

Meet Zahra, Maaz and Shaimaa: CSPA Contributors



Zahra Haq, Maaz Haq, Shaimaa Helal **Medical Students, Queen's University**

Our names are Zahra, Maaz and Shaimaa. We are a group of medical students at Queen's University, in our second and third years, who started the Muslim Medical Association of Queen's, a student-run group that helps advocate for Muslim students and patients. Through our time in medical school, we realized there was information lacking on common complaints that we had heard from family members and friends, and set out to do our own research. We began by creating sessions for our own classmates including one titled 'Dermatological Considerations for Muslim Patients.' Our work was recognized by one of our Dermatology professors, Dr. Yuka Asai, who helped connect us with the CSPA to share our research with patients and dermatologists nationally.

We worked with the CSPA to design a series of evidence-based infographics and articles to cover the unique needs of Muslim patients accessing dermatology, including hijab hair care, wudhu-pattern xerosis and maintaining modesty within the skin exam. We hope, through our involvement, to raise awareness surrounding common dermatological conditions experienced by Muslim patients, both to the Muslim community and healthcare community. We have heard our community members voice these concerns and wanted to provide them with the latest evidence regarding various treatment options.

The team at the CSPA has been incredibly supportive of our work. We have been so grateful to be able to bounce ideas back and forth and receive helpful feedback from licensed dermatologists. This has helped us improve our own understanding of the intersection of our faith and healthcare needs, and share this with our Canadian Muslim community. We are also grateful for the opportunity to refine our skills on patient advocacy and education, and connect with patients nationally.

To anyone considering joining the CSPA, we encourage you to just reach out! All the staff have been incredibly responsive. You do not need to have all the details ascertained, you will have an incredibly skilled team to support you in producing high quality content. This is a wonderful opportunity to refine your advocacy and patient education skills with a team of skilled experts in these two areas!