

Obituary

Obituary: Prof. P. A. Mohammed KunjuMini S.¹¹Department of Pediatric Neurology, Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

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“To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.”

Thomas Campbell, “Hallowed Ground,”

In Loving Memory of a Remarkable Teacher, Physician,
and Human Being

With profound sadness and deep reverence, we remember Prof. P. A. Mohammed Kunju, a luminary in pediatric neurology whose life and work left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of knowing him. His passing on October 10, 2025, is a loss not only to his family, friends, and colleagues but also to generations of students, residents, and patients who were touched by his knowledge, compassion, and dedication.

Prof. Kunju embodied a rare blend of qualities—scholarly brilliance, clinical mastery, inspiring mentorship, professional integrity, inclusive leadership, and visionary purpose. A man of perseverance and quiet strength, he met every challenge with grace and efficiency.

After earning his MBBS from T.D. Medical College, Alapuzha, he completed DCH, MD (Pediatrics), and Doctorate in Neurology at the Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, followed by World Health Organization Fellowship in Pediatric Neurology at the University of Pittsburgh. Rising through the ranks from tutor to professor and head of pediatric neurology at SAT Hospital, he devoted his career to advancing medical education and child neuroscience in India.

From the beginning, his command of theory and clinical acumen was exceptional. Yet, what truly set him apart was his ability to make complex ideas clear, relevant, and inspiring. As a teacher, he awakened curiosity and fostered critical thinking. His demonstrations in pediatric neurological examination were legendary—combining precision with compassion, transforming anxious encounters into moments of trust for children. Students recall not only what he taught but how he taught—with patience, empathy, and joy.

As a mentor, he nurtured independence, discipline, and confidence. Many who now lead pediatric neurology units across India attribute their growth to his guidance. Even brief interactions with him left lasting impressions—his calm confidence and thoughtful counsel became a model for others to emulate.

Prof. Kunju's humility equaled his intellect. He listened patiently, spoke thoughtfully, and treated everyone—from junior students to senior colleagues—with the same respect. Whether in academic debate or casual conversation, he made others feel valued. His kindness and inclusiveness earned him both admiration and affection.

His academic contributions were far-reaching. Under his visionary leadership, the Department of Pediatric Neurology at Thiruvananthapuram achieved national recognition, with DM Pediatric Neurology formally instituted as a superspecialty under the NMC PG Regulations—laying the foundation for structured training programs across India. He also pioneered the Indian Academy of Pediatrics Fellowship and DrNB programs in pediatric neurology, authored numerous research papers, and contributed chapters to key textbooks. As Chief Editor of the IAP Textbook of Pediatric Neurology and PAM Kunju's Simplified Pediatric Neurology, he enriched the discipline with clarity and accessibility.

Beyond academics, he championed compassionate care. His collaboration with Pallium India introduced palliative services at SAT Hospital, reflecting his conviction that healing extends beyond cure.

A visionary leader, Prof. Kunju served as National Chairperson and Convenor of the Academy of Pediatric Neurology of India, President of the Kerala Association of Neurology, the Neurological Society of India (Kerala), Kerala State IAP, and the IAP Kerala Pediatric Neurology Subchapter. He organized numerous national and international congresses, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.



P. A. Mohammed Kunju

Address for correspondence
Mini S. Mini S., MD, DNB, DM
(Neurology), Fellowship (Epilepsy
& EEG), Professor, Department of
Pediatric Neurology, SAT
Hospital, Government Medical
College, Thiruvananthapuram,
Kerala, India
(e-mail: drmini70@yahoo.com).

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He was equally passionate about community awareness. He promoted understanding of epilepsy, ADHD, autism, dyslexia, headache, encephalitis, cerebral palsy, and movement disorders through public lectures, media, and outreach initiatives. During his tenure as Kerala IAP President, he conceptualized the short film *Mazhavillu* (Rainbow) to counter stigma surrounding neurological disorders. He also encouraged sports and wellness among professionals, believing that health and happiness sustain excellence.

For his outstanding service, Prof. Kunju received many honors: the Veena Kalra Lifetime Achievement Award from AOCN India, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Academy of Pediatric Neurology India, the Kerala State Best Doctor Award, and the Karma Ratna Award. He was also a distinguished Fellow of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (FIAP), Fellow of the Indian Academy of Neurology (FIAN), and Fellow of Royal College of Physician (FRCP).

Despite his many achievements, he remained grounded and humble. He found joy in family, friendships, and the growth of his students. A loving husband, devoted father, caring son, affectionate grandfather, and loyal brother, he

embodied strength tempered by gentleness, intellect guided by compassion.

What most defined Prof. Kunju was his seamless union of brilliance and humanity. He proved that excellence and empathy are not opposites but companions; that knowledge gains meaning only when used to serve and share; and that true greatness lies in touching lives with kindness. He was a teacher of rare caliber, a clinician of exceptional sensitivity, and above all, a human being of grace and dignity.

His legacy endures—in every student he mentored, every patient he healed, every colleague he inspired, and every life he uplifted. The institutions he built and the values he embodied will continue to guide pediatric neurology in India and beyond.

As we bid him farewell, we do so with gratitude—for his life, his service, and the light he brought into ours. He reminds us that greatness is not measured by rank or title but by compassion, balance, and love.

Forever in our hearts, his life and lessons will continue to guide generations to come.