing themselves as consultants or specialists. It was further alleged that such individuals/practitioners are practicing in clear violation of section 29(2) of the Pakistan Medical Commission Act 2020.



2. Similar petition was lodged to the President of Pakistan Medical Commission vide a letter received on 20.10.2021. Also, in-charge Federal Investigation Agency, Cyber Crime forwarded the same petition vide letter dated 05.11.2021 which was received on 10.11.2021.
3. The petitions mentioned the names and detail of medical practitioners allegedly involved in the specialized dermatology/aesthetic procedures without requisite qualifications. Name of Dr. Sheher Bano (hereinafter referred to as the “Respondent”) was also mentioned in the petition.

II. SHOW CAUSE NOTICE:

4. In view of the reference received from the office of the President of Pakistan and allegations leveled in the accompanying complaint, Show Cause Notice dated 08.11.2021 was served to Dr. Sheher Bano in the following terms:
 5. **WHEREAS**, in terms of information, evidence available on record, website www.ipalclinic.com, and social media networking accounts such as, <https://www.instagram.com/drsheherbanoipa/?hl=en>, <https://www.facebook.com/IPALCLINIC/>, you are practicing at IPAL Skin Care Clinic situated at House 28, St.10, F-8/3, Islamabad and have published information and represented yourself in the following manner;
Dr. Sheher Bano (Dermatologist)
M.D (Dermatology)
MCPS (Dermatology-PIMS),
X Consultant Dermatologist Maroof International Hospital Islamabad,
Member of RA Academy London Chesire,
Member of American Academy of Aesthetics; and
 6. **WHEREAS**, you are registered with Pakistan Medical Commission under Registration No.55186-P, whereby you have the degree of Basic Medical Qualification (MBBS) only; and
 7. **WHEREAS**, a general practitioner cannot practice in the field of specialty without requisite qualification duly recognized by the Commission and represent as having acquired or seek to practice a specialty unless same is recognized by the Commission. Therefore in view of facts mentioned in this notice your conduct of representing yourself as a specialist is in violation of Section 29(2),



(8) & (10) of the Act, read with Regulation 8(2) of Code of Ethics of Practice for medical and dental practitioners Regulations, 2011; and

III. REPLY TO SHOW CAUSE NOTICE:

5. Dr. Sheher Bano in response to Show Cause Notice submitted her reply/comments on 07.12.2021 wherein she stated that:
- I have completed my MCPS and MD trainings and yet have to clear the exam. Currently, I am working as general practitioner and performing Aesthetic procedures only. I hold all relevant training certificates required to practice Aesthetic procedures.
 - I have always strived to adopt a pro-active approach to ensure the compliance of all codes of ethics and rules. However, I was not aware of any such rule of practice requiring not to represent as dermatologist while someone is undergoing MCPS trainings. Hence, it is requested that relevant rules may be provided for its strict compliance
 - It is submitted that I am registered with Pakistan Medical Commission as general practitioner and never practiced in any such field or specialty recognized by Pakistan Medical Commission for which formal training is required, however, it is humbly clarified that specialty of Aesthetic Physician has not been enlisted by Pakistan Medical Commission nor any formal training has been specified in this regard till now.
 - I have established clinic as M/s IPAL Clinic but there is no violation of law or medical ethics. As far as higher qualification is concerned I have joined training of MCPS Dermatology but has not cleared test yet.
 - I carried out authentic training certificates for Aesthetics practice.
 - I have never presented myself as a Specialist in violation of any law or code of ethics for medical practice.
 - It is requested that while considering the above stated grounds the Show Cause Notice dated 8th of Nov. 2021 may kindly be withdrawn.

IV. HEARING:

6. Notice dated 30.12.2021 were issued to Respondent Dr. Sheher Bano directing her to appear before the Disciplinary Committee on 15.01.2022. The Respondent appeared before the Disciplinary Committee in person on the date of hearing.
7. The Respondent doctor stated that it is correct that she is registered with the PMC as a general practitioner and hold a degree of MBBS only. She practices at her clinic "Islamabad Premium Aesthetic and Laser Clinic". The Disciplinary Committee enquired from the Respondent that why

she had advertised herself as qualified dermatologist at her clinic and different websites, she stated that it was done inadvertently and now all such references/titles have been removed.

8. Responding to another query she stated that she completed her MCPS training from Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). She further stated that she cleared her theory exam but failed in viva. Thereafter, she received a job offer from Maroof International Hospital, Islamabad to join them as a dermatologist. From there onward she was known as a dermatologist. She practiced as dermatologist at Maroof International Hospital and on the prescription pads of Maroof International Hospital, she was mentioned as Dermatologist.
9. The Disciplinary Committee confronted the letter of Maroof International Hospital to the Respondent doctor wherein she has been mentioned as consultant dermatologist, she stated that it was done by the hospital. The Committee enquired whether she informed Maroof International Hospital not to represent her as consultant dermatologist since she was not qualified, she stated that she never stopped the administration of Maroof International Hospital from doing so.
10. She further stated that IPAL is not owned by her solely. There are other practitioners as well practicing at IPAL. All the dermatology patients are seen by Dr. Afaq (Assistant Professor of dermatology). She carries out aesthetic procedures only.
11. The Disciplinary Committee specifically asked the Respondent doctor about the ashetic procedures she carries out at the clinic, she stated that she was doing basic aesthetic procedures like laser hair removal and injectable. She further stated that she holds diploma in aesthetic medicines from Paris. The Committee further enquired about the diploma of aesthetic medicines to which she stated that period of training was 2-3 days. She added that it was a kind of Continuing Medical Education (CME) certification.
12. The Committee further enquired from the Respondent doctor that whether she has done Basic Life Support (BLS) training, she replied affirmatively. She further stated that on her clinic she has basic life support medicines to deal with emergencies. On query of Disciplinary Committee regarding prescription of medicines to patients she replied that she does not go beyond the scope

of general practitioner while prescribing medicines. In case such medicines are required she refers the patient to consultant available at clinic.

13. The Disciplinary Committee directed Respondent Dr. Sheher Bano to submit a compliance report within two days regarding removal of words, titles such as consultant, dermatologist used and advertised with her name on her prescription pad, visiting card, different websites and social media sites.

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

14. In September 2021, the Pakistan Medical Commission widely circulated through public notice on its website and newspapers and warned all medical practitioners against using misleading titles with their names which cause misrepresentation to the general public and patients as to their qualifications and skills. It was made abundantly clear in the public notice that such misrepresentation as to specialized medical and dental practice is in violation of the code of ethics and tantamount to misconduct. In addition, such act is in gross violation of the PMC Act 2020 and mandates a disciplinary action against medical and dental practitioners involved in such deceptive practices.
15. Petition that was forwarded from the Office of President and FIA referred to the same public notice of the Pakistan Medical Commission and provided a list of medical practitioners who allegedly are carrying out practice in dermatology and aesthetics without requisite qualifications. Further the Authority has carried out its preliminary assessment of such cases resulting in collection of relevant evidence. Therefore, Disciplinary Committee has proceeded to issue show cause notice based on sufficient information available to it and submission of a complaint.
16. The Respondent Dr. Sheher Bano is practicing at the clinic under the name and style of IPAL clinic situated at House 28, St.10, F-8/3, Islamabad. On her clinic's official websites i.e. www.ipalclinic.com, and social media networking accounts such as, <https://www.instagram.com/drsheherbanoipa/?hl=en>, <https://www.facebook.com/IPALCLINIC/>, she is being represented in the following manner;

Dr. Sheher Bano (Dermatologist)

M.D (Dermatology)

MCPS (Dermatology-PIMS),

X Consultant Dermatologist Maroof International Hospital Islamabad,

Member of RA Academy London Chesire,

Member of American Academy of Aesthetics;

17. Respondent Dr. Sheher Bano in her reply and during the hearing stated that she is practicing aesthetic medicines and to justify her practice she has submitted number of certificates including:
- a) Certificates of attendance of 3day workshop conducted by Academy of Aesthetic Medicine and Surgery 2017
 - b) Certificates of attendance of 3day workshop conducted IMCAS annual world congress 2018
18. As per the record, Dr. Sheher Bano is simple MBBS and she has no post graduate qualification registered with Pakistan Medical Commission. It is also an admitted fact that Dr. Sheher Bano has not even passed her MCPS dermatology though she did her training for MCPS from Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and cleared her theory exam but failed in viva.
19. During the hearing, the Respondent doctor has admitted she had been practicing at Maroof International Hospital, Islamabad as a dermatologist and on the prescription pads of Maroof International Hospital, she was mentioned as Dermatologist which she never objected.
20. A medical or dental practitioner can represent and practice only a specialty which is duly recognized and consequently registered on their license by the PMC. Medical practitioners who have been granted license to practice basic medicine or dentistry as a general practitioner cannot practice a specialty or use specialization or consultant titles with their names as it amounts to deceiving the general public. Section 29 of the Pakistan Medical Commission Act 2020 explicitly prohibits in this regard as under:

Section 29. Licensing

(2) A general practitioner may treat all ordinarily recognized common medical or dental ailments and shall not practice in fields or specialties, as recognized by the Commission for which formal training is required No practitioner shall represent himself as a specialist or practice as a specialist without having appropriate qualifications, recognized and duly registered by the Commission.”

Sub-section (6) provides:

No registered licensee shall use or publish in any manner whatsoever any title, description or symbol indicating or intended to lead persons to infer that he possesses any additional or other professional qualification unless the same has been duly recognized and registered on his licence by the Commission.

Further Sub-section (8) provides:

“... (8) No medical or dental practitioner shall be permitted to represent in Pakistan as having acquired or seek to practice a specialty unless the same is duly registered on his license by the Authority. ...”

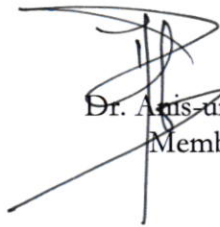
21. Dermatology is a specialist field of medicine which can only be practiced by a practitioner having acquired the requisite post graduate qualification in dermatology. Diplomas, certifications and other such qualifications are considered additional qualification and where the same pertain to the specific practice of dermatology the same are valid for further credentialing of a holder of a post graduate qualification. However, there are numerous diplomas and certifications in aesthetic medicine and cosmetology which are not specifically training in a medical specialty or the general practice of medicine rather are more in technical nature and in most cases consist of a few days training at nonmedical facilities such as hotels or convention centers etc. These cannot be equated with medical qualifications. The field of aesthetic medicine has been loosely used over many years whereas in reality it is the practice of aesthetics or cosmetology which consists of procedures which may not be strictly speaking a practice of medicine yet have either medical consequences or cross over into the practice of medicine in part. A more recognized term for medical practitioners involved in the practice of aesthetics is an ‘aesthetic physician’. However, unfortunately over the years no effort has been made to define the credentialing pathways or privileging structure for an aesthetic physician and correspondingly those practices which fall in the domain and definition of technicians or the sphere of allied health. This vacuum has resulted in the increasingly growing practice of aesthetics and cosmetology to be unregulated to a large extent. While it would be

incorrect and unreasonable to generally limit all practice of aesthetics or cosmetology to only those who are qualified specialists in dermatology which is a wholly distinct specialty of medicine, it is imperative that the practice of aesthetics medicine be properly defined and credentialed.

22. What is relevant to the Pakistan Medical Commission as the national regulator of medical practices is what is commonly referred to as “Aesthetic Medicine”. Aesthetic medicine is a broad term for specialties that focus on altering cosmetic appearance through the treatment of conditions. It includes non-invasive procedures such as injectables including fillers, botulinum toxins, mesotherapy etc., rejuvenation treatments such as chemical peels, photorejuvenation , laser treatments, hair transplant etc. On the other hand Aesthetic Medicine also includes surgical or reconstructive procedures which requires qualified surgeons and specialists.
23. It has become abundantly clear that there is an urgent need to determine the scope of Aesthetic Medicine and its credentialing as in the absence of the same it is not possible to enforce the limits of practice on medical practitioners engaged in the practice of aesthetics and cosmetology, as well as those who are not medical practitioners and are practicing essentially as technologists. The absence of this clarity critically has created a confused state of affairs amongst the public and patients who are simply proceeding on the basis of marketing representations made by practitioners and clinics etc. As a result, the Authority is directed to immediately take up this issue and initiate a consultative process to prepare detailed credentialing for aesthetic medicine and guidelines for its practice whereupon the Council’s approval be sought for its notification and consequent implementation.
24. However, in the interim it is essential to ensure that no medical practitioner incorrectly represents themselves as a ‘dermatologist’, ‘consultant’ or ‘specialist’ in the absence of having acquired a recognized post graduate qualification registered with the Pakistan Medical Commission. This needs to be publicly communicated as well.
25. TheDr. Sheher Bano has submitted a compliance report after the hearing vide letter on 26.01.2022 wherein she stated that she has removed the word ‘Dermatologist’ and dermatology consultation from her visiting card, social media websites, including www.marham.pk &

www.oladoc.com/pakistan, other relevant document as well as office board and the same has been verified.

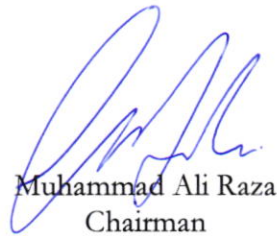
26. In view of the above discussion and the admitted absence of a proper credentialing system for aesthetic medicine and also considering the compliance report submitted by Dr. Sherbano, the Committee has decided that no penalty shall be imposed upon Respondent doctor. However, Dr. Sherbano is directed that if any third party without her consent represents her as dermatologist, consultant or specialist, she will initiate appropriate steps to have it corrected on an immediate basis.



Dr. Anis-ur-Rehman
Member



Dr. Asif Loya
Member



Muhammad Ali Raza
Chairman

28 February, 2022