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Institute of Public Health Newsletter- Volume2, Issue1

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Institute of Public Health Newsletter

COVID-19 pandemic: the interface between communicable and non-communicable diseases

Prof. Syed Mahboob Shah – Professor of Public Health



Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which claimed the lives of over 2.85 million people worldwide so far, an emerging challenge is the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

NCDs include cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and cancer, which collectively account for more than 80% of premature mortality among adults in developing countries, each year. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affects adults over 65 years disproportionately; who represent 80% of hospitalizations, and a 23-fold greater risk of death compared to those under 65. The risk factors for COVID-19 related mortality in Wuhan, China included comorbidities with hypertension being the most common, followed by diabetes, and coronary heart disease. Co-morbidities with hypertension, other CVDs, diabetes, obesity, pulmonary disease and cancer were significantly associated with in-hospital fatalities in the US population. Increased COVID-19 related mortality in the UK population was also found significantly associated with cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity.

The interaction between COVID-19 and NCDs was not only associated with increasing the severity of the pandemic, but in turn, the pandemic also contributes to the increasing burden of NCDs – another challenge to be tackled. The current non-pharmaceutical public health countermeasures including the lockdown and working from home were known to be associated with a notable lack of physical activities and changes in eating habits. The implemented interventions to tackle the burden of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic must also stimulate more political action to overcome the ongoing burden of NCDs.

Institute of Public Health, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, UAEU

The Institute of Public Health (IPH) has a mission to train health professionals and protect and improve the health of the population of the United Arab Emirates. Faculty members at the IPH have a considerable and wide range of research experience and expertise in different scientific disciplines, including epidemiology, biostatistics, infectious diseases, public health and preventive medicine, environmental health, cardiovascular diseases and other chronic health problems, injury prevention, occupational safety and health, health economics, health promotion, and healthcare management (please see the last page).

Welcoming Message

In this issue of the IPH Newsletter, we are delighted to update and it is our pleasure to share with you a wide range of the IPH news and activities.

Our, the IPH family members, heartiest welcome goes to our readership. We hope you would enjoy reading the Newsletter.



Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai –
Chief Editor, Assistant
Professor of Epidemiology

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IPH Latest News and Activities

Awards and Recognitions

College Award for Excellence in Scholarship — 2020



Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology

Exemplary Researchers during COVID-19 Pandemic



Dr. Mohamud Sheek-Hussein
Associate Professor of Epidemiology



Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology



Dr. Abderrahim Oulhaj
Associate Professor of Biostatistics

UAEU Awards for publications in top 1%, 5%, 10%, and 25% (Q1) peer-reviewed international journals in 2019

Dr. Javaid Nauman – 1 paper 1%; 2 papers 5%

Dr. Marilia Silva Paulo – 1 paper 5%; 1 paper 10%

Dr. Luai Ahmed – 1 paper 5%

Dr. Rami Al Rifai – 1 paper 25%

Dr. Abderrahim Oulhaj – 1 paper 5%; 1 paper 10%

Prof. Syed Shah – 1 paper 5%

Dr. Mohamud Sheek-Hussein – 1 paper 10%

Adjunct Clinical Teaching Award

for support of Junior Clerkship in Public Health

Dr. Salma Al Dhaheri – Disease Prevention and Screening Center, Ambulatory Healthcare Services, SEHA, Al Ain

Dr. Fatima Al Darmaki – Director of Al Hili Primary Health Clinic, Ambulatory Healthcare Services, SEHA, Al Ain

Dr. Latifa Al Ketbi – Muwajji Clinic, Director of Ambulatory Healthcare Services, SEHA, Al Ain

PhD Students Teaching Academy

Congratulations to our PhD Student **Ghuwaya Al Nuaimi** for successfully graduating from the UAEU

**Graduation Ceremony of the
PhD Students Teaching Academy Program
Fall 2020 - Cohorts 1 and 2**

Wednesday, March 3rd, 2021
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Virtual Graduation Ceremony
on UAEU Microsoft Teams

 Sally Al Nayadi CEDU	 Biyem Alqasim COS	 Sabera Haris COE	 Blansi Fahad Man COE	 Basma Cull CMHS	 Ezraanuel Callwangs COE	 Ghuwaya Al Nuaimi CMHS	 Mohammed Haddi Yusuf CEDU	 Hoorah Farhad CIT
 Omaria El Hamei COE	 Rama Habbib COS	 Britly Mathew COS	 Shajal Tharayyil COS	 Salafdeen Kabbier COE	 Samantha Stephen COE	 Saraibul Hossain CMHS	 Amira Abouelhamdi COE	

PhD. Students Teaching Academy Program - Cohort 2

Conducted by The Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL) and The College of Graduate Studies (CGS)

Collaborative Meetings with National Health Entities

Institute of Public Health (IPH) and Abu Dhabi Health Services Company- SEHA

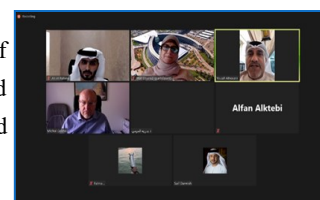
IPH was invited to attend the annual retreat of the SEHA Health Education and Wellbeing Committee by Ms. Suheila Ali Hassan, Corporate Senior Health Education Officer. Delegates attended the meeting from SEHA, Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC), and other stakeholders including Academia. Dr. Iffat Elbarazi represented IPH, UAEU. An overview of SEHA health education activities was presented in the retreat. Dr. Aysha Aldhaheri presented the new ADPHC vision and plan for health education/promotion and stated that all SEHA hospitals will become Health promoting hospitals.

IPH and Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre - ADPHC

A meeting to discuss future collaboration between ADPHC health promotion team and IPH took place via teams on the 7th of January 2021. Collaboration on research, community awareness activities, and public health licensing were on the agenda. Dr. Aysha Aldhaheri, Ms. Jamila Albalushi, and Ms. Mariam Alkarbi from the ADPHC and Prof. Michal Grivna, Dr. Iffat Elbarazi, and Dr. Marilia Silva Paulo from IPH attended the meeting.

Emirates Public Health Association – EPHA

Prof. Michal Grivna and Dr. Iffat Elbarazi met with the EPHA team (Dr. Yousef Alhosani – the President of the EPHA, Dr. Badrya Alharmi the Vice-president, Mr. Ali Rahma and Ms. Alfani Alketbi – EPHA board members, and Dr. Saif Darwish the spokesperson of EPHA) to discuss opportunities for collaboration and partnership to advance public health practice and awareness in the UAE.



The EPHA was assembled by Ministerial Resolution No. (13) of 2019 and registered with the Ministry of Community Development under the No. (187). It is the first professional association specialized in public health in the UAE and has a legal personality and independent financial liability. The association's board of directors consists of five members who are elected by the association's members for a period of four years. Currently, there are four main committees working to advance the vision and mission of the association state: "empowering UAE community members by promoting public health, creating a healthy culture, and adopting elements of an environment that supports healthy lifestyles in the UAE". To join the association please contact the association at epha.uae@gmail.com



Meeting with Dr. Nahayan Hilal, Adjunct Assistant Professor at the IPH and owner and CEO of the “Holistic Medical Center - HMC”

Dr. Mohamed El-Sadig and Dr. Balázs Adam met with Dr. Nahayan Hilal, Adjunct Assistant Professor at the IPH, owner and CEO of the “Holistic Medical Center - HMC”, an Occupational Health Center in Abu Dhabi. HMC is the first center of its kind in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It delivers basic and advanced occupational medicine and occupational health services to workers in Abu Dhabi. It has the capacity to serve over 300 candidates per day. The center is run by specialized occupational health physicians and consultants, supported by an efficient nursing team. HMC offers fast, professional and efficient service to the oil and gas sector, providing the full range of health screening checkups from basic to executive levels. HMC is supported by the Sheikh Khalifa Fund, a foundation, which aims to create a new generation of Emirati entrepreneurs, by instilling and enriching the culture of investment among young people.



The Centre has graciously been endowed the status of a “Non-SEHA Public Health Care Provider” which means it reaps the same privileges of a Public health care provider. HMC deals with general healthcare and occupational health/medicine and provides services. The meeting discussed present and future collaboration between the IPH and HMC in undergraduate and graduate student education, occupational health training, and scientific research. The two parties are currently working on drafting a memorandum of understanding (MoU) which will be signed soon by concerned authorities at the UAE University and the HMC.

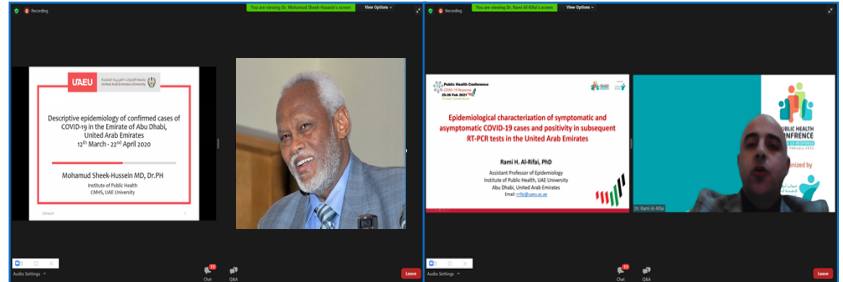


UAE Public Health Conference — COVID-19 Response

The UAE-Public Health Conference— COVID-19 response, was conducted in partnership with many strategic stakeholders including the Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference was attended by over 1,200 delegates. Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai (Assistant Professor of Epidemiology) and Dr. Mohamud Sheikh Hussein (Associate Professor) from the Institute of Public Health shared their research findings on COVID-19, utilizing data from the Abu Dhabi Emirate. Dr. Rami Al-Rifai’s research findings were highlighted by the media and by the UAE university — research highlights ([Click here](#) for more information).



For more information about the conference, please [click here](#) or visit: <https://uae-public-health-conference.vfairs.com/en/>

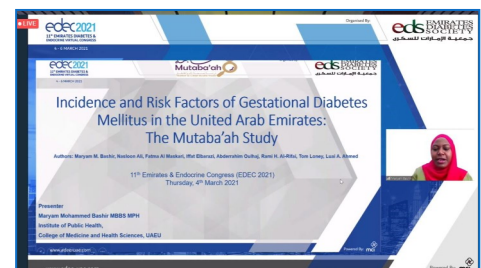


Public Health Think Tank Seminar

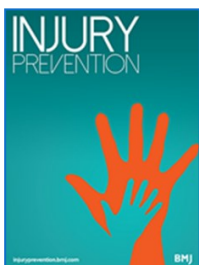
Prof. Syed Shah, from the Institute of Public Health, was a Keynote Speaker at the Public Health Think Tank Seminar held on November 27-28, 2020, New York University, Abu Dhabi Campus. His presentation was entitled “Epidemiology of COVID-19: Prevention First.”

11th Emirates Diabetes and Endocrine Virtual Congress (EDEC 2021)

The EDEC 2021 was held between the 2nd and 4th of March 2021. It was a three-day virtual conference with more than 30 speakers and over 250 delegates from around the world presenting on topics including Diabetes and COVID-19, young adults’ diabetes, technology advances, obesity, pediatric endocrinology, cardiovascular diseases, genetics, and many others. The conference included keynote speeches, Endo-Diabetes UAE data, state-of-art lectures, parallel sessions, panel discussions, oral abstract presentations, poster presentations, product theatre, and networking opportunities. Dr. Maryam Bashir, a second-year PhD student at the Institute of Public Health, presented her research findings with the audience about the Incidence and risk factors of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) among the Emirati Population in the UAE. The presented study is the first major study in the country to estimate the incidence of GDM and identify its risk factors utilizing longitudinal follow-up data.



Virtual Pre-Conference Global Injury Prevention Showcase 2021



At the recent online injury prevention conference in Australia, our PhD candidate Ms. Alfian Alketbi presented “*Call for action to address school bullying in the UAE: Scoping review*” and Dr. Mohamed Elsadig presented: “*The prevalence of seatbelts use in the UAE*”. Both abstracts were published in BMJ Injury Prevention Journal.

The Next worldwide injury prevention conference **Safety 2022** will be held in Adelaide, Australia on November 27 -30, 2022.

More information: www.worldsafety2022.com

Covid-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Perspectives

Dr. Iffat Elbarazi, Assistant professor at the IPH, was invited to present on health promotion amid COVID-19 in the Webinar: **COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Perspectives** that was organized by the Mauritanian Association for Scientific Research Development. The webinar was held via Zoom on 16 January 2021. The Mauritanian General Director of Health (MOH) presented an overview of the COVID-19 situation in the country and the measures taken to combat the disease.



Public Health Webinars Series

The IPH Public Health webinars became a popular venue for gaining the most current updates for participants from public health professional network in the UAE and abroad.



The first webinar in the new year was on January 19th 2021 by **Dr. Nina Paichadze** from George Washington University, USA about “**Commercial determinants of health**”. **Prof. Adnan Hyder**, Professor of Global Health and Senior Associate Dean for Research at the Milken Institute School of Public Health of George Washington University, introduced this important topic and praised the starting collaboration between the IPH and the George Washington University.

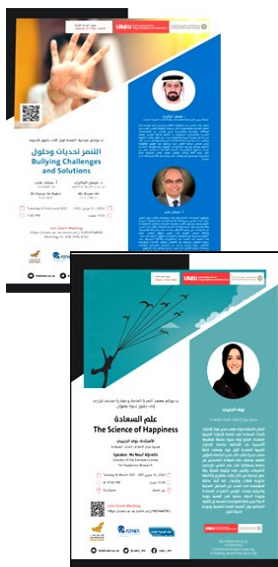


On the 23rd of February, **Prof. John Middleton** from the UK, current President of ASPHER and Past-President of UK Faculty of Public Health has accepted to talk about “**Planning for an outbreak of health – Lessons from the pandemic for health, the health of the public and the public health service**”. He highlighted challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, how it influenced public health response and how ASPHER swiftly reacted by establishing a Task Force and issuing different important statements.

On the 23rd of March, **Prof. Iman Nuwayhid**, from the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon and **Prof. Salman Rawaf**, from the Imperial College London in United Kingdom, discussed public health challenges in the region. Their presentation entitled: “**Public health in the Arab world: Are we doing well?**” initiated an interesting and thought-provoking discussion.



Health Promotion Webinars Series



The IPH has launched on the 9th of February 2021 its series of **Health Promotion webinars** for the community. The first webinar titled **Anti-bullying strategies and solutions** was presented by Engineer **Dr. Faisal Albakeri** – Advisor to H.E. Minister of Education and **Mr. Essam Ali** – Social Policy Specialist UNICEF, Gulf Area Office - and was moderated by **Dr. Iffat Elbarazi**. More than 260 people attended the virtual webinar which received positive feedback. The webinar attracted many questions from the audience. The IPH took the opportunity during the webinar to launch a health initiative titled: “**My health is a decision**” led by Dr. Iffat Elbarazi and a group from the CMHS medical students led by Ms. Hajar Alkteifan. IPH invites all students to become part of this initiative which aims to spread health awareness in the community.

On the 15th of March, the second **Health Promotion webinar** entitled: “**The Science of Happiness**” took place at 7:00 pm and was presented by **Ms. Nouf AlJuncibi** – Director of the Emirates Centre for Happiness Research. The session was moderated by **Prof. Fatima Al Maskari** and had almost 100 attendees with very

The next **Public Health webinar** will be about “**Health lifestyle before Ramadan**”. For more information, follow the Institute of Public Health social media accounts (Facebook and twitter) .



The Brain Health Survey kicks off in the United Arab Emirates University—IPH

The study is conducted in collaboration with the Lifebrain consortium in Europe using an adapted version of their original survey to suit our UAE cultural and special context. The original survey was conducted in Europe over 81 countries and was translated into 14 languages. (LINK <https://www.lifebrain.uio.no/global-brain-health-survey/>)

The study is conducted under the coordination of the Principle Investigator: Dr. Iffat Elbarazi from the IPH and the collaboration with other co-investigators Dr. Javaid Nauman from IPH, Prof. Emmanuel Stip and Dr. Karim Abdul Aziz, from the Psychiatry department at the CMHS, UAEU with the support of the Lifebrain consortium.

The main objective of the UAE Brain Health Survey is to investigate people's views on brain health globally and to further understand what may or may not motivate them to support their brain health. The study aims to explore people's perceptions of the brain and brain health, interest in maintaining brain health, willingness to learn more about current personal brain health state, intentions and support needed to promote brain health by adopting a new lifestyle.

The Mutaba'ah Study – update since last published newsletter – Nov 2020

Principal Investigator: Dr. Luai A. Ahmed

The Institute of Public Health at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences pioneered the first and largest mother and child health cohort study, Mutaba'ah (meaning: follow up) in the UAE. Mutaba'ah aims to secure longitudinal epidemiological data on maternal and child health to investigate the health determinants and outcomes of the mothers, and the maternal and early-life health determinants and outcomes of infants, children, and adolescents.



To read more about *The Mutaba'ah Study*, [click here](#) or visit this link:

<https://mutabaah.uaeu.ac.ae/>

Recruitment progress



Around **650** more pregnant women were recruited since November 2020.

9,450 pregnant women were recruited in the study so far

Scientific output



2 more scientific articles were published.

5 peer-reviewed publications

2 conference presentations

Contributors



2 new collaboration activities (locally and internationally) were initiated.

16 co-investigators and collaborators

3 collaborating universities

Students' involvement



1 PhD completed

4 PhD in progress

4 undergraduate students

Contact the *Mutaba'ah* team at

Email: mutabaah@uaeu.ac.ae

Highlight of the Month

January

Nabila Mohamed



Welcome to Ms. Nabila Mohamed. Ms. Nabila, is a Fulbright Research Scholar, from the University of Minnesota. She has joined the IPH to complete her independent research project titled “Social determinants of health for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the UAE”, under the supervision of Prof. Syed Shah.

February

Angi Mohamed



Welcome to Ms. Angi Alradie Mohamed. Ms. Angi, has joined the IPH as a Research Assistant. Ms. Angi, holds a Master's degree in Public Health from the Anglia Ruskin University, UK, and the Bachelor degree in Dental Surgery from the University of Khartoum, Sudan. Her previous research focused on reproductive health, social and behavioral sciences, gender inequalities and psychology.

Interview with Dr. Javaid Nauman

Can you please tell us about yourself?

Dr. Javaid Nauman (JN): I am currently working as an Assistant Professor at the IPH, CMHS. I am also the Director of the Master of Public Health program. I obtained my doctoral degree in 2011 and the topic of my PhD dissertation was to investigate the role of resting heart rate and mortality in large –scale population studies. During my doctorate and post-doctorate time, I mainly focused on non-communicable disease epidemiology, especially cardiovascular diseases, metabolic diseases, and dementia.

Why did you choose the specialty of Public Health?

JN: The fascinated thing about public health is that it can serve as an excellent bridge between ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ approaches in health sciences. Public health could be credited as a blend of sciences, ranging from biology to sociology, ethics to epidemiology, environmental health to policy, in order to prevent diseases and promote health through evidence-based measures.

Would you please tell us about your most important achievements?

JN: I am very proud of my achievements in the research field which is evident by publications in top tier journals. This is possible



because of group work and collaborations, and we were able to disseminate our findings to a larger audience across continents.

What are your plans for future?

JN: To enhance my knowledge in the fields of epidemiology and biostatistics, and work with the big data platforms. At the same time, keep working with the clinical studies related to exercise/fitness and health outcomes.

Would you please tell us about your daily working schedule?

JN: A usual working day include teaching commitments to undergraduate and graduate programs, supervisory duties to masters and PhD students, and working on the research projects. Together with these, I am a member of various committees, thus contributing to college/university and community services.

Join the upcoming

14th European Public Health Conference 2021

Public health futures in a changing world

Virtual event from 10 – 12 November 2021

For more information and abstract submission deadline, [Click here](#) or visit this webpage: <https://ephconference.eu/>



Interview with IPH–PhD student Dr. Ali Al Rahma



Azhar Talal Rahma (AT): Kindly tell us about yourself, current position, work, experience and professional.

Ali Al Rahma (AR): Currently, I am a senior health educator in Dubai Health Authority since almost 6 years. I have worked in several projects that aimed to improve community health in the emirate of Dubai, UAE. I was part of projects such as Tobacco Free Dubai, Happiness Prescription (lifestyle intervention), Diabetes Prevention Framework, Smart Clinics (virtual), and Health education clinics in primary health care centers.

AT: Why did you chose the public health PhD program?

AR: I chose this program because I believe that the public health field is vital to prevent, control, and monitor diseases/risks and therefore improve health.

AT: How did the PhD program increased your knowledge and improve your current career.

AR: The PhD program has enhanced my skills especially in research and solidified the concept of evidence based-practice in all the work I perform.

AT: Do you think that the program will encourage you to improve your career in the future?

AR: This program is a gateway to seek further knowledge in the field of public health. No matter how much knowledge a person gains, we must always improve ourselves and increase our knowledge to benefit the people.

AT: Would you encourage your colleagues to join this program?

AR: Yes, definitely, the faculty and supervisors in the Institute of Public Health always do their best to ensure you gain the necessary knowledge and skills in the field of public health.

Interview with IPH–Master of Public Health (MPH) alumni Dr. Faisal



Bayan Abu Hamada (BA): Kindly tell us about yourself, current position, work, experience and professional.

Faisal Al Shamsi (FA): I graduated from UAE university in 2004 with

MBBS degree. After that, I continued my work at Zayed Military hospital. In 2008, I started my residency program in family medicine and managed to accomplish it in 2013. Right now, I'm working as Family Physician Consultant at Zayed Military Hospital in Abu Dhabi.

BA: What is unique about MPH program within UAE University, the University of Future?

FA: In 2015 I joined the Master program in Public Health at UAE university. It was a good opportunity that I joined and graduated from the MPH program where I learned lots of scientific knowledge and research skills.

BA: What values did the MPH added to you, to your current career?

FA: Joining the MPH program was the right decisions at the right time. In addition to the scientific knowledge, the MPH program has equipped me with several scientific and leadership values and skills that I use in my daily life personal and work time.

BA: Do you think that the MPH Program will encourage you to improve your career in the future?

FA: Definitely, as a physician the MPH program has added plenty to me. The acquired scientific knowledge and practical skills would enable me to improve my career and to add a lot to my work.

BA: Would you encourage your colleagues to join this program?

FA: No doubt about this. I would really strongly encourage colleagues to join the MPH program offered by the Institute of Public Health. The faculty members and researchers at the Institute of Public Health are equipped with a wide range of expertise in the field of epidemiology and public health.

BA: As you are planning to continue your higher education, how our MPH program motivate you to pursuit your PhD?

FA: Joining the MPH program has really encouraged me to seek further knowledge through looking forward to join the PhD program offered by the IPH. I hope I would have the opportunity to join the PhD program.

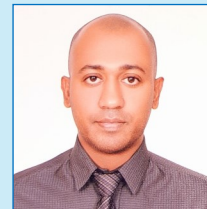
BA: COVID-19 Pandemic, do you think that the role of public health became very precious during this pandemic and why?

FA: Off course, during the COVID-19 pandemic, not only health care professionals but also general public realized the importance of public health. We also learned that applying simple public health prevention measures are of paramount importance to protect our health.

Highlight of the month

March

Mr. Sanju John



Mr. Sanju John Mathew, has joined IPH as a Research Assistant with the Mutaba'ah Study. He will be responsible of the data management in the study. He has Post-Graduate degree in Information Systems Management from De Montfort University, United Kingdom.

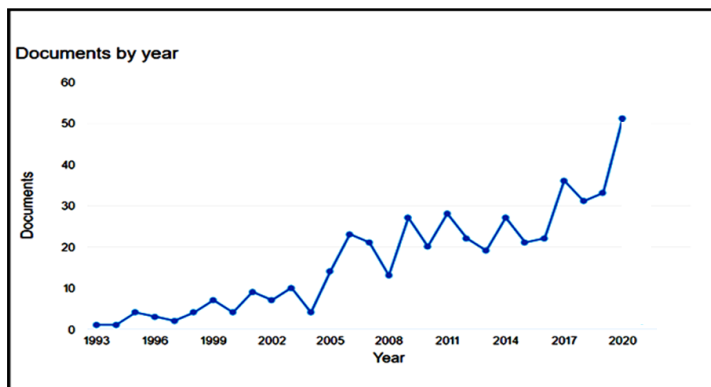
UK Fellowship Faculty of Public Health

Dr. Iffat Elbarazi



Congratulations to Dr. Iffat Elbarazi, for receiving the Fellowship Faculty from Public Health of the United Kingdom.

Scopus-indexed publications by faculty members at the Institute of Public Health from January 1993 to December 2020



Peer-reviewed Scientific publications by IPH members (Nov 2020 – March 2021)

*Undergraduate or graduate students were involved

- *Dababneh E., Saha S., Östlundh L., Al-Rifai RH, Oulhaj A. *Impact of cardiac rehabilitation on mortality and morbidity in diabetic versus non-diabetic patients: A systematic review and meta-analysis*. BMJ Open, 2021, In press.
- *Menon P., Khan M AB., Östlundh L., El Deyarbi M., Grivna M., Al-Rifai RH., El Sadig M. *Systematic review of risk factors associated with quad bike crashes: a protocol for systematic review of observational studies*. BMJ Open, 2021, In press.
- Saha S., Al-Rifai RH., Saha S. *Diabetes prevalence and mortality in COVID-19 patients: a systematic review, meta-analysis, and meta-regression*. Journal of Diabetes & Metabolic Disorders. Journal of Diabetes & Metabolic Disorders, 2021.
- *Hosani FA., Aden B., Memari SA., Mazrouei SA., Ajab S., Abid M., Alsuwaidi AR., Grivna M., Paulo MS., Sheek-Hussein M. *Epidemiology of asymptomatic and symptomatic Coronavirus Disease 2019 confirmed cases in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates: Observational study*. Medicine (Baltimore), 2021, 26;100(12):e25219.
- *Rahma AT., Elbarazi I., Ali BR., Patrinos GP., Ahmed LA., and Al-Maskari F. *Stakeholders' interest and attitudes toward genomic medicine and pharmacogenomics implementation in the United Arab Emirates: A Qualitative Study*. Public Health Genomics, 2021, 17:1-11.
- Alkaabi J., Al-Maskari F., Afandi B., Abdelrazeq S., Syed S., Wieke H., Papadimitropoulos E., Zoubeidi T., Abdul-Kader S., Silva Paulo M., and Frank S. *Effects of diabetes prevention education program for overweight and obese subjects with family history for type 2 diabetes mellitus: a pilot study from the United Arab Emirates*. Oman Medical Journal, 2021.
- Guseva Canu I., Marca SC., Dell'Oro F., Balázs Á., etl al. *Harmonized definition of occupational burnout: A systematic review, semantic analysis, and Delphi consensus in 29 countries*. Scand J Work Environ Health. 2021, 1;47(2):95-107.
- Ádám B., Göen T., Scheepers PTJ., Adliene D., Batinic B., Budnik LT., Duca RC., Ghosh M., Giurgiu DI, Godderis L, Goksel O., Hansen KK., Kassomenos P., Milic N., Orru H., Paschalidou. A, Petrovic .M, Puiso. J, Radonic. J, Sekulic MT., Teixeira JP., Zaid H., and Au WW. *From inequitable to sustainable e-waste processing for reduction of impact on human health and the environment*. Environ Res. 2021, 11:110728.
- Al-Rifai RH, Ali N., Loney T., Oulhaj A., and Ahmed LA. *Knowledge and preference towards the mode of birth delivery in the United Arab Emirates: The Mutaba'ah study*. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 2021, 18, 36.
- Ádám B., Lovas S., and Ádány R. *Use of genomic information in Health Impact Assessment is yet to come: a systematic review*. Int J Environ Res Public Health, 2020, 15;17(24):9417.
- Chaabna K., Dashzeveg D., Shagdarsuren T., and Al-Rifai RH. *Prevalence and genotype distribution of hepatitis C virus in Mongolia: systematic review and meta-analysis*. Int J Infect Dis, 2021, 15: S1201-9712(21)00126-0.
- Elbarazi I., Al-Hamad S., Alfalasi S., Aldhaheri R., Dubé E., and Alsuwaidi AR. *Exploring vaccine hesitancy among healthcare providers in the United Arab Emirates: a qualitative study*. Hum Vaccin Immunother, 2020, 28:1-8.
- Sgargi D., Adam B., Budnik LT., Dinelli G., Moldovan H R., Perry M J., Scheepers PT., Schlünssen V., Teixeira JP., Mandrioli D., and Belpoggi, F. *Protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis of human exposure to pesticide residues in honey and other bees' products*. Environmental research, 2021, 186, 109470.
- Al-Rifai RH., Acuna J., Al Hossany FI., Aden B., Al Memari SA., Al Mazrouei SK., and Ahmed LA. *Epidemiological characterization of symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 cases and positivity in subsequent RT-PCR tests in the United Arab Emirates*. PLoS One. 2021, 12;16(2):e0246903.
- *Shah SM., Jaacks LM., Al-Maskari F., Al-Kaabi J., Aziz F., Soteriades E., Loney T., Farooqi H., Memon A., and Ali R. *Association between duration of residence and prevalence of type 2 diabetes among male South Asian expatriate workers in the United Arab Emirates: a cross-sectional study*. BMJ Open, 2020, 17;10(12).
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Message from IPH–PhD Alumni

DR. NASEEM MOHAMMED RAFEE



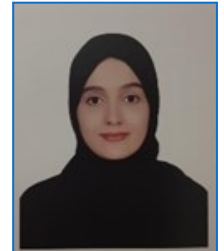
As a UAE national, I am proud to lead a distinguished department, the Department of Health and Safety at Dubai Municipality, which represents an integrated system to ensure health and safety in Dubai, and includes specialized sections and teams of more than 190 employees. Our vision is to develop a happy and sustainable city that provides the essence of success and sustainable living. This can be achieved by applying the highest standards based on best international practices to ensure the health and public safety.

The PhD program in Public Health and Occupational Health made me realize that I have become another person intellectually and practically. It enriched my research skills that helped me to explore my ideas deeply with specialized insight on KAP studies of community towards public health and safety. In addition, to share the benefits of my experience and knowledge and thus will help me to build professional networks with universities and academic research centers. Furthermore, a PhD qualification is necessary to work in advanced positions and opens doors to career opportunities that would not otherwise be possible.

My personal ambition in improving my scientific career and what I was able to achieve during those years of effort and perseverance, led me to share my personal experience with my family and work colleagues.

“Female Genital Mutilation: From a Medical Student Perspective”

Ms. Hajar Ahmed AlKtifan. Undergraduate student in medicine, CMHS, UAEU



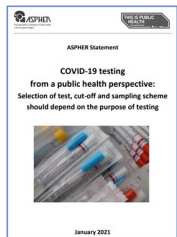
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the practice of partial or total amputation of external female genitalia or any other injury to female genital organs for non-medical indications. It is, unfortunately, a very common practice that have no health benefits and only do harm. FGM is a reflection of deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and is indeed an act of extreme discrimination against females especially minors as they inherently are the victims of this crime. As a medical student, I find it truly frustrating how awareness regarding the topic is gravely lacked in the public as well as among healthcare professionals. Reasons why the FGM is performed are variable but mostly are due to sociocultural factors within regions, communities and families where is perceived as a social norm and almost universally performed and unquestioned!

The practice is highly associated with immediate as well as with long term complications that are undoubtedly deteriorating girls and women health physically and psychologically. Hence, imposing a heavy global burden ethically and financially. Thus, several official global entities have established strategies and legal regulations toward the abandonment of the practice. The World Health Organization is opposing all forms of FGM as well as health care providers performing them. The United Nations strives for FGM full eradication by 2030 following the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality). I believe raising awareness within the community about this serious violation of human right is a great step toward its eradication. The 6th of February marks the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. By consistent joint effort, we can make the world a better place for girls and women.

ASPHER, The Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region, is the key independent European organization dedicated to strengthening the role of public health by improving education and training of public health professionals for both practice and research.

In 2020, the Institute of Public Health was accepted as an Institutional Associate Member of the ASPHER.

ASPHER Statement on COVID-19 testing



The available COVID-19 tests are of high to absolute specificity (Sp) but lack in sensitivity (Se), specially for the detection of asymptomatic and early infected individuals. A purpose-specific approach to the selection of tests and cut-offs and/or repeated testing schemes could be used for the effective control of the pandemic with these tests. To assess the efficiency of control programs valid estimates of COVID-19 prevalence/incidence are needed. Such estimates must be based on a proper sampling scheme that will ensure the representativeness of the target population. However, current estimates of COVID-19 incidence/prevalence are based on passive surveillance and are thus subject to bias. They

cannot be compared among countries, regions, or even among different time periods within the same country/region. Finally, incidence / prevalence must adjust for the imperfect Se/Sp of the diagnostic process. Diagnostic Se and Sp are population-specific and must be relevant to – if not obtained from – the target population. Se and Sp estimates from a clinical setting or populations that have a different mixture of the various infection stages should not be naively extrapolated to dissimilar settings.

ASPHER survey report of European Schools and University Departments of Public Health in the 2020 COVID-19 response

The ASPHER COVID-19 Task Force has been extremely productive since the winter holidays. We encourage all to use and share the Task Force materials, e.g. ASPHER Statements. We know from results of the ASPHER Schools' Response to COVID-19 Survey that many of members are engaged with work advising their country officials and ASPHER hopes the Task Force statements and reports assist countries in that capacity.



ASPHER report on herd immunity – The misuse of COVID-19 herd immunity argument

After the initial lockdowns, countries have come to the realization that COVID-19 is going to stay with us. This understanding has led to strategic discussions on how to live with COVID-19 in a period of "new normal". Consequently, there has been renewed interest in a so-called herd immunity approach to managing the pandemic. In COVID-19, the form of acquired population immunity from actual infections is different to the acquired herd immunity that follows systematic delivery of a comprehensive population vaccination programme. Given that promising candidate vaccines are commencing for wider population use from early 2021, we would strongly advise that governments and their professional public health advisers hold firm with effective physical distancing and other non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI) strategies to compress virus transmission and limit infection rates and impacts on health services. We caution against the concept of naturally occurring herd immunity in the context of the pandemic, it is potentially dangerous and is unsupported by broader scientific evidence. We advise that such a form of haphazardly acquired herd-immunity would not end the pandemic but would probably result in recurring outbreaks and epidemics that place an unacceptable and longer strain on economies and healthcare systems.

ASPHER Statement towards “vaccine internationalism” on the need for an equitable and coordinated global vaccination approach to effectively combat COVID-19

ASPHER believes that the achievement of (vaccine-derived) herd immunity worldwide as soon as possible should be the core aim of all COVID-19 vaccination programs. This would thereby minimize the spread of the virus both between and within countries. Failure to address structural and systemic inequalities in the acquisition and delivery of vaccinations is a fundamental ethical and moral issue of fairness, between and within all countries. There is also a strategic imperative with pragmatic consequences in ensuring other vital goals of comprehensive global vaccination. These include: supporting sustainable economic development, allowing international travel and movement, and restoring and further building adequate and accessible health and social care systems for all our populations worldwide. Moreover, beyond the profound ethical dimension, no region or nation can truly be free of the pandemic until all nations are free of it.

International Health Awareness Days

By **Dr. Iffat Elbarazi** (Assistant Professor – IPH)

During the past couple of months, the world has celebrated several health days to raise people's awareness on several important public health topics. To join this international efforts, the IPH is delighted to highlight these awareness days.

1 December is World AIDS Day

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is still costing the world lives. Youth and underprivileged people are still at higher risk. This day is dedicated to raise awareness about AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) the deadly disease caused by HIV. As of 2017, AIDS has killed between 28.9 million and 41.5 million people worldwide, and an estimated 36.7 million people are living with HIV. The IPH joins the world in raising awareness about HIV and in the fight against this disease.



18 December is International Migrants Day

In December 2000, the UN general assembly declared 18 December to be world's migrant day due to the increase in the number of migrants around the world. Fighting for the health of displaced people is a human and public health right. In the IPH we join the forces in helping migrants and refugees through education and research.

4 February is World Cancer Day

February 4 is marked as world cancer day and aims to raise awareness about cancer in a bid to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. The primary goal of World Cancer Day is to significantly reduce illness and death caused by cancer and to join the world in helping cancer sufferers. The Union for International Cancer Control calls to create a future without cancer and to act now.

8 March is International Women's Day

This year's International Women's Day (IWD) theme is **#ChooseToChallenge**. The official #IWD2021 website describes "A challenged world" as an alert world where we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions and where we can all choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality.



Research training and consultancy service

Advance your knowledge and research capacity by consulting and collaborating with our well-established research experts at the Institute of Public Health (IPH). Our experts are graduates of top universities, equipped with strong expertise in scientific researches designing and execution, and with tracked records of publications in top international peer-reviewed journals. The IPH welcomes invitations for consultancies in research design and execution, biostatistics and data analysis including systematic reviews and meta-analysis, local and international collaboration, and designing and delivering training courses and workshops including, but not limited to, biostatistics, quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, scientific writing, and publication skills.

Faculty profile and contact information of the IPH faculty members are available by **Clicking here** or copying this link: <https://cmhs.uaeu.ac.ae/en/departments/iph/faculty.shtml>

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