

Historical Perspectives

Pioneers of Paediatrics in Sudan: Professor Mahmoud Mohamed Hassan

FRCP (Edinburgh), FRCP (Glasgow), FAAP

Place of birth: Khartoum North. He is the brother of Ustaz Mustafa Abu Sharaf, the famous education man.

Graduated from University of Khartoum (U of K) in 1946

After working as a medical officer in many parts of Sudan, including the South, he went to U K in 1951 for post graduate studies. There, he obtained the following qualifications: DCH (London) 1952, MRCP (Glasgow) 1957, and MRCP (Edinburgh) 1958. He was the first qualified Sudanese paediatrician to take over the headships of Paediatric Unit at Khartoum Civil Hospital (renamed Khartoum Teaching Hospital) in 1958. He was also the first Sudanese doctor to obtain a post graduate MD from University of Khartoum in 1965 and his thesis was on "Genetic Diseases in Sudanese Children" [1].

He was awarded FRCP (Edinburgh), FRCP (Glasgow) and also fellowship of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1967, 1968 and 1972, respectively. During his stay in Sudan, he published more than 40 papers in international journals and 24 in local journals. He was pioneer in describing many genetic disorders for the first time in Africa and Arab World including vitamin D dependent type 2 rickets, hemoglobinopathies, phenylketonurea, Hartnup disease and even Down syndrome. His report on Down syndrome [1] came

3 years before the association of this disorder with a chromosomal abnormality was demonstrated by Lejeune et al [2]. It is noteworthy that his description of a Sudanese family with 5 children who had vitamin D dependent type 2 rickets preceded the first description of the disease worldwide by one year [3]. He contributed remarkably to teaching the undergraduates and postgraduate students including establishing Sudan Master in Paediatrics and Child Health (MPCH) which started in 1977 and was later renamed Clinical MD in Paediatrics and Child Health (Photo).

He was the first president of the Sudanese Association of Paediatricians (SAP), the first Chief Paediatrician for the Sudan Ministry of Health, and first Chief Editor of Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics (SJP). He also held many international posts including Visiting Professor to Makerere University Uganda, WHO Consultant, and founding member of the International Nutrition Society. He migrated to Saudi Arabia in the early eighties where he worked as Professor and Head, Department of Pediatrics at King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah before his retirement. He died in 2007.

Professor Mohamed Ahmed Abdullah

President, Sudanese Association of Paediatricians

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2. Lejeune J, Gauthier M, Turpin R. Les chromosomes humains en culture de tissus. Acad Sci 1959; 248:602
3. Salih MAM. Genetic Disorders in Sudan. In: Teebi AS, ed. Genetic Disorders Among Arab Populations (2nd ed). New York: Springer, 2010; 575-611.
4. Available at: <http://www.friendsofvellore.org/uploads/1/9/9/2/199259/jkgwfuneraltribute.pdf>. Accessed September 7, 2011.
5. Available at: <http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/publications/obituaries/2010/hendrickse.php>. Accessed September 7, 2011.
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Photo: The first batch enrolled for the Master in Paediatrics and Child Health (U of K) after the final examination (February 1980). The Examiners are in the first row and include the Late Prof Mahmoud Mohamed Hassan (third from left); Dr Osman Awad Al Karim (second from left); Prof Gaafar Ibn Oaf Suliman (first from right, Ex-President of SAP, founder of Gaafar Ibn Oaf Children's Hospital, and current Member of SJP Editorial Board), Prof Hafiz Elshazali (second from right, Ex-President of SAP and current Member of SJP Editorial Board); the Late Professor John K G Webb (third from right, External Examiner, University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne [4]), the Late Professor Ralph G Hendrickse (fourth from right, External Examiner, University of Liverpool and former Editor-in-Chief of the Annals of Tropical Paediatrics [5]), Prof Mohamed Ibrahim A Omer (fifth from right, Convenor of MPCH Board, Ex-President of SAP, and former Editor-in-Chief of the Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics [SJP]). The students are in the second and third rows and include Prof Mustafa Abdalla M Salih (second row, second from

right, former SPJ Editor and current SJP International Editor; External Examiner for the last batch of the U of K Clinical MD in Paediatrics and Child Health, October 2008); Prof Mabyoa A Mustafa (second row, third from left, Ex- President of SAP and current Member of SJP Editorial Board); Dr Eltahir Medani Elshibly (second row, sixth from left, former Member of SJP Editorial Board); and Prof Hassan Mohammed Ahmed (third row, fourth from left, current Member of SJP Editorial Board). The occasion was also attended by the Late Prof Saad Ahmed Ibrahim (first row, fourth from left, Dean Faculty of Medicine, U of K); Prof Abdel Rahman M Musa (last row, first from left, Head Department of Medicine and later Dean Faculty of Medicine, U of K); and the Late Prof Omer Belail (first row, fifth from left, Director of the Postgraduate Medical Studies Board, one of the pioneers of renal transplant surgery in the Arab World [6], first Secretary General of the Arab Board for Medical Specializations in Damascus; and later the Vice Chancellor of the University of Khartoum).