



# MOTHERS in MEDICINE

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## A mother's STRENGTH IN CARDIOLOGY

**In the demanding world of interventional cardiology, Dr Tunaggina Afrin Khan, a Consultant at Unico Hospitals, bridges a high-stakes environment with motherhood. With seventeen years of experience, she believes empathy and multitasking skills honed at home have made her a more effective clinician. Discover how maternal instincts drive medical excellence, innovation, and care.**

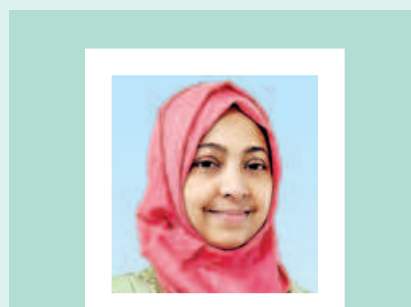
**The Daily Star (TDS):** What drew you to Cardiology, and how has your mission evolved since becoming a mother?

**Tunaggina Afrin Khan (TAK):** I always aspired to be a physician. When I completed my MBBS, interventional cardiology was advancing rapidly. The ability to take life-saving action felt thrilling. Motherhood gifted me multitasking skills and empathy towards my patients. Whether navigating chaos in the health sector or handling tough clinical circumstances, I have matured into a more resilient professional. Raising children has taught me that patience and perspective are vital in medical care.

**TDS:** How has motherhood changed the way you communicate regarding diagnoses?

**TAK:** Managing my children's needs while balancing professional pressures has given me a unique perspective. These experiences allow me to understand people's fears better. When I speak to a family now, I am not just a doctor; I am someone who understands the weight of responsibility and the depth of emotional concern and worry.

**T D S :**  
Cardiology



**DR TUNAGGINA AFRIN  
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Motherhood gave me the ability to multitask and made me more empathetic. It granted me the serenity to handle difficult clinical situations with maturity and grace.

requires focus. What is your strategy for transitioning from hospital to "Mom"?

**TAK:** It is entirely about mindset. This practice has been refined over seventeen years into an internal pattern. I eventually understood that despite being busy professionally, I must leave my titles at the door when I reach home. My children deserve the very best of my available time. I strive to be fully present and supportive for them. This transition is essential for always maintaining a healthy balance between my two most vital roles.

**TDS:** Can you share an instance where maternal strength helped navigate a professional crisis?

**TAK:** Early in my career, a young patient suffered a heart attack. After the consultation, his wife wept, sharing that she had young daughters and no relatives to help. As a

mother, I felt her terror. That night, I challenged myself: "What did I miss?" That emotional connection pushed me to think outside the box. I discovered an additional diagnosis requiring immediate attention. Feeling that woman's pain as a mother gave me the drive to look deeper and save a life. This experience remains a defining moment. Empathy is a powerful clinical tool leading to better patient outcomes. Empathy drives me to be a better doctor.

**TDS:** How do you handle "mom guilt" during late-night emergencies?

**TAK:** I believe guilt stems from a desire to control everything. My coping mechanism reflects the understanding that not everything is within my hands. I have taught my family to adapt to the demands of my profession. It must be a two-way support system where we navigate challenges together. This mutual understanding eases the burden, allowing me to focus on my patients.

**TDS:** How do female physicians contribute uniquely to the nation's health?

**TAK:** Their contribution is immense. In our conservative society, many women felt uncomfortable with male cardiologists, often waiting until their condition became grave. Female cardiologists are bridging this gap, excelling in both imaging and complex interventions. They provide a sense of comfort that encourages more women to seek help, ultimately improving the overall health of our nation's female population.

**TDS:** Who is the biggest supporter behind your success?

**TAK:** It is an entire system—my parents, sisters, husband, and especially my children. Even on my most exhausting days, my kids encourage me, saying, "Mom, you'll rock. Finish the day." Their belief in me is my most powerful strength, providing the motivation I need to excel in both roles.

**TDS:** What philosophy keeps you motivated when worlds feel heavy?

**TAK:** I tell myself I must get through without losing myself. I cannot stop because people need me and love me. I still have so much to give to society. It is about finding the strength to carry on.

Interview conducted by Samia Chowdhury

