

**M. Muzaffar Mir, PhD**  
**Professor of Biochemistry**  
**Sheri-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences**  
**Srinagar, India**

**Q. Briefly tell us about your education and career background.**

**A.** Well, I did my Bachelors with Chemistry and Biology as main subjects in 1980 and obtained my Masters degree in Biochemistry from the University of Kashmir in 1983. I pursued my research work and got M Phil {Biochemistry} in 1986 and PhD {Biochemistry} in 1989 from Faculty of Medicine, Aligarh Muslim University, and Aligarh India. Thereafter, I attended many training programs and workshops in Laboratory Medicine and molecular biology. I joined the Clinical Biochemistry



**M. Muzaffar Mir (right)**

Department at Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, SKIMS Srinagar [J&K], India in the early-90s as Assistant Professor. I worked in different capacities and became Head of the Clinical Biochemistry department in 2001. Currently, I am a visiting Professor of Biochemistry in AlJouf University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Q. What made you decide on a career in laboratory medicine?**

**A.** To be honest it was more of a chance than a choice. Biochemistry was still an emerging science in my country in early-80s and attracted many young people to select it as a future academic line. My research work was more oriented towards clinical chemistry and I developed a taste for the specialty. After my doctorate, I was fortunate to get a faculty position at SKIMS. The Kashmir valley was passing through turbulent times at that time and not many people were willing to work under trying circumstances. I remained and got engrossed in my work which involved supervision of the clinical chemistry laboratory services including an emergency lab which runs 24 hours. I was successful to a large extent and enjoyed my work. We provided all routine and some specialized clinical chemistry investigations including blood gas and electrolyte analyses on 24 hour basis. In addition I was engaged in teaching of MBBS, BSc and MSc Medical Lab Technology students.

**Q. What areas of laboratory medicine do you specialize in and what initiated your interest in those areas?**

**A.** I have been involved in routine and specialized clinical chemistry including diagnostic enzymology, metabolic screening, lipid profile and critical care investigations like electrolyte and blood gas assays. These investigations have profound role in the diagnosis and prognosis of diseases. The fact that clinical chemistry is so important in both health and disease has fascinated me much.

**Q. What are some of the most rewarding and/or challenging moments of your career?**

**A.** There are many which I would like to share with you and my friends. I got involved in the field of laboratory medicine at the time when my people in Kashmir were in dire need. There was political turmoil in the early-90s and all facets of life, including healthcare, were in shambles. I played my part in running and streamlining the clinical chemistry services in the premier healthcare facility in Kashmir, SKIMS, at the time when it was most needed with full cooperation of my colleagues. This was the most challenging period in my career and gave a lot of satisfaction to me. In 1998, I was recognized as a guide for PhD which gave me an opportunity to supervise PhD students and carry forward my research interests and our research work in the area of cancer biology and signal transduction. Our research work received good recognition and was published in reputable and indexed international journals.

I received many local and international awards. In 2004, I received a travel grant from APCCB and attended the annual meeting at Perth Australia. I was given Gallwas membership grant of AACC in 2005 which got extended in 2009 and also received international travel grant from AACC for 2008. This provided me an opportunity to attend the AACC Annual Meeting in Washington, DC and interact with the leaders in the field and share my work with them and carry home many new ideas and immense confidence. AACC membership provides me many incentives including free access to the prestigious journal *Clinical Chemistry*. Besides I received many research grants from national funding agencies to carry out my research work.

**Q. What do you see as the challenges facing laboratory medicine in your country?**

**A.** In a developing country like India, laboratory medicine still faces many challenges which include the paucity of basic and critical care investigative back up in the rural areas. The rigorous quality assurance in big government hospitals and private laboratories has yet to be fully implemented.

**Q. Other than AACC, with what other professional organizations are you involved?**

**A.** I am a life member of the Association of Clinical Biochemists of India and Immunology Society of India.

**Q. What advice do have for anyone wanting to get involved in AACC?**

**A.** I consider Joining AACC a landmark in the career of a laboratory professional. It is an opportunity to further one's domain in the field of laboratory medicine. AACC offers many philanthropic incentives for those lab professionals living and working in the developing countries. Attending AACC annual meetings is a bundle of academics, social networking and fun. Long Live AACC!

**Q. Finally, and on a lighter note, what would recommend that a visitor to India do or see, and why?**

**A.** Yes, of course. I would invite one and all to visit India which is a symbol of plural cultures and a great civilization. There are plenty of historic and tourist places. Kashmir is a great tourist attraction and every year lots of people from all parts of the globe visit. Kashmir is a very beautiful place known for its landscapes, fresh flowing waters and trekking areas. Mesmerized by its natural beauty, a poet rightly said "if there is a heaven on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here". India on the whole has plenty of famous tourist destinations, including the Taj Mahal in Agra (a wonder of the world), the backwaters of Kerala, the fine beaches of Goa and Tamil Nadu, the breathtaking beauty of Andaman Nicobar islands, historic Ajanta and Elora caves, the Temples of Khajuraho, the historical palaces of Mysore and Rajasthan, Himalayan peaks full of adventure, and much more.