



BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE OF PAKISTAN MEDICAL COMMISSION

In the matter of
Complaint No. PF. 8-2033/2021-DC/PMC

Referred from office of the President of Pakistan

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

Present:

Dr. Shumaila Qasim Khan (48902-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. Shumaila Qasim Khan (hereinafter referred to as the “Respondent”) was also mentioned in the petition.

II. SHOW CAUSE NOTICE:

4. In view of the allegations leveled in the complaint, show cause notice dated 08.11.2021 was served to Dr. Shumaila Qasim Khan in the following terms:
 5. **WHEREAS**, in terms of information, evidence available on record, Website www.drshumailakhan.com and social media networking accounts such as, <http://www.instagram.com/dr.shumailakhan/?hl=en> , you are practicing at clinic; Dermalase at House No. A-103 Main Sumbal Road, F-10/1, Islamabad and have published information and represented yourself in the following manner;
Dr. Shumaila Khan (Dermatologist & Consultant Aesthetic Physician)
Diploma in Dermatology (D.Derm); and
 6. **WHEREAS**, you are registered with Pakistan Medical Commission under Registration No.48902-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. Shumaila Qasim Khan in response to show cause submitted her reply/comments on 13.12.2021 wherein she stated that:



- a) I am registered with Pakistan Medical Commission as general practitioner (48902-P) and never practiced in field or specialties as recognized by the Pakistan Medical Commission for which formal training is required.
- b) I have established clinic as M/s Dermalase but there is no violation of law or medical ethics on my part. So far as higher qualification is concerned, I have submitted an application to the Worthy President Pakistan Medical & Dental Council for the registration of my Post Graduate Qualification i.e. Diploma in Practical Dermatology from Cardiff University Wales, UK and Diploma in Aesthetic Medicine from American Academy of Aesthetic Medicines.
- c) I have also acquired higher qualification and experience in the field of Aesthetic Medicine.
- d) I have never presented myself as a specialist in violation of any law.
- e) Show Cause Notice may very graciously be withdrawn in the interest of justice because the complaint forwarded to this Worthy Committee is false and frivolous having no concern with the reality

IV. HEARING:

6. Notice dated 30.12.2021 were issued to Respondent Dr. Shumaila Qasim Khan (48902-P) directing her to appear before the Disciplinary Committee on 15.01.2022. The Respondent along with her counsel appeared before the Disciplinary Committee on the said date.
7. The Disciplinary Committee asked Respondent Dr. Shumaila Khan regarding her qualification to which she responded that she is MBBS only. The Disciplinary Committee asked to why she has been advertising herself as dermatologist at different websites/social media sites to which she responded that her marketing team has done that inadvertently. She further stated that she is aware that she is not qualified dermatologist.
8. On the said query of Disciplinary Committee as to impersonating as dermatologist, she clarifies that she will remove all such advertisement from different social media/websites and submit a compliance report to the satisfaction of the Disciplinary Committee. She further stated that she practices Aesthetic medicine only. The Committee enquired her the basis on which she is practicing aesthetic medicines, to which she responded that she has done two years' attachment at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Dermatology. She has also completed Diploma in Dermatology (Dip Derm) from Cardiff.
9. She further stated that she has been continuously getting training in aesthetic medicines from different institution around the world. She further stated that she has completed her certificate training form American Academy of Aesthetic Medicines. She has performed over 1000 aesthetic

procedures. She performs different procedure including Botox, Fillers, laser hair removal, antiaging laser, thread lift procedure, mesotherapy, chemical peels. She also has diploma in antiaging medicines from American Academy of Aesthetic Medicines.

10. The Disciplinary Committee further enquired about the criteria of admission, duration and mode of training of the Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines, to which she responded that the criteria for admission in Diploma program need to have basic degree in medicine i.e. MBBS and/or BDS. She further stated that a practitioner has to provide evidence of six months' practice of Aesthetic Medicines on the basis of which level II Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines is issued.
11. The Disciplinary Committee enquired about the training requirement for Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines to which Respondent Dr. Shumaila Qasim stated that there are training sessions of six to eight hours. She attended such session in Dubai. The Disciplinary Committee specifically asked about the duration of training to which the Respondent doctor stated that level I training requires three days. The Committee further enquired whether the training was in a hospital or otherwise to which she responded that the said training was arranged in a hotel and not in hospital.
12. The Committee enquired that whether there is any requirement of logbook to be submitted to the American Academy of Aesthetic Medicines for completion of level II of Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines, to which she responded that there is no such requirement, however, she has record of all the patient whom she treated to gain experience of six months.
13. The Committee further enquired whether there is any evaluation by the American Academy of Aesthetic Medicines for successful completion of level I & II of Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines, to which she stated that there is no formal evaluation and the Academy granted level II on the bases of six months' experience certificate submitted by her. The Committee further enquired the Respondent doctor that whether she has the course work of Diploma in Aesthetic Medicines, to which she stated that she has all the course work and will submit the same.
14. The Disciplinary Committee enquired regarding her diploma done in Cardiff, to which she stated that she has done D Derm from Cardiff. She further stated that it was one year course which comprises of basic dermatology and small portion also involves advanced dermatology. The

Committee enquired whether she attended classes in Cardiff for the diploma, to which she stated that the study was online but she went to Cardiff for the exam. The Committee further enquired whether the procedures like Botox, Chemical peel, laser were included in the syllabus of diploma, to which she stated there was a small chapter on these topics.

15. The Disciplinary Committee enquired that what would she prescribe in emergency in case a patient develops skin irritation (burn) during aesthetic procedure, to which she responded that she would prescribe antibiotic with a mixture of steroids. She further stated that the lasers she is using is of very advanced technology and normally no such incident happened. The person doing such laser procedure is properly trained.
16. The Committee further enquired from Respondent Dr. Shumaila Qasim Khan that what would be the course of treatment she would follow for a reaction of Botox, to which she stated that she has crash trolley which has BP apparatus, Stethoscope, Adrenaline, aspirin etc. The Committee further enquired that whether she has done any certification course of Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), to which she replied that she has not done it yet, however she will do these certifications without any further delay.
17. The Disciplinary Committee directed Respondent Dr. Shumaila Qasim Khan to remove words, titles such as consultant, dermatologist used and advertised with her name on her prescription pad, visiting card, different websites and social media sites and submit a compliance report within 2 days in this regard.

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

18. It is pertinent to mention here that 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.

19. 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 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 proceeded to issue show cause notice based on sufficient information available to it and submission of a complaint.

20. As per available record the Respondent doctor is practicing at clinic Dermalase at House No. A-103 Main Sumbal Road, F-10/1, Islamabad and have published information and represented herself as dermatologist on www.drsumaila.com and social media networking accounts such as, <http://www.instagram.com/dr.shumailakhan/?hl=en>. in the following manner:

Dr. Shumaila Khan (Dermatologist & Consultant Aesthetic Physician);
Diploma in Dermatology (D. Derm)

21. The Committee has noted that the Respondent doctor in her written reply and during the hearing took the stance that she is practicing as an aesthetic physician at her clinic. She has submitted following academic qualifications certificates/diplomas which she has attained in her career, to justify her ability to undertake aesthetic procedures:

- a) MBBS, Baqai Medical College, Karachi, Pakistan. 2004.
- b) PG Dip Derm, Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales, UK, 2010.
- c) Certification in Aesthetic Medicine, American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine, UAE.
- d) Different certificates of attendance of short workshops/training in aesthetic medicines

22. Based on her diploma and certification in aesthetic medicines, she was enquired about training experience which she has stated that for level I of Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines the required training is three days and the that training was arranged in a hotel and not in hospital. During hearing the Committee further enquired whether there is any evaluation by the American Academy of Aesthetic Medicines for successful completion of level I & II of Diploma of Aesthetic Medicines, to which she stated that there is no formal evaluation and the Academy granted level II on the bases of six months' experience certificate submitted by her. Regarding her diploma

done in Cardiff, the Respondent doctor clarified that it was an online program for one year course which comprises of basic dermatology and small portion also involves advanced dermatology.

23. It is also important to mention here that 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 (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. ...”

Furthermore, Sub-section (13) provides:

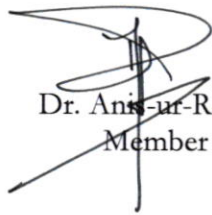
(6) No registered licensee shall use or publish in any manner whatsoever any title, description or symbol indicating or intended to lead persons to infer that he possesses any additional or other professional qualification unless the same has been duly recognized and registered on his licence by the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

24. 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.

25. 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 etc., laser treatments, hair transplant etc. On the other hand, Aesthetic Medicine also includes surgical or reconstructive procedures which requires qualified surgeons and specialists.
26. 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.


27. 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.
28. The Disciplinary Committee has further noted that Respondent Dr. Shumaila Qasim Khan submitted a letter on 26.01.2022 wherein she stated that the 'Dermatologist/ consultant/ specialist' have been removed from her official website i.e. www.drshumailakhan.com. She further submitted that she has also sent emails to www.oladoc.com/pakistan, www.marham.pk and www.health.hamariweb.com for removal of word 'Dermatologist/ consultant/ specialist' used with her name. The said information has been verified.
29. 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. Shumaila Qasim Khan, the Committee has decided not to impose any penalty on the Respondent doctor. However, the Respondent is directed to immediately ensure that she does not in any manner use the terms 'dermatologist', 'consultant' or 'specialist' to represent herself and if any third party has without her consent done so to initiate appropriate steps to have it corrected on an immediate basis. Failure to do so will result in action being taken against the Respondent for misrepresenting her credentials.



Dr. Anis-ur-Rehman
Member



Dr. Asif Loya
Member



Muhammad Ali Raza
Chairman

28 February, 2022