

[#SundayWiMIN23](#) Week 35: Dr Houriya Kazim

Ms Houriya Kazim, RCSI Fellow (1993) and Alumna (Class of 1988) is a Consultant Breast Surgeon, Medical Director of the Well Woman Clinic, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor MBRU and Founder and President of Brest Friends.

After attending medical school in Ireland, Dr. Houriya returned to the UAE to intern at a government hospital in Dubai. There, she began treating women with the most advanced breast tumors she had ever seen - not even in medical textbooks. She learned that superstition, fear, lack of knowledge and mainly modesty, prevented many Emirati women from seeking treatment from the country's predominantly male medical establishment. In fact, at the time, there were no female surgeons in the UAE. She resolved to change that! Dr. Houriya pursued further training in General Surgery and Surgical Oncology at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London and the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas and returned to the UAE as its first female surgeon. Motivated by what she'd seen during her internship, she created an ambitious outreach program to educate women about breast cancer, taught them about breast (and body) awareness, and offered treatment advice and options.

In 2006, she opened the country's first Well Woman Clinic staffed exclusively by women for all women's healthcare needs. She also established Brest Friends, a charity organization which includes the first breast cancer support group in Dubai. In 2015, Brest Friends partnered with Al Jalila Foundation, a non-governmental organization established by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The joint mission is to promote early detection of breast cancer, expedite support with medical treatment and research into the epidemiology of breast cancer in the UAE and the region.

(Prompted by RCSI Alumni news <https://issuu.com/articles/30228741>)