

## CURRICULUM VITAE

# Pamela Hardy

The emergency care consultant's "life's too short" attitude has led to a varied career, spanning pre-hospital and emergency medicine

### Early life

I went to a comprehensive school on a council estate in Nottingham (above) where it wasn't really "the thing" to go to university. I was planning to do midwifery training when someone suggested I do medicine. I didn't get in first time round and had to re-sit my A levels. When I got my results, I ran down the road after my dad, who was on his way to work as a mechanic, to tell him. I've always had incredible support from my family.



### Air ambulance

When I was an emergency medicine registrar, patients started coming in by air ambulance. I had done some pre-hospital care courses and was about to sit the diploma in immediate care. The helicopter crew invited me to join them and I ended up doing informal shifts. In 2008 I started working for Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland Air Ambulance and I still come down from Scotland to do monthly shifts. We do anaesthesia at the roadside and surgical interventions, including opening the chest and amputations.



### Life's too short

I became an emergency medicine consultant but various life events, including a former partner being diagnosed with terminal cancer, led to my "life's too short" moment. I took a year's unpaid leave as there was no other way I could be a carer for him, but he died six days into my leave. For some time I had been threatening to escape to the far north of Scotland, although I knew nothing about it and no one there. I saw an advert for Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin and went for it.



### CAREER TIMELINE

**2017 to date** Co-vice chair, Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care

**2011 to date** Lead consultant in emergency medicine, Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin

**2008 to date** Clinical supervisor, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland Air Ambulance

**2003 to 2011** Consultant in emergency care, Chesterfield Royal Hospital

**2003 to 2005** Clinical director, East Midlands Ambulance Service

**2001 to 2003** Consultant in accident and emergency, King's Mill Hospital, Mansfield

**1996 to 2001** Emergency medicine training, Nottingham, Derby, Mansfield and Sheffield

**1983 to 1988** Sheffield University medical school

### Fat, wheezy child

When I moved here I intended to be a hermit and do what I wanted and nothing else. But I found a trail and a beach and finally realised a dream of being able to run 5 km and now have medals for 10 km runs. I was a fat, wheezy child and my PE teachers would never believe it! I love it here—the space, the scenery, the people.



### Department in disarray

When I came into this job, a review into the emergency department at Elgin, the country's smallest district general hospital, had described it as being in disarray. At that time, it was operating as an old fashioned casualty unit, led by GPs with specialty support. I set up a consultant led department from scratch. We see 25 000 patients a year, which is tiny compared with most other emergency departments, but we have the same pressures and congestion as other places.

### A privilege

When the search and rescue service (below) was still with the Royal Air Force (until 2015) I had the incredible experience of going out in a Sea King helicopter and seeing some amazing flying and rescue situations. I have winched in various settings, such as on Ben Nevis and onto a tiny boat in the North Sea. One afternoon I was winched off a mountain looking at the Great Glen. It was such a privilege to be able to experience that.



### Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care

The progress in the field of pre-hospital care over my career has been phenomenal—it's now a fully fledged subspecialty. I was one of the founder members of the faculty and we approached the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh to develop exams and set standards.



Saleyha Ahsan is a doctor working in A&E at Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital in Bangor. Born in Essex, she trained at Sandhurst and served in the British army in Bosnia, rising to the rank of captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Inspired by the work of doctors in conflict zones, she left the army in 2000 and trained as a doctor in Dundee while developing yet another career presenting television documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4. These include *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor*, as well as many reports from frontline trouble spots such as Syria, Libya, and Kashmir.

## BMJ CONFIDENTIAL

# Saleyha Ahsan

## Trust me, I'm an activist

### What was your earliest ambition?

To be an independent activist against injustice. This came from listening to my father's strong opinions against inequality and from my mother, whose advice remains, "Stand on your own two feet."

### What was your best career move?

Gaining a place at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In 1997, as a captain, I stood in a field hospital watching soldiers and doctors manage a Bosnian patient with a traumatic amputation. I was a non-clinical medical support officer with the Royal Army Medical Corps and at that moment I decided to retrain as a doctor.

### How is your work-life balance?

Er... it's a work-work-work balance: emergency medicine, humanitarian work, and media. I'm one of those folk whose work is life.

### How do you keep fit and healthy?

Jogging and yoga. Part of the reason I joined the army was because I loved the idea of a job where you had to go for a 7 am run.

### What single change would you like to see made to the NHS?

A unified, logical IT system that works between hospitals and trusts. If you want to centralise services, shouldn't the system follow patients around?

### What do you wish that you had known when you were younger?

Not everyone's on your side, so stand up for yourself.

### Do doctors get paid enough?

In my last London job I took home just over £2000 a month, couldn't afford a mortgage, and lived in one room in a shared flat—so, does that sound like enough? Nurses are appallingly paid, and cutting bursaries was cruel.

### To whom would you most like to apologise?

To my parents: my aim of being financially secure so that I could look after them comfortably in retirement was sacrificed for my medical career.

### Which living doctor do you most admire, and why?

So many. Pauline Cutting—I heard her report from Palestinian refugee camps under siege in Lebanon during the 1980s, and a seed was sown. And my sister, Saima Ahsan—a paediatric registrar in training who's worked her socks off.

### What unheralded change has made the most difference in your field?

Non-invasive ventilation.

### What new technology or development are you most looking forward to?

I most look forward to the end of Jeremy Hunt's hands on the NHS.

### What is your guiltiest pleasure?

Solo cinema trips.

### What personal ambition do you still have?

To be an integral part of the fight to save the NHS, involving political engagement.

### What is your pet hate?

My "big" hate is bullying—sadly, it exists in the NHS.

### Is the thought of retirement a dream or a nightmare?

There'll be no retirement—just more writing time.

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