

Get to Know NYCPM Faculty:
Reem Sheikh, DPM
Instructor, Department of Surgery



Nearly everyone's made a journey of some kind, but by almost any measure, Dr. Reem Sheikh's journey to podiatry, to the classrooms of NYCPM and the patients of FCNY, is extraordinary – she has physically traversed an ocean and a continent with stops in between and spiritually traveled just as far.

Born in the Middle East, Dr. Sheikh immigrated with her family to St. Mary's, Alaska at the age of 12. St. Mary's is a beautiful Yup'ik Eskimo village with a population of about 500, located on the Andreafski River, nearly 450 miles northwest of Anchorage. Dr. Sheikh was the Valedictorian and part of the largest graduating class her high school had ever seen: 5. Her mother was a high school teacher and principal of the school, from which she graduated at 15.

It's interesting to note that Dr. Sheikh saw the need for better medicine and was exposed to podiatry in that rural setting, where diabetes and amputations were rampant. Often times, emergency medical care was delayed for hours to those who suffered trauma as they had to be flown to a bigger village or Anchorage for treatment. She recalls how the lack of preventive care and delay of treatment drastically impacted the quality of life of those affected.

Similarly, she noted a disparity in the urban setting of Anchorage. Though it's the biggest city in Alaska, care was still limited and advanced specialty care was only found in the 'Lower 48.' These situations inspired Dr. Sheikh to pursue a career in podiatry.

Dr. Sheikh graduated from the University of Alaska Anchorage with a BS in Biology, with Undergraduate Research and Leadership Honors in 2007. She followed her passion for research and worked for the Alaska Hepatitis Program at the Alaska Native Medical Center for about a year. She then moved to Iowa to attend the Des Moines University College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, obtaining her DPM in 2012.

Des Moines, Iowa was a good fit, she says, coming out of Alaska. As a student on rotations, she saw how podiatry made a difference in the medical field; she witnessed a multi-specialty approach to address patients' needs.

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Part of Dr. Sheikh's training was at Hahnemann Hospital in Center City Philadelphia. She later transferred into NYCPM/ Metropolitan Hospital program and served as chief resident in her final year, graduating in 2017. She was also awarded second position at the annual Residency Forum at the 2017 NYSPMA Clinical Conference.

Now, she's an instructor in the Department of Surgery, lecturing and providing guidance in both clinics and the operating room to second, third and fourth -year students. She is an attending at Metropolitan, Lincoln and Harlem Hospitals as well as at the Foot Clinics of New York. She is board certified by the American Board and Podiatric Medicine and is working towards obtaining board certification in Foot and Reconstructive Rearfoot & Ankle by the American Board of Foot And Ankle Surgery.

While her rural environment suffered from a lack of access to crucial medical care, New York City's challenges are different: diverse populations with diverse medical needs, an epidemic of diabetes, trauma and a plethora of social issues.

Dr. Sheikh feels she's constantly evolving and learning - "you cannot be afraid of new experiences," she says. She loves New York City, but eventually, she wants to return to her home state and serve Alaskans. Over the last decade, she says, St. Mary's and Anchorage have changed tremendously – in the future, she aspires to start a residency program in Alaska.

In addition to seeing patients and teaching students, Dr. Sheikh continues to be involved in research projects and publications. Her most recent research project with students focused on deltoid ligament insufficiency after ankle trauma. Outside NYCPM, Dr. Sheikh devotes her time to her family, exploring NYC and enjoys her hobbies, which include photography and painting. She is happy to have ended up here: "Each step has led to bigger and better opportunities."