

DR POOJA S RAO

— ENTREPRENEUR —

Dr Pooja Sidharth Rao is an entrepreneur balancing medical education, clinical practice and women's healthcare. As Co-Founder and Executive Director of Medline Academics and Dr Kamini Rao Hospitals, she is shaping a more integrated approach to healthcare and distant learning.

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW

“For me, it was not a dramatic moment that changed everything overnight. It was a realisation from experiences in the healthcare ecosystem and seeing the gap between what doctors knew academically and what they were able to access in practice. Reproductive medicine was evolving rapidly, yet access to structured learning and clinical exposure was limited. The decision to address that gap became the foundation for Medline Academics.

“One of the biggest challenges has been learning to grow without compromising on quality of education the values with which we started. Venturing into healthcare is different as compared to other industries because growth and decision-making have an impact on people's lives. What helped me most was learning to look at challenges as part of the process rather than as indications that something was not working.



“If I were starting my journey today, I would trust the process more and spend less time worrying about having everything figured out from the start.

Experience has taught me that entrepreneurship rarely works that way. Some important lessons come when you step forward, make decisions, face the consequences, and learn to adapt. I would invest in people earlier.

“It is difficult to identify one award or milestone because meaningful achievements have been moments where I have seen our work create a ripple effect beyond the organisation. One of the most fulfilling aspects of Medline Academics has been seeing doctors who trained with us become more confident in their practice and,

in some cases, strengthen fertility services in their regions. Knowing that the education they received can benefit many patients makes the journey worthwhile.

“**IMPORTANT LESSONS COME WHEN YOU STEP FORWARD, MAKE DECISIONS, FACE THE CONSEQUENCES, AND LEARN TO ADAPT**”

“To anyone starting their journey, I would say: Do not wait for someone else to give you permission to believe in your potential. Build competence and work towards financial and professional independence. Keep learning, surround yourself with people who challenge and support you, and do not be afraid

to change direction when your circumstances or aspirations evolve. Every person's journey has a different pace. What matters is whether you are moving towards something meaningful to you. Most importantly, do not feel that ambition and empathy are opposites. You can lead without losing your humanity.” >



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