

## Obituary: Prof. A. Samad Shera



Prof. A. Samad Shera  
(1934–2020)

It is with profound sadness that I write this obituary about my good friend for several decades, Prof. Samad Shera. Prof. Shera was a doyen in the field of diabetes and also a much respected clinician, academician, administrator, and leader in the field of Diabetology. He is one of the few from South Asia who have held the position of Honorary President of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF).

Prof. Abdus Samad Shera was born on December 29, 1934, in Alwar, British India. He migrated with his family to Pakistan in 1947, where they rebuilt their life in Hyderabad, Sindh. As a child and young man, Samad spent a lot of time with his father, who was well versed in religion, poetry, world affairs, and history. A lot of his personal interests evolved directly from his close rapport with his father. He joined Liaquat Medical College in Hyderabad, where he completed his MBBS in 1957. He then decided to proceed to the United Kingdom in 1959, where he worked mainly in the South of England, and later in Kent. He received his MRCP in 1964. In 1965, he married Noorjahan, who remained his life partner and biggest support throughout his life. They both returned

to Pakistan in 1967, where they started their professional careers with their young family. He joined SESSI Hospital in Karachi, where he worked as a Medical Superintendent and Consultant Physician until his retirement. Simultaneously, he also built up his private practice as a Diabetologist.

Prof. Shera assumed the role of the Secretary General of the Diabetic Association of Pakistan, where he worked to promote a better understanding of diabetes prevalence, prevention, and management in providers and public, throughout the country. This position was a voluntary role, which he remained committed to, for over four decades. Few people know that he raised funds through both personal and professional networks to provide free insulin and extended care to those who could afford neither. In particular, Noorjahan and Samad provided insulin to women with gestational diabetes through personal funds.

Prof. Shera's affiliation with the IDF dates back to 1982, when he initially participated in the Nairobi IDF World Congress. Subsequently, he was elected as a Vice President of IDF in 1985, and finally rose, to become the Honorary President, a position that he held until his demise. His affiliation with IDF meant a lot to him, and he, in turn, continued to advise and guide several generations of colleagues.

Prof. Samad Shera also served as the Head of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for "Treatment, Education and Research in Diabetes and Diabetic Pregnancies" in Pakistan and was involved with numerous WHO programs. He served as the Chairman of the IDF Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region Diabetes Guidelines Committee. He also served as the National Coordinator for Diabetes Control Programme.

Prof. Samad Shera traveled all over the globe delivering lectures and chairing sessions on diabetes and was a much sought-after speaker.

Prof. Samad Shera played a key role in formulating national and international diabetes policies. He authored several books and articles in English and in Urdu. He was also Chief Editor of *Diabetes Digest*, a monthly scientific publication of the Diabetic Association of Pakistan.

In recognition of his services in the field of diabetes and medicine, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan conferred on Prof. Samad Shera, the prestigious civil awards of "Sitara-e-Imtiaz" (Star of Distinction) and "Tamgha-e-Imtiaz" (Medal of Distinction).

Prof. Samad Shera was the Founding President of the Diabetes in Asia Study Group (DASG), which owed its origin, growth, and sustenance to his personal charisma. Always positive in

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his approach, Prof. Shera won the love and affection of all the member countries that are associated with DASG. Under his able guidance, the DASG grew from strength to strength and several conferences of DASG were held successfully.

We are proud to state that the *Journal of Diabetology* was established under the auspices of DASG with the support and blessings of Prof. Samad Shera. On behalf of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Diabetology* and all the members of DASG, I salute this pioneer in Diabetology, who was also a statesman and above all, a great human being.

May his soul rest in peace.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

#### Viswanathan Mohan

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