

SIH'HEE UDHARES

AEH NEWSLETTER | MONTHLY EDITION

Advancing

Cardiac Care
in the South

**FIRST MEDICAL
INTERNSHIP**

Graduation

Occupational Therapy
Listening to
Autistic Voices

VOICES OF OUR INTERNS

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO: A NEW YEAR OF COMMITMENT, INNOVATION, AND CARE

The graduation of the first batch of medical interns from Addu Equatorial Hospital represents a defining milestone in our institution's journey. As the first internship programme conducted at AEH reaches completion, we celebrate not only the achievements of four outstanding young doctors but also the realization of a vision to contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation's healthcare workforce.

This inaugural cohort has demonstrated dedication, resilience, and a commitment to excellence throughout their training. Their successful completion of the programme reflects the effort they have invested in their professional growth and their readiness to take on the responsibilities of medical practice. As they move forward in their careers, we extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes for continued success and fulfillment in serving patients and communities.



DR. AHMED ADEEL NASEER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

This achievement is also a testament to the collective efforts of many individuals who have contributed to the programme's success. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our consultants, specialists, supervisors, and mentors who generously shared their expertise, guided our interns, and helped create a rich learning environment. Their dedication to teaching and professional development has been invaluable.

I also wish to thank our HODs for their vision and unwavering support in establishing and advancing this important programme. Their commitment to strengthening healthcare services and medical education has enabled AEH to take this significant step forward.

A special note of appreciation goes to our Internship Director, Dr. Mahmooh, whose leadership, dedication, and tireless efforts were instrumental in building and successfully implementing this programme. The strong foundation established through their work will continue to benefit future generations of interns at AEH.

As we celebrate this historic first, we also look ahead with confidence. The graduation of our inaugural internship batch marks the beginning of a proud tradition at Addu Equatorial Hospital, one that will continue to shape future doctors and strengthen healthcare services in our community.

To our graduating interns, congratulations on this important achievement. May your careers be guided by compassion, integrity, and a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr. Adeel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

SPEECH GIVEN BY AEH CEO AT THE OPENING OF PATIENT SAFETY CHAMPIONS LEADERSHIP TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) ON 12TH JULY 2026

Healthcare organizations invest significant resources in policies, procedures, technologies, and accreditation standards to ensure patient safety. While these elements are essential, they alone cannot create a truly safe hospital. The foundation of patient safety lies in the mindset of the people who deliver care every day. A positive mindset influences how healthcare professionals communicate, respond to challenges, address risks, and work together to protect patients. The journey toward a safer hospital begins not with a policy, but with a shared commitment to placing patients at the center of every decision.

At the heart of patient safety is a simple but powerful question: Are our systems designed around the convenience of the hospital or around the safety and needs of our patients? This question challenges healthcare leaders and staff to critically examine existing processes and practices. Hospitals are often busy environments where efficiency, resource constraints, and operational pressures compete for attention. However, when systems prioritize convenience over patient needs, safety can be compromised. Every policy, workflow, and clinical process should ultimately serve the primary purpose of delivering safe, timely, and high-quality care to patients.

One of the most important principles of patient safety is that timely care is safe care. Delays in healthcare are not merely operational issues; they can directly affect patient outcomes. A delay in assessment may postpone the diagnosis of a serious condition. A delay in treatment can lead to deterioration in a patient's health status. Similarly, delays in specialist responses can prevent timely interventions that could significantly improve outcomes. For patients and families, every minute can matter. Therefore, healthcare organizations must recognize avoidable delays as patient safety concerns and address them with urgency and accountability.

Creating a safer hospital also requires a commitment to measuring performance. Improvement is only possible when organizations understand where they stand and where risks exist. Hospitals should focus on monitoring indicators that truly matter to patient safety. These include emergency room waiting and response times, specialist response times, medication incidents, healthcare-associated infections, patient falls, pressure injuries, and reports of incidents or near misses. By continuously measuring these areas, healthcare leaders can identify trends, detect potential risks, and implement targeted improvements. Effective measurement transforms safety from an abstract goal into a measurable and manageable responsibility.

However, data and metrics alone are not enough. Behind every safety outcome is a culture shaped by attitudes and behaviors. The mindset of healthcare professionals determines how they respond to challenges and opportunities for improvement. A positive safety culture requires a shift from blame to learning, from silence to speaking up, from individual responsibilities to shared ownership, from accepting delays to valuing urgency, and from defensiveness to continuous improvement. Such shifts encourage openness and transparency, enabling organizations to learn from mistakes rather than hide them. When staff feel safe to raise concerns and report incidents, hospitals gain valuable opportunities to improve systems before patients are harmed.

Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering this culture. Patient safety does not belong solely to a quality department, a committee, or a checklist. It is reflected in everyday interactions, decisions, and actions across the organization. Leaders set the tone by demonstrating that safety is a core value rather than a regulatory requirement. They create environments where questions are welcomed, concerns are heard, and learning is encouraged. By consistently prioritizing patient safety in decisions and communications, leaders inspire staff to adopt the same commitment and mindset.

Building a safe hospital requires moving from mindset to action. A positive mindset must translate into behaviors that strengthen patient care. Hospitals should strive to create environments where concerns are addressed promptly, delays are challenged, incidents become opportunities for learning, and every employee feels responsible for safeguarding patients. Whether someone works at the bedside, in administration, or in support services, each individual contributes to the safety of the healthcare system. Patient safety becomes sustainable when ownership is shared across the entire organization.

Ultimately, patient safety is not a destination but a continuous journey of improvement. Safe hospitals are built through vigilance, teamwork, learning, and a relentless focus on patient needs. By embracing a positive mindset and fostering a culture of accountability, transparency, and shared responsibility, healthcare organizations can create environments where patients receive safer, more reliable care. The message is clear: patient safety begins with leadership, grows through culture, and succeeds when every person commits to making safety a daily priority.

Voices of Our First Medical Interns



Being part of the very first internship programme in AEH was a unique opportunity and i would say that it's been an honour to be a part of it.

Since the first day, this programme has been very promising with it's structure and guided learning.

one of the greatest strength of this programme is the amount of time we get to be under the direct guidance of the consultants during all of our rotations which I don't see in any other internship program. .

During the ward based rotations, our medical officers and nurses, kindly and encouragingly guided us through the duties.

I believe this year has been a smooth transition point between our medical school knowledge and how to apply that practically to the real world especially to our Maldivian community.

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank all the consultants, medical officers, nurses, every member of the healthcare team and the community of addu, who invested their time, patience, trusted us and encouraged us in our learning process.

As I progress in my career, I would always look back on this year as I am truly grateful to AEH for giving me this opportunity.



**DR. FATHMATH ANNAN
IMTHIYAZ**



I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to do my internship at AEH.

It was a very guided and structured program where we had constant guidance from consultants. I was able to ask questions and learn without feeling judged as the consultants were not only enthusiastic teachers, but supportive and compassionate as well.

Moreover the medical officers were extremely supportive- they entrusted us with tasks, gave us responsibilities and pushed us to do better.

And ofcourse, the nursing teams in each department- they taught us so much with so much patience. Things they could have done in an instant, they guided us through it taking their time.

I am truly grateful to have been able to work alongside such wonderful consultants, medical officers, nurses and other healthcare staff. Thank you for everything



**DR. FATHMATH RIFA
RASHEED**

Voices of Our First Medical Interns



Before coming to AEH, I had no idea what the internship here would be like. I had little understanding of how different it would be in a resource-limited setting outside the capital. That was one of the main reasons I chose to come here, to experience and learn what it is like to work in the peripheries. It was a bold decision to leave everything behind and come here, not knowing where the journey would take me. However, once I started and progressed through the year, I became confident that choosing AEH was one of the best academic decisions I had made. It provided an exceptional learning opportunity, allowing me to work closely with my mentors while benefiting from their constant guidance and supervision.



**DR. IBRAHIM AAKIF
AHMED**



DR. AMINATH RUZAIN



Working at Addu Equatorial Hospital has been an incredibly valuable experience. AEH provided a supportive learning environment, clinical experience, dedicated mentors, and countless opportunities to help me grow both professionally and personally.

I would like to thank the management, consultants, medical officers, nurses and everyone else who helped me through this journey.

I'm truly thankful for the opportunities and experiences AEH has given me.



From Our Physiotherapy Interns

In Their Own Words

My internship at Addu Equatorial Hospital was an excellent learning experience. The Clinical Educators were supportive, approachable, and provided valuable guidance throughout my placement. I had the opportunity to improve my clinical assessment, treatment planning, and communication skills while working with a variety of patients. The learning environment was welcoming and professional, which helped me gain confidence in my abilities. Overall, I am very grateful for this opportunity and would highly recommend this internship to future students. Thank you for your guidance and support.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone at AEH for providing me with such a rewarding and enriching internship experience.

-Khadheeja Fazeen (Bachelor's of physiotherapy,MNU)-

AEH was a meaningful and rewarding experience, marking the final clinical placement of my Bachelor of Physiotherapy programme. Throughout this posting, I gained valuable hands on experience managing a variety of conditions while strengthening my clinical reasoning, practical skills, and confidence.

I am sincerely grateful to the Physiotherapy department and my clinical educators for their continuous guidance, encouragement, and support. Their patience, knowledge, and willingness to teach made this placement both enjoyable and enriching.

Thank you to the AEH management and the entire Physiotherapy Department for providing such a positive learning environment. I truly appreciate this opportunity and would highly recommend AEH to future physiotherapy students.

-Fathimath Saifa (Bachelor's of physiotherapy,MNU)-

From Our Physiotherapy Interns

In Their Own Words



My internship at Addu Equatorial Hospital (AEH) was one of the most valuable learning experiences of my final year. My clinical educators were supportive, kind, patient, and always willing to share their knowledge. They encouraged me to remain confident, independent, and committed to continuous learning.

During the internship, I gained experience in observing, assessing, and treating a wide range of musculoskeletal, neurological, pediatric, cardiopulmonary, geriatric, and sports-related conditions. I also had the opportunity to work with ward and ICU patients, which further strengthened my clinical skills and confidence.

I am truly grateful for this rewarding opportunity and would highly recommend AEH to future physiotherapy students. I also hope to see the physiotherapy department expanded in the future to better accommodate the growing patient load and demand.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the AEH management, the Physiotherapy Department, the Head of Department, and my beloved clinical educators for their guidance, encouragement, and support throughout my internship.

-Ahmed Shifaan (Bachelor's of physiotherapy,MNU)-





CELEBRATING THE GRADUATION OF THE FIRST MEDICAL INTERNSHIP COHORT AT AEH

Addu Equatorial Hospital proudly celebrates a historic milestone with the graduation of the first cohort of the Medical Internship Program. This achievement marks an important step in the hospital's ongoing commitment to developing the next generation of competent, compassionate, and professional physicians in the Maldives.

The Medical Internship Program was established to provide newly graduated doctors with structured clinical training that bridges the transition from medical school to independent medical practice. Designed in accordance with the standards of the Maldives Medical and Dental Council (MMDC), the program offers comprehensive exposure across the major clinical specialties while fostering professionalism, ethical practice, patient safety, and lifelong learning.

Over the past year, our interns have successfully completed rotations in Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry, Anaesthesia and Intensive Care, Orthopaedics, ENT, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Community Medicine, and Health Centre rotations. Alongside clinical training, they participated in academic teaching sessions, workplace-based assessments, portfolio development, and continuous professional evaluation.

Graduating our first cohort is more than the completion of a training program, it represents the successful establishment of a sustainable educational framework within Addu Equatorial Hospital. This accomplishment reflects the collective dedication of many individuals who have generously contributed their expertise, time, and commitment to advancing medical education at AEH.

On behalf of the Internship Unit, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Chief Executive Officer, Medical Director, hospital management, consultants, specialists, medical officers, nurses, allied health professionals, and administrative staff whose unwavering support has been instrumental in the success of this program.



**DR. MAHMOUD ABDELRAHEEM
ABDELSALHEEN**

(Medical Internship Director of AEH)

Their mentorship, guidance, and collaboration have created a learning environment where our interns have been able to grow both professionally and personally.

Most importantly, I congratulate our graduating interns. Throughout this challenging year, they have demonstrated resilience, professionalism, curiosity, and compassion. They have embraced every opportunity to learn, accepted constructive feedback, and continually worked to improve their clinical knowledge and skills. These qualities will serve them well throughout their medical careers.

As we celebrate this milestone, we also look ahead with optimism. Future cohorts will continue to benefit from the experience gained during this inaugural year, and we remain committed to continuously strengthening the internship program through innovation, quality improvement, and adherence to national standards.

The graduation of our first Medical Internship cohort is not only a proud moment for our graduates but also a significant milestone for Addu Equatorial Hospital. It reflects our vision of excellence in patient care, medical education, and professional development, and reinforces our role as a leading teaching institution dedicated to shaping the future of healthcare in the Maldives.

Congratulations to the graduates of our first Medical Internship cohort. We wish them every success as they continue their journey in the noble profession of medicine.





A MILESTONE FOR CARDIAC CARE IN THE SOUTH

By: Nishaaza Abdulla (Senior Healthcare Administrative Officer of AEH)

Addu Equatorial Hospital (AEH), in collaboration with the cardiac team from Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) and the National Centre for Cardiovascular Sciences, has successfully launched its Cardiac Implantable Electronic Device (CIED) Outpatient Clinic, bringing specialized follow-up care closer to patients in the southern region.

During the first clinic, six patients received device interrogation and programming, including four pacemakers, one Automated Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (AICD), and one Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy Defibrillator (CRT-D).

Among these patients, three travelled from nearby Fuvahmulah, reflecting the growing collaboration between healthcare providers in the southern region and paving the way for a stronger regional cardiac care network.

A CIED is a small electronic device implanted to help monitor and regulate the heart's rhythm. These devices support patients with heart rhythm disorders and heart failure by maintaining a normal heartbeat or delivering life-saving treatment when dangerous heart rhythms occur.

A pacemaker, the most commonly implanted CIED, is designed for people whose hearts beat too slowly or irregularly. It sends small electrical impulses to keep the heart beating at a healthy rate, helping reduce symptoms such as dizziness, fatigue, fainting, and shortness of breath while improving quality of life.



Regular follow-up is an essential part of living with a cardiac implantable device. During these appointments, specialists check the device's battery, confirm that it is functioning correctly, review recorded heart rhythm data, and adjust the settings when needed. Routine checks help detect potential problems early and allow the device to continue providing the support the patient needs.

Until now, many patients from the southern atolls had to travel to Malé for routine device checks. With the introduction of the CIED Outpatient Clinic at Addu Equatorial Hospital, patients can now receive these essential services closer to home, reducing travel and making timely follow-up care more accessible.

The launch of this service marks another important step in expanding specialized cardiac care in the south through the continued collaboration between Addu Equatorial Hospital, IGMH, and the National Centre for Cardiovascular Sciences.

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LISTENING TO AUTISTIC VOICES: A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

By: Navaa Waheed (Psychologist of AEH) & Fathimath Wijha (Assistant Counsellor of AEH)

When most people think about therapy for autistic children, they often imagine teaching new skills or helping children fit into the world around them. But what if one of the best ways to improve therapy is to ask autistic adults what they wish had been different when they were children?

A recent study by **Sterman and colleagues (2023)** did exactly that. Instead of asking only parents or professionals, the researchers spoke to autistic adults about what therapy should look like for autistic children. Their insights offer a fresh perspective that focuses less on changing the child and more on understanding and supporting them.

Autism Is a Difference, Not Something to "Fix"

One of the strongest messages from the study is that autism should not be viewed as something that needs to be corrected. Autistic adults described autism as a different way of experiencing the world rather than a defect or illness.

In the past, some therapy goals focused on helping children appear more "typical," such as encouraging constant eye contact or discouraging behaviours like hand flapping or fidgeting. While these changes may make a child appear to fit in, many autistic adults shared that constantly hiding their natural behaviours often can be exhausting and may affect self-esteem and mental health. Instead, they suggested that therapy should help children become confident, healthy, and successful as autistic individuals, rather than trying to make them appear less autistic.

Sometimes the Environment Needs to Change

Imagine trying to concentrate in a room where the lights are painfully bright, the noises are overwhelming, and your clothes feel uncomfortable. For many autistic people, everyday environments can feel this way.

The study encourages therapists and families to ask an important question:

"Can we change the environment instead of expecting the child to change?"

Rather than insisting a child tolerate an uncomfortable haircut or hair brushing, small adjustments can make a big difference. Giving choices, reducing sensory overload, taking breaks, or approaching tasks differently can help children participate without unnecessary distress.

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Sterman, J., Gustafson, E., Eisenmenger, L., Hamm, L., & Edwards, J. (2023). Autistic adult perspectives on occupational therapy for autistic children and youth. *OTJR: Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 43(2), 237–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15394492221103850>

The researchers also highlighted the value of **child-led, play-based therapy**, where children are encouraged to explore activities that match their interests. When children are engaged in something they enjoy, learning often happens more naturally.



Helping Children Find Their Voice

Perhaps the most powerful message from the study is the importance of teaching children that their voice matters. Autistic adults reflected on childhood experiences where they felt expected to comply, even when they were uncomfortable or overwhelmed. Many wished they had been encouraged to express their feelings, ask for help, or say "no" when something didn't feel right.

Occupational therapy can help build these lifelong skills by involving children in decisions about their therapy, asking for their consent, respecting their preferences, and adapting activities when needed. These experiences teach children that their thoughts and feelings are important and help build confidence, independence, and self-advocacy.

A Shift Towards Partnership

This research reminds us that the goal of therapy is not to create children who simply fit in, but to help them thrive in a way that respects who they are.

By listening to autistic adults, who have lived these experiences we gain valuable insights into how therapy can better support autistic children. Acceptance, flexibility, and respect for each child's individuality are becoming central to modern occupational therapy. Sometimes, the most meaningful question we can ask is not, "**How can we change this child?**" but rather, "**How can we better support this child to be themselves?**" That simple shift in perspective has the potential to make a lasting difference not only in therapy, but in homes, schools, and communities as well.

GOOD TEAMS ARGUE: THE ART OF DISAGREEING WELL

By: Mohamed Saain Ahmed (Senior Health Care Administration Officer of AEH)

A surprising truth from organisational research the best performing teams are not those with the fewest disagreements, but those that disagree well. Silence in a meeting is not harmony it is often unspoken frustration. Some of the world's most admired organisations have turned disagreement into a professional skill, and their findings apply as readily to a hospital corridor as to a boardroom.

What the Evidence Shows

• Google — Psychological Safety

In its two year internal study of 180 teams, Project Aristotle, Google found that the strongest predictor of team effectiveness was not talent, seniority, or resources it was psychological safety: the shared belief that one can speak up, question decisions, and admit mistakes without fear of embarrassment or punishment. Notably, the concept was first documented by Harvard's Professor Amy Edmondson through research conducted in hospital teams, where units that openly discussed errors learned faster and performed better

• Pixar: The Braintrust

Pixar attributes much of its creative success to the "Braintrust" a standing forum where directors receive candid, unfiltered feedback on works in progress. Its governing rule is that critique is directed at the work, never the person "this scene is unclear" is welcome personal criticism is not. The product improves the relationship survives.

• Amazon — Disagree and Commit

Amazon's leadership principles expect employees to respectfully challenge decisions they disagree with, before those decisions are made even when doing so is uncomfortable. Once a decision is taken, however, everyone commits to it wholly, including those who argued against it. Debate hard then row in the same direction.

• Aviation and Medicine — Speaking Up as a Safety System

After accident investigations revealed that junior crew members' silence contributed to fatal errors, the airline industry developed Crew Resource Management, which trains every crew member regardless of rank to voice concerns directly. This error management approach has since been formally adapted into healthcare, where hierarchy driven silence carries clinical risk. In a hospital, speaking up is not insubordination; it is a safety mechanism.

• Harvard — Hard on the Problem, Soft on the Person

The Harvard Negotiation Project's enduring principle is to separate the people from the problem: address the issue with full rigour while treating the individual with full respect.

Applying It at AEH

Disagreement at AEH is natural a ward needs an item urgently, stores require documentation, clinical and administrative priorities collide. This is not dysfunction, it is the normal condition of a working hospital. What distinguishes a professional team is how such moments are handled:

- **Disagree in the room, not in the corridor.** Raise concerns in the meeting, not in whispers afterwards.
- **Question the idea, never the intention.** Assume your colleague also wants what is best for the patient.
- **Once decided, commit collectively.** Yesterday's debate should not become today's resistance.
- **Speak up early and respectfully, regardless of rank.** A concern raised today is a crisis prevented tomorrow.

Every disagreement in this hospital ultimately resolves at the same point: the patient's bedside. When we disagree well, the patient wins.

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CARDIAC IMPLANTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE (CIED) FOLLOW-UP CLINIC.





**CARDIAC IMPLANTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE (CIED)
FOLLOW-UP CLINIC.**





CATHLAB 7TH CAMP





CATHLAB 7TH CAMP



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