

LIFELINE

Sania Nishtar



Sania Nishtar is a clinical cardiologist who works in the private sector in Islamabad, Pakistan, with a career focus on preventive

cardiology. She is founder and director of Heartfile, a non-profit organisation involved in pioneering work in cardiovascular-disease prevention in Pakistan. Heartfile targets the community and health professionals and its successful experiences are being replicated in other less-developed countries.

Who was your most influential teacher? Surprisingly enough it was my Golf instructor, who taught me the value of strategy, concentration, and recovery.

What research paper has had the most effect on your work? The Global Burden of Disease Study, which has been instrumental in steering my focus to the preventive rather than the curative approach in cardiovascular care in a developing world setting.

What would be your advice to a newly qualified doctor? Discover your work-related passions before you attempt to drive efforts with hard work.

How do you relax? At home with good music and the company of those I love after having met a pressing deadline at work.

What is the best piece of advice you have received and from whom? Discover your strengths, and work on them: my husband.

What part of your work gives you the most pleasure? To see my modest efforts translate into policy change.

What is the least enjoyable job you have ever had? My straight-jacketed public sector job as a cardiologist in a tertiary care setting in Pakistan with no room for initiative, growth, and innovation.

Where were you in your sibling order, and what did you gain or lose as a result? I was the second child, which taught me to give rather than take.

Describe your ethical outlook? I try hard to be God fearing and just.