

UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS IN KENYA

Aga Khan University Hospital

According to the African Medical and Research Foundation, the Government of Kenya pays for about a half of the healthcare services accessed by Kenyan citizens.(1) Consequently, private hospitals are filling a gap, and providing healthcare services for Kenyans who are accessing healthcare and can afford treatment. One such private hospital is Aga Khan University Hospital, which is part of Aga Khan Health Services, which is an organization providing community health programs in Kenya.

Aga Khan Health Services is a part of the Aga Khan Development Network. The network was founded and guided by Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, and consists of a group of development agencies including health and education organizations. Aga Khan Health Services works closely with the Aga Khan Foundation and with Aga Khan University to provide primary healthcare, specialized medical care, and building an effective healthcare system in Kenya. Unless stated otherwise, the information in this article came from the Aga Khan Hospital website.(2)

Aga Khan Health Services identify their major initiatives as:

- Assisting communities to develop, manage, and sustain the healthcare they need
- Providing accessible medical care in modern, efficient, and cost-effective facilities
- Working in partnership with other agencies in the development of communities and the enhancement of their health
- Educating health professionals including physicians and nurses
- Conducting research relevant to environments in which Aga Khan Health Services institutions exist.
- Contributing to the development of national and international health policy

Aga Khan Health Services community health programs focused on providing healthcare to vulnerable groups, such as young children and women of child-bearing age, which is important in Kenya, where 15% of women between 15 and 40 die during childbirth.(1,2) Aga Khan Health Services are funded, as are other agencies in the network, through local fees for services, community support, and contributions from private donors, and by the Aga Khan.(2)

The Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi is one of 9 hospitals of Aga Khan Health Services. The Hospital was established 1958 as a private, not-for-profit facility that gives ambulatory care, critical care, highly specialized medical care. It is a teaching and research facility with a 25-bed maternity ward, a nursery for 30 newborns, a 24-bed childrens ward, it has 73 surgical beds, a 33-bed general ward, an

emergency room with 6 observation beds and 15 examination rooms, it has an 8-bed intensive care unit, 6-bed high dependency unit. A hospital medical team includes resident physicians, credentialed specialty physicians, and nursing staff.

The Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi has adopted International Standards and Working Practices, and was the first hospital in Eastern Africa to receive ISO 9001:2000 Certification for compliance to the International Quality Assurance standards in all clinical, diagnostic, administration, and support services. In addition, Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi Maternity Services are accredited by the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynecology of United Kingdom. In order to ensure that clinical tests conducted by Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi laboratory meet international standards, samples of their results are sent to the National External Quality Assurance Scheme for assessment.(3)

Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi is a teaching hospital. It offers a Conversion Diploma Program for Kenya Enrolled Community Health Nurses, which allows practicing nurses to upgrade their skills in order to become eligible for registration as Kenya Registered Community Health Nurses. This hospital also runs a continuing medical education program for physicians.

The goal stated by the Aga Khan quoted on the website is "... to invest in medical education, and health care facilities, to enable the delivery of patient care to international standards in a wider spectrum of medical specialties". The Aga Khan invested USD30 million in construction of a brand new facility, which will house a new comprehensive Cardiology and Oncology programs. To support these new programs an interventional Cardiology program and Nuclear Medicine program was started in 2007 with the assistance of the University of Alberta to and Capital Health in Canada.(3)

Macharia Waruingi MD, DHA, worked as a physician in the emergency intensive care unit of Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi, in the 1990s before working at Nairobi Hospital. During an interview, Dr Waruingi shared his opinion that the efficiency of care and self-sustainability achieved by Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi comes from a good organizational model of Aga Khan Health Services, and from a commitment to the quality of care.

MJoTA Publisher Professor Wanjiru Akinyi Waruingi visited the Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi in August 2008. She learned that in 2010 the Aga Khan Hospital plans to start training medical students.

Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi commitment to education is demonstrated by continuously developing programs. The first educational program for

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nurses started in 1980s, and then the Continuing Medical Education Program for physicians and the internship for graduate medical students began in 1990s. The internship at Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi became a big step in health education: before that, internship was allowed only in public hospitals. Because the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi has high standards of medical care, the internship gives graduate medical students a better concept of a quality in medical care.

Aga Khan University hospital in Nairobi cares equally well for patients who are poor or wealthy. This hospital treats patients of all faiths. It is, however, a hospital of the Ishmaelite community.

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Nairobi center, pictures below and on following page. Photos taken by Editor-in-Chief.



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