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Winter 12-2021

Institute of Public Health Newsletter- Volume2, Issue4

Institute of Public Health (IPH)

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Institute of Public Health Newsletter

Editorial

Prof. Michal Grivna, Director - Institute of Public Health



We are pleased to share our new Institute of Public Health (IPH) newsletter with you. The past year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic was full of challenges, new demands but also new achievements and successes. At IPH, we actively joined this fight and assisted health authorities working in different task forces and epidemiological research, leading to 24 scientific papers related to the COVID. Pandemic showed how important it is to continue investing in infectious disease control, pandemic preparedness, and public health workforce development. We are proud to be associated with ASPHER (Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region), where we were actively involved in the COVID Task Force. ASPHER, in collaboration with Global Network for Academic Public health (GNAPH) issued a major statement of the vital role of schools of public health in the teaching and training in order to increase public health workforce capacity in countries. There is a call for investment in the public health profession, system and services at local, national, and global levels. The new WHO-ASPHER “Roadmap to professionalizing the public health workforce” is a key document.

During the last year, our small IPH team (10 Faculty and 6 staff and researchers) was very productive in research. We published 64 scientific papers (33% increase from the previous year), many of them in top peer-reviewed journals. By Altmetrics, our IPH was mentioned in social media more than 11,000 times, in 323 WHO documents and in 79 Twitter mentions from the Institute of Health Metrics of the University of Washington in the USA (GBD studies). We expanded our graduate program - currently, we deliver around 40 graduate courses for 40 MPH and 28 PhD students. Five rotations of the Public Health Clerkship is an essential part of the undergraduate education of medical students. Our successful work at IPH would not be possible without the constant support of our College of Medicine and Health Sciences and UAE University management.

For IPH is important a collaboration with different national governmental authorities, as with Abu Dhabi Public Health Center, Department of Health Abu Dhabi, Dubai Health Authority, Ministry of Health and Prevention, Ministry of Education, Dubai Ambulance Services Corporation...etc. Very beneficial was workshop on public health research priorities organized by ADPHC in October. Our activities also increased at the international level by collaboration with ASPHER, EMRO WHO, organizing IPH webinars and by research collaboration with different academic institutions. We signed MOU with Holistic Medical Center in Abu Dhabi to expand the cooperation in research and training in occupational health and safety.

We can be proud that the United Arab Emirates was efficient in combating the COVID-19 pandemic – the vaccination rate is among the highest in the world, and a successful governmental response to a pandemic is an excellent example for other countries. Any challenging crisis or disaster makes humankind stronger and teaches us to adapt to critical situations. Fortunately, we can start to see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, but we should continue to be prepared and vigilant in public health.

We wish you all a successful, safe, and healthy new year 2022.

Welcoming Message

This issue of the IPH newsletter, issued by the Institute of Public Health (IPH), provides you with a new and wide range of the latest news and activities of the IPH.

On behalf of the editorial board members, I welcome you to this last issue of the IPH newsletter for the year 2021. We hope you all enjoy reading the IPH newsletter.



Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai
Editor-in-Chief
Associate Professor of
Epidemiology

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 public health in the United Arab Emirates.

Faculty members at the IPH have considerable teaching and 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.

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Institute of Public Health (IPH) Latest News and Activities

Honors and Recognitions

Faculty members at the IPH were honored and recognized, by H.E. Zaki Nusseibah, Chancellor of the UAE University and Cultural Advisor to H.H. the President of the UAE, for publishing scientific papers in top 1%, top 5%, top 10%, and/or top 25% ranked international journals in 2020.



Prof. Michal Grivna



Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai



Dr. Luai A. Ahmed



Dr. Iffat Elbarazi



Dr. Azhar Rahma

Among the top 2% cited scientists in 2020

Congratulations to Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, for being listed among the top 2% cited scientists by the Stanford University for the year 2020.



Certificate of appreciation to the IPH

The IPH received a certificate of appreciation from the “Emirates Transport” for their contribution in delivering series of training sessions to raise awareness on road safety and injury prevention. The session was delivered by our PhD student Ms. Alfana Alketbi.



PhD Degree in Public Health to Dr. Akshaya Bhagavathula

Dr. Bhagavathula, on December 19th 2021 successfully defended his PhD dissertation titled "*Blood pressure management and factors associated with adherence to antihypertensive therapy in the United Arab Emirates.*"



Dr. Akshaya's research filled a major gap in the literature and uncovered the extent of blood pressure control during the early stage of hypertension. It compared four landmark hypertension guidelines from USA, EU, UK, and Global to the UAE cohort, revealed the level of medication adherence and explored several factors that can help reach the guidelines-recommended blood pressure targets and improve medication compliance.

Dr. Akshaya, will move to USA as a postdoctoral researcher.

Welcome Dr. Azhar Talal Rahma

Dr. Azhar Talal, holder of PhD and MPH degrees and a graduate of the PhD and MPH programs hosted by the IPH, has recently joined the IPH as a lecturer to contribute to the mission of the IPH in teaching and research.



Dr. Azhar, obtained her bachelor's degree in pharmacy and health sciences, from the Faculty of Pharmacy, Ajman University of Science and Technology, Ajman - UAE in 2001. She is a graduate of the first cohort of PhD Teaching Academy of UAE University.

Dr. Azhar's area of research interest is pharmacogenomics. She has so far published seven papers about the implementation of genomics and pharmacogenomics in UAE. Teaching has always been a passion for Dr. Talal.

We wish Dr. Azhar a very successful and productive career.

IPH Bids Farewell to Dr. Marilia Silva Paulo

Dr. Marilia Paulo, bids farewell to the IPH. She served at the IPH for several years as a research assistant then as a lecturer of Health Promotion and Policy. During her days, she contributed significantly to the mission of the IPH in teaching and research.



We wish Dr. Marilia every success in her new post and looking forward for continuous future collaboration.

International Conferences

XIV World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation & 7th Abu Dhabi International Mental Health Conference

Prof. Syed Shah, was invited as a speaker and session chair at the XIV World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation & the 7th Abu Dhabi International Mental Health Conference that was held December 9-11, 2021 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.



Prof. Shah, shared with the audience findings related to suicidal ideation and attempts in the Himalayan Mountain. His presentation titled “*Prevalence of suicidal ideation and attempts in the Himalayan Mountain villages of Gilgit Baltistan: Gender disparity and inadequate access to care*”.

Shirien Younus and Shaima AlJasmi, PhD candidates in Public Health under the supervision of Prof. Shah, also participated and presented at the conference. Ms. Shirien, presented a paper titled “*Intimate partner violence in Himalayan Mountain villages in Pakistan*” while Ms. Shaima, presented about obesity and its relationship with positive symptoms of depression in Emirati youth.

FORUM 2000 at EXPO 2020

The FORUM 2000 organized by the Czech Embassy in the UAE was held at the EXPO Dubai 2020 on November 17, 2021.

Prof. Michal Grivna, Director of the Institute of Public Health, participated in the section “*Through Education to Tolerance and Civic Responsibility*”. Dr. Hawaa Althahak AlMansoori, a member of the Federal National Council, UAE was the main speaker. The section discussed the role of formal education in terms of educating for tolerance, respect of diversity, and active citizenship.



WHO’s 10th Global Conference on Health Promotion

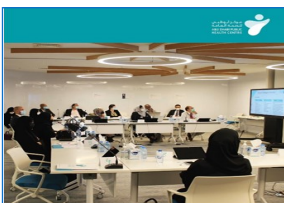
Faculty members from the IPH participated in the online 10th Global Conference on Health Promotion organized by WHO between 13 and 15 December, 2021. The conference is the largest WHO conference ever, with over 5,000 active participants from 149 countries.

The conference aimed at drafting the Geneva Charter for Well-being to provide a foundational document that will guide the way in re-booting our societies. The conference platform will serve as a forum to meet, dialogue, exchange and advocate.



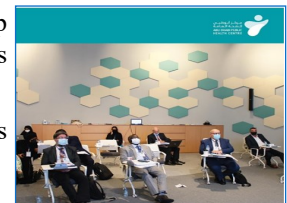
Visits, Collaborative Meetings, and Workshops

Workshop with Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC)



Faculty members from the IPH participated in a collaborative workshop on research priorities in public health in the UAE. The workshop was organized by the ADPHC in November 2021.

The workshop was attended by many researchers and representatives from different public and private institutions in the UAE.



IPH Delivers a Workshop in Pakistan

“**Silk Route Health: improving health literacy about chronic diseases and mental health to protect vulnerable populations**” by Prof. Syed Shah— a Full Professor at IPH



With a generous funding from Zayed Center for Health Sciences, Prof. Syed Shah has established research in Himalayan mountain villages in Gigit region of North Pakistan.

Prof. Shah, shared his research findings on suicide mortality and suicidal ideation in youth with local police officers of Gilgit Baltistan Province in Pakistan.



Visits, Collaborative Meetings, and Workshops

Russian Delegation from Siberian Medical University Visited the IPH

A delegation from the Siberian Medical University of Tomsk – Russia visited the IPH on Tuesday, November 16th 2021.

The delegation was led by Prof. Sergey Antipov (Professor of onco-surgery) and CEO of Russian based Center for Corporate Medicine. The members of the delegation were Prof. Konstantin Logunov (from Sankt Petersburg) and Dr. Sergey Yakovenko, managers of CCM, the largest oil and gas occupational health and remote medicine center in the Russian Federation, Central and East Asia. Dr. Nahyan Helal, Director of the Holistic Medical Center Abu Dhabi was escorting the delegation.

During the meeting, potential areas of collaboration in academic and research activities were discussed between the IPH and the Siberian Medical University in Tomsk – Russia. Areas of potential interest include environmental and occupational health, and remote healthcare for workers in the oil and gas industry in the UAE and Russia. The meeting also discussed opportunities for academic exchange between the two institutions, especially in relation to the postgraduate programs and scientific research.



Czech Ambassador, H.E. Jiří Slavík, Visits the UAE University



H.E. Zaki Nusseibah, Chancellor of the United Arab Emirates University and Cultural Advisor to H.H. the President of the UAE with Prof. Ghaleb Alhadrami, Acting Vice-Chancellor and colleagues from the College of Medicine and Health Sciences met the Czech Ambassador H.E. Jiří Slavík in the UAE on December 20th, 2021.



Prof. Michal Grivna, Director of the IPH, was invited to the meeting. During the meeting, collaboration between UAE University and the Czech Republic in research and education was explored and discussed.

Meeting with Prof. Padmini Murthy, New York Medical College

On November 23rd, 2021, Prof. Michal Grivna — Director of the IPH, met online with Prof. Padmini Murthy from New York Medical College. Prof. Padmini is chair of the International Health Section of American Public Health Association (APHA) and Secretary-General for Medical Women’s International Association. They discussed collaboration in education and research.

Meeting with Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE)

On December 8th 2021, following an invitation from the GLIDE, faculty members and researchers at the IPH met with representatives from the GLIDE in Abu Dhabi. The discussion was about collaboration in community campaigns, training and research. Follow up meetings to be resumed soon in 2022.

GLIDE is a collaborative initiative from Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Health Promotion Webinar

On November 16th, 2021, IPH organized and delivered a health promotion webinar on “*Home Child Injuries Prevention*”. The webinar was presented by Ms. Samira Al Kathiri, Head of Occupational Safety in Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre and a member of the Traffic Safety Committees.

The webinar was moderated by Ms. Alfani Al Ketbi, a PhD student in the IPH.



Public Health Webinar

On November 23rd, 2021, IPH held a public health webinar that presented on the topic titled “*From reducing high maternal & child mortality to NCDs burden in the Himalayas: Prevention first*”.

Prof. Syed Shah, a Professor of Chronic Disease Epidemiology at IPH, delivered the webinar.



Public Health Webinar

On December 21st, 2021, a public webinar titled “*Challenges of Cancer Survivorship*” was organized and delivered by the IPH. Dr. Islam El Konaissi, provided an informative presentation and fruitful discussion about the challenges behind successful survivorship in patients with cancer. Dr. Islam, also touched on the importance of multidisciplinary approach to help cancer survivors.

Dr. El Konaissi, is a Senior Clinical Pharmacist in Sheikh Shakhboot Medical City and Mayo Clinic in the United Arab Emirates. He is also the director of the UK Clinical Pharmacy Association.



Health Promotion Webinar

On Wednesday 2nd of Feb 2022, a health promotion webinar was delivered via Zoom about “*Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)- Prevention or Treatment*”.

The webinar was delivered by Dr. Afra AlDhaheri, a consultant Rheumatologist at Tawam hospital—SHE, Al Ain, UAE.

Dr. Budoor El Shehhi- Section Head Chronic Condition Abu Dhabi Public Health Center, moderated the webinar.



Call for Speakers

The IPH welcomes speakers from public and private institutions from all around the world to address audience attending public webinars organized by the IPH.

Topics related to public health, health promotion, and epidemiology are highly welcomed. Also, public health related success stories are also highly welcomed.

Speakers interested to join the IPH webinars, please contact Dr. Iffat Elbarazi (ielbarazi@uaeu.ac.ae) or Dr. Azhar Rahma (azhar.talal@uaeu.ac.ae).



Congratulations to Ms. Shamsa Al-Shamsi, on the birth of her new baby boy named Zayed.



Best wishes and blessings go to “Zayed” and his family on this occasion.

An Instrument for Early Assessment of Subjective Cognition and Memory Problems among Emirati Population

Ms. Fadwa Babikir, a PhD student at the IPH under the supervision of Prof. Emmanuel Stip, has recently secured ethical approval from the Social Sciences Ethical Committee to kick-off a research project for her PhD degree. The research project is titled “*An Instrument for Early Assessment of Subjective Cognition and Memory Problems among Emirati Population*”.

Developing and validation such a tool would be appropriate for the UAE population and will serve as an early assessment tool to measure subjective cognition and memory problems. Cognitive complaints and lack of cognitive insight are not specific to schizophrenia. It could be depression, mild cognitive impairment, dementia, Alzheimer’s, or addiction. Hence, scales in this field can be very useful to assess and collect data for populations at risk of developing cognitive decline.

Abu Dhabi Public Health Workforce Development after COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Tahani Al Qadiri, a PhD student at the IPH under the supervision of Prof. Michal Grivna and Dr. Marilia Silva Paulo, is about to kick-off the first-ever research project aiming at assessing the need for a structured public health workforce in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The research project is titled “*Abu Dhabi Public Health Workforce Development after COVID-19 Pandemic*” specifically aims to describe the characteristics of the public health workforce in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and to qualitatively measure the required health system development to integrate the public health concept as part of a strong health system after the COVID-19 pandemic experience, which highlights the importance of building well-structured public health.

This research project will be a cornerstone providing a scientific assessment of the need for a structured public health task force in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Findings from this study are expected to be the ultimate reference for building a robust public health workforce to improve and cover the gaps in the current system. There is no better time for this proposed research as the world is currently realizing the importance of the public health workforce, a key lesson from the COVID-19 crisis.

The *Mutaba’ah* Study – update since September 2021

Principal Investigator: Dr. Luai A. Ahmed

The *Mutaba’ah* Study, the largest Mother and Child Health Cohort study in the UAE, to be scaled up to phase II.

Phase II of The *Mutaba’ah* Study aims at recruiting more pregnant women from more hospitals as well as to start follow up children born to women already recruited in the study. The scaling-up plan has been recently ethically-approved by the “Abu Dhabi Health Research and Technology Ethics Committee”.



This scaling-up plan follows the very successful phase I that led to recruiting around 12,000 pregnant women from Al Ain city. This signifies the hard work of The *Mutaba’ah* Study research team members.

Thanks to all of the research team under the main supervision of Dr. Luai Ahmed for their efforts and for their patience to achieve the goal in less than 4 years. It is worth noted the first recruitment was initiated in May 2017. It was interrupted for few months in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team was able to achieve the 10,000 recruitments on the 30th of May 2021.

To read the news you may [Click here](#) or use this link: <https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/emirati-pregnancy-study-reaches-10-000-participants-1.1235240>.

Peer-reviewed Scientific Publications by IPH members (Oct 2021 – Dec, 2021)

Bolded name indicates to a PhD student

1. Abdou MS, Kheirallah KA, Aly MO, Ramadan A, Elhadi YAM, Elbarazi I, Deghidy EA, El Saeh HM, Salem KM, Ghazy RM. *The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccination psychological antecedent assessment using the Arabic 5c validated tool: An online survey in 13 Arab countries*. PLoS One. 2021 Nov 29;16(11):e0260321.
2. Ahmad T, Imran M, Ahmad K, Khan M, Baig M, Al-Rifai RH, Al-Omari B. *A Bibliometric Analysis and Global Trends in Fascioliasis Research: A Neglected Tropical Disease*. Animals. 2021 Dec;11(12):3385.
3. **Ajab S**, Adam B, Al Hammadi M, Al Bastaki N, Al Junaibi M, Al Zubaidi A, Hegazi M, Grivna M, Kady S, Koornneef E, Neves R, Uva AS, Sheek-Hussein M, Loney T, Serranheira F, Paulo MS. *Occupational Health of Frontline Healthcare Workers in the United Arab Emirates during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Snapshot of Summer 2020*. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Oct 29;18(21):11410.
4. **Alrahma AM**, Habib MA, Oulhaj A, Loney T, Boillat T, Shah SM, Ahmed LA, Nauman J. *Effects of a workplace exercise intervention on cardiometabolic health: study protocol for a randomised controlled trial*. BMJ Open. 2021 Nov 3;11(11):e051070.
5. **Bhagavathula AS**, Shah SM, Aburawi EH. *Medication Adherence and Treatment-Resistant Hypertension in Newly Treated Hypertensive Patients in the United Arab Emirates*. J Clin Med. 2021 Oct 28;10(21):5036.
6. **Bhagavathula AS**, Shah SM, Aburawi EH. *Prevalence, Awareness, Treatment, and Control of Hypertension in the United Arab Emirates: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Dec 2;18(23):12693.
7. Cheng TS, Ali N, Elbarazi I, Al-Rifai RH, Al-Maskari F, Loney T, Ahmed LA. *Sociodemographic determinants of prepregnancy body mass index and gestational weight gain: The Mutaba'ah study*. Obesity Science & Practice. 2021 Nov 11.
8. Das KM, Alkoteesh JA, Sheek-Hussein M, Alzadjali SA, Alafeefi MT, Singh R, Statsenko Y, Soteriades ES, Singh V, Van Gorkom K. *Role of chest radiograph in MERS-Cov pneumonia: a single tertiary referral center experience in the United Arab Emirates*. Egyptian Journal of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine. 2021 Dec;52(1):1-7.
9. GBD 2019 Adolescent Mortality Collaborators (Grivna M.). *Global, regional, and national mortality among young people aged 10-24 years, 1950-2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019*. Lancet. 2021 Oct 30;398(10311):1593-1618.
10. Grivna M, AlKatheeri A, AlAhabbi M, AlKaabi S, Alyafei M, Abu-Zidan FM. *Risks for bicycle-related injuries in Al Ain city, United Arab Emirates: An observational study*. Medicine. 2021 Nov 5;100(44).
11. **Karkaz I**, Elbarazi I, Östlundh L, Paulo MS, Sheek-Hussein M, Al-Rifai RH, Adam B. *Sharps injuries and splash exposures among healthcare workers in Arab countries: protocol of a systematic review and meta-analysis*. BMJ Open. 2021 Oct 7;11(10):e052993.
12. Lagorio S, Blettner M, Baaken D, Feychting M, Karipidis K, Loney T, Orsini N, Rössli M, Paulo MS, Elwood M. *The effect of exposure to radiofrequency fields on cancer risk in the general and working population: A protocol for a systematic review of human observational studies*. Environ Int. 2021 Dec;157:106828.
13. **Mezhal F**, Oulhaj A, Abdulle A, AlJunaibi A, Alnaeemi A, Ahmad A, Leinberger-Jabari A, Al Dhaheri AS, Tuzcu EM, AlZaabi E, Al-Maskari F, Alanouti F, Alameri F, Alsafar H, Alblooshi H, Alkaabi J, Wareth LA, Aljaber M, Kazim M, Weitzman M, Al-Houqani M, Ali MH, Oumeziane N, El-Shahawy O, Al-Rifai RH, Scherman S, Shah SM, Loney T, Almahmeed W, Idaghmour Y, Ahmed LA, Ali R. *The interrelationship and accumulation of cardiometabolic risk factors amongst young adults in the United Arab Emirates: The UAE Healthy Future Study*. Diabetol Metab Syndr. 2021 Nov 27;13(1):140.
14. Modenese A, Loney T, Rocholl M, Symanzik C, Gobba F, John SM, Straif K, Silva Paulo M. *Protocol for a Systematic Review on the Effectiveness of Interventions to Reduce Exposure to Occupational Solar UltraViolet Radiation (UVR) Among Outdoor Workers*. Front Public Health. 2021 Nov 11;9:756566.
15. Abdalla MA, Shah N, Deshmukh H., Östlundh L., Al-Rifai RH, Atkin S.L, Sathyapalan T. *Effect of pharmacological interventions on lipid profiles and C-reactive protein in polycystic ovary syndrome: a systematic review and Meta-analysis*. Clinical Endocrinology (Oxf), Oct 2021, 1–17.
16. Abdalla MA, Shah N, Deshmukh H., Östlundh L., Al-Rifai RH, Atkin S.L, Sathyapalan T. *Impact of pharmacological interventions on insulin resistance in women with polycystic ovary syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials*. Clinical Endocrinology (Oxf), Oct 2021. 1-24
17. Paulo MS, **Abdo NM**, Bettencourt-Silva R, Al-Rifai RH. *Gestational Diabetes Mellitus in Europe: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Prevalence Studies*. Front Endocrinol (Lausanne). 2021 Dec 9;12:691033.
18. **Rahma AT**, Elbarazi I, Ali BR, Patrinos GP, Ahmed LA, Elsheik M, Al-Maskari F. *Development of the pharmacogenomics and genomics literacy framework for pharmacists*. Hum Genomics. 2021 Oct 16;15(1):62.
19. Saddik B, Elbarazi I, Tamsah MH, Saheb Sharif-Askari F, Kheder W, Hussein A, Najim H, Bendardaf R, Hamid Q, Halwani R. *Psychological Distress and Anxiety Levels Among Health Care Workers at the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United Arab Emirates*. Int J Public Health. 2021 Nov 11;66:1604369.
20. Tessema RA, Nagy K, Adam B. *Pesticide Use, Perceived Health Risks and Management in Ethiopia and in Hungary: A Comparative Analysis*. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Oct 3;18(19):10431.
21. **Yasin YJ**, Alao DO, Grivna M, Abu-Zidan FM. *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on road traffic collision injury patterns and severity in Al-Ain City, United Arab Emirates*. World J Emerg Surg. 2021 Nov 19;16(1):57.

Significant Rise in Research Productivity by the IPH

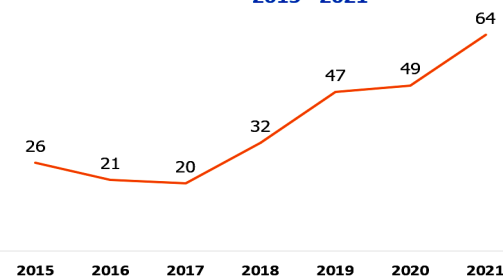
Faculty members and researchers at the IPH reach a milestone of publishing 65 peer-reviewed publications in 2021.

The 65 IPH-publications represent:

→ 17.6% of the 369 peer-reviewed publications produced by the College of Medicine and Health Sciences in 2021.

→ 3.3% of the 1,973 publications produced by the UAE in 2021.

Peer-reviewed Publications at IPH 2015 - 2021



Three faculty members from the IPH contributed to a major publication by WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) published a major systematic review and meta-analysis titled “*The effect of occupational exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation on malignant skin melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer: a systematic review and meta-analysis from the WHO/ILO joint estimates of the work-related burden of disease and injury*” as part of a global collaborative research project. Three faculty members from the IPH (Dr. Rami H. Al-Rifai, Dr. Balazs Adam, and Dr. Marilia Silva Paulo) had significant contribution in this publication.

This publication is accessible by [Clicking Here](#) or using this link <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/350569>

Post-graduate Programs Hosted by the IPH

The IPH hosts two major postgraduate programs; the Master's of Public Health Program (MPH) and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program in Public Health.

In 2021, there were 40 students enrolled in the MPH program and 28 students enrolled in the PhD program in Public Health. So far, more than 150 students graduated from the MPH program and 12 PhD holders graduated from the PhD program in Public Health.

The MPH and PhD programs contribute significantly in teaching and training future generations to build their capacity in serving their communities. The IPH-graduates have joined several academic and non-academic entities locally, regionally, and internationally.

PhD program in Public Health

The PhD program in Public Health is a CAA-accredited program that is designed to provide student with sufficient knowledge, research skills and competency in a wide variety of areas that will prepare him/her for a career in public health and epidemiology research, academia and leadership. The program embraces both course work as well as original research work completion. The combination of unique courses will cover several public health topics, epidemiology, biostatistics, and research methodology. This 54-credit hours PhD program is typically finished in four to six years. The program will intend to contribute to the advancement of the UAE knowledge-based economy through community engagement and knowledge transfer. The program will enhance scientific innovation through research and establish the UAEU as a leader in public health research within the country and region.

The learning outcomes of the PhD program in Public Health, are:

- Synthesize new knowledge by engaging in original research using advanced concepts and methods of public health data collection, analysis and interpretation.
- Evaluate major health-related needs, concerns and trends using public health concepts and methods to improve the human health.
- Analyze, critically, the biological, occupational, environmental, socio-economic, behavioral, cultural, and other determinants that impact human health.
- Design effective communications, policies and strategies for promoting health and preventing diseases.
- Evaluate the legal, ethical, economic, and regulatory dimensions of public health.

Master of Public Health (MPH)

The MPH program in Public Health is a CAA-accredited program that is designed to meet the development needs of professionals working in the field of public health or related fields such as occupational health, environmental health, primary care or health promotion. It is appropriate for those working in health and social care organizations, including health authorities, government departments and health service providers such as hospitals and clinics. The course will also be appropriate for those who wish to pursue a career in academic public health or to learn more about epidemiology and statistics for research or health service evaluation.

The learning outcomes of the MPH program are:

- Use advanced concepts, methods, and tools of public health data collection, analysis and interpretation.
- Identify and address the major health-related needs and concerns of populations using population health concepts and methods
- Analyze the biological, environmental, socio-economic, behavioral, cultural, and other factors that impact human health.
- Use effective communication and strategies for promoting health and preventing disease across the lifespan.
- Compare the characteristics and organizational structures of health care systems in selected countries.
- Explain the legal, ethical, economic, and regulatory dimensions of health care and public health policy.

How to join the MPH and PhD programs in Public Health

Application requirements, admission cycles, and application deadlines are provided in the website of the College of Graduate Studies at the UAE University. For more information [Click Here](#) or use this webpage: <https://www.uaeu.ac.ae/en/cgs/admission.shtml>



Nadia Al Breiki

Admitted to the PhD program in Public Health with a full scholarship from the UAE university.

Ms. Nadia, received a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in clinical psychology.

During her PhD course, she be mentored by Prof. Syed Shah.

Congratulations to PhD students graduated in 2021 from the

PhD Teaching Academy

at the UAE University



Noor Abdo



Preetha Karuveetil

Shamma Al Muhairi

Dr. Iffat Elbarazi – Assistant Professor of Health Promotion

Ms. Bayan, Dr. Iffat, could you please briefly tell us about yourself?

Dr. Iffat: I describe myself as a working woman who has juggled and handled many roles in her life. Roles that provided me with strengths, objectives, love and guidance from many people in my life. I started my career as a registered nurse after graduating from the American University of Beirut with a bachelor's in nursing. While working as a registered nurse, I appreciated the importance of education and patients' counseling which made me pursue a graduate diploma in health education while still working as a nurse. Later, I decided to shift my career to health education and promotion by earning a degree in Health Sciences from Latrobe University in Australia. Since then, I have worked in the health education & promotion field in Lebanon, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. My work in health education included training health professionals in patient education, program development and behavioral change. In fact, training and mentoring students were the drives behind my decision to join King Saud University as a lecturer in the Community Medicine Department in the College of Applied Medical Sciences. This role was a significant step to my new role in academia and research, a journey that continues until today in the UAEU. I joined the UAEU in 2012 as a Medical Research Specialist (MRS) until the end of 2019. The MRS role has provided me with extensive experience in research and education. In 2019, I joined another institution for 6 months then re-joined the UAEU in August 2020 as an Assistant Professor at the IPH.

Why did you choose the specialty of Public Health?

Dr. Iffat: As I mentioned above, I shifted my career to health education and health promotion, which made me appreciate the importance of awareness, health literacy, epidemiology, indicators of health and measures that improve population health. In addition to this experience, my work in academia with prominent professors in Public Health encouraged me to pursue further studies in the field.

Why did you choose the UAE University?

Dr. Iffat: The UAEU is a prominent university with an excellent reputation. Working in the UAEU is an asset to anyone, and for me, it was a great place to work. The IPH has a great team and supportive colleagues who are an inspiration and great motivation to others.

Who is your personal and professional role model?

Dr. Iffat: On a personal level, I have two main figures who have always influenced my personality and my success in my work life. My late father (God bless his soul) taught me that my only weapon in this life is education. He repeatedly told me that I am not leaving for you any significant inheritance except your education and your degree. He always encouraged me to be a doctor or to get a higher degree.

Moreover, my husband has been always a great drive behind finishing my studies and pursuing my dream career. My husband has been always supportive and has always been a great role model who kept encouraging me to achieve and succeed.

To be honest, many people whom I met during my studies and work journey were and still are my professional role models and impacted my interest in public health. Moreover, the late professor Ensaf AbdelJawad who had a role in recruiting me and providing me with the opportunity to join the academic world was a great model to me and to many of my peers by her passion for public health and improving people's health. I always felt that I want to be a professor like her, May Allah bless her soul and give her the deserved reward.

Would you please tell us about your most significant achievements?

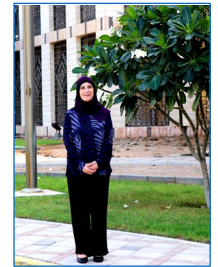
Dr. Iffat: I guess my outstanding achievement is being a role model to my children and my students. Other than my academic and research publications as well as the long experience in different countries and with various multicultural communities, I consider touching the lives of many patients with cancer and their families as an achievement and a treasure that have influenced my success. Moreover, my experience and training in qualitative research allow me to be a pioneer in the CMHS in this type of research. In 2021, I was awarded the UK Faculty of Public Health Fellow by a distinction based on my success in health promotion and in improving public health practice and prospects.

What are your plans for the future?

Dr. Iffat: I plan to continue my success in academia and to work on more successful research projects. I would like to improve people's health literacy and lifestyle through education and research,

Lastly, would you please tell us about your daily working schedule?

Dr. Iffat: I am handling many responsibilities in the IPH which is making my schedule cluttered and busy. In addition to teaching and research activities, I am working on improving communities' health through organizing health promotion webinars. I work with IPH colleagues and students to empower the community and to organize community awareness activities and educational webinars. My daily schedule starts by arriving in the office between 8 to 9 am. I work in my office on my projects, teaching activities, meetings and students. I believe that my busy schedule helps me to be more organized and to prioritize my work.



Dr. Shamma Al Muhairi – a PhD student

Ms. Bayan: would you kindly tell us about yourself, your current position, work, and professional experience?

Dr. Shamma: I am a consultant family medicine physician working at Tawam Hospital in the outpatient clinic seeing different types of medical cases, including acute medical cases, daily symptomatic cases for all age groups, chronic disease cases as well as providing preventive services such as vaccination and medical fitness. I am an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Family Medicine Department at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences where I teach medical students. I am an academic faculty member in the Al Ain Family Medicine Residency Program teaching and supervising family medicine residents in the clinic.

Why did you choose the PhD program in Public Health hosted by the IPH?

Dr. Shamma: I chose the PhD program in Public Health at UAEU because this program is one of the best well-oriented and well-organized program in the region. I believed that joining the PhD program would guide me to serve and help at the community level, to protect the community from diseases and help to address pandemics or outbreaks that may affect them. It would also give me the ability to provide the best preventive recommendations against such diseases and keep giving the best advice based on research findings.

How did the PhD program improve your knowledge?

Dr. Shamma: The PhD program in Public Health improved and shaped up my skills and knowledge through providing me with various types of information to transfer scientific knowledge into real best practices that would improve the health of the community. Moreover, the PhD program equipped me with advanced research skills and academic experiences related to the different fields of scientific information. Additionally, acquiring and learning leadership skills was an integral part of the PhD in Public Health.

Do you think that the program will help improve your career in the future?

Dr. Shamma: Yes. The PhD program will improve my career in the future through the high-level skills I acquired and learned and by being more knowledgeable in research. This will make me qualified for more leadership positions.

Lastly, do you think that the role of Public Health became very precious during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and why?

Dr. Shamma: Yes, public health has a vital role during the COVID pandemic. It has a core role in the prevention of the disease as well as limiting the negative impact of the disease on the general health of the community. Public health researchers published much different epidemiological research during the pandemic which helped in establishing international pathways and guidelines to prevent and control the pandemic. Parts of these recommendations are – using suitable masks, social distancing, and other preventive recommendations. Public health also has an integral role in measuring and tracking the spread of the diseases, developing models to predict the number of cases on a daily basis, developing vaccines, and screening and testing the community. Public health has an important role in guiding development of informative guidelines in prevention models for this pandemic as well as contact tracing for different community social levels.

Dr. Akshaya Bhagavathula – a PhD Alumnus

Ms. Bayan: would you kindly tell us about yourself, your current position, work, and professional experience?

Dr. Akshaya: I was born and raised in Hyderabad, India, and did my Bachelor of Pharmacy (BPharm) and Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) from government universities in India. I did my one-year clinical pharmacy training in infectious diseases at Nelson Mandela Children Hospital (NMCH), Johannesburg, South Africa. Soon after, I joined World Health Organization as a field worker and served in more than eighteen resource-limited countries during various outbreaks and epidemics for five years (2012-2017). I also worked as a Lecturer and Assistant Professor of Clinical Pharmacy at the University of Gondar from 2013 to 2018. In August 2018, I joined the Institute of Public Health as a doctoral student and accomplished my thesis work on the dynamics of hypertension in the United Arab Emirates population in December 2021.



Why did you choose the PhD program in Public Health hosted by the IPH?

Dr. Akshaya: Although most institutions offer the PhD program in Public Health, the IPH-UAEU has a unique opportunity to concentrate on Public Health and Occupational Health. The PhD program in IPH is well designed with two years of coursework coupled with dissertation research that is perfectly suitable for acquiring skills and applying them in the research work. Along with public health domains, it also provides an advantage of the broad field of occupational health, including environmental health, toxicology, and risk assessment.

How did the PhD program improve your knowledge?

Dr. Akshaya: Studying Public Health is a wonderful choice to understand the distribution of diseases, research methods, data collection, ethics, conducting evidence-based research, statistical analysis, and scientific writing. There is a tremendous increase in my knowledge and skills after the PhD coursework and translating the knowledge into practice.

Do you think that the program will improve your career in the future?

Dr. Akshaya: The PhD program in public health and occupational health covers many disciplines and areas. Broadly speaking, it helped me to develop sufficient competence in most of the skills needed in any public health team to work in the real world. The program armed me with the breadth of scientific knowledge and compass of research skills that will help me to advance my career.

Would you encourage your colleagues to join this program and why?

Dr. Akshaya: I strongly encourage healthcare professionals who wish to dedicate their careers to advancing healthcare delivery & practices and improving the health and wellbeing of the public to join this program. The doctoral degree in Public Health is suitable for a wide range of careers in the field, both academic and non-academic.

Interview with Hiba Parvez – an MPH Alumnus

Ms. Bayan: would you kindly tell us about yourself, your current position, work, and professional experience?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: I am a Doctor of Medicine and a Public Health professional. I have worked in a wide variety of roles including as a clinician and a clinical auditor, but my two most recent roles have been as COVID-19 response doctor and a medical writer and researcher.

Why did you choose the MPH program at UAEU?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: UAEU is the most prestigious government academic institution in the UAE. Moreover, they have an excellent Public Health Program with the most elite and accomplished faculty members.

How did the MPH program improve your knowledge?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: Public Health has broadened my horizons, shaped my approach as a clinician and most importantly taught me how to think like a researcher.

Do you think that the program has contributed to the improvement in your career?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: Certainly, the MPH program has really elevated my portfolio and helped me get into some really exciting career opportunities.

Would you encourage your colleagues to join the MPH program and why?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: I would encourage all my colleagues who have a passion for health care and love playing their role in the community to pursue the Public Health program at UAEU so –

they can gain knowledge, acquire skills and develop their expertise in an area in Public Health that they find exciting and satisfying.

What is your favorite quote and why?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: My favourite quote is “*Be the change you wish to see in the world*” by Mahatma Gandhi. I love this quote because it can motivate people to pursue their desires and also be an inspiration and an example for others to follow.

Who is your role model and why?

Dr. Hiba Parvez: My role model is Dr. Ruth Pfau. She was a doctor born and raised in Germany who visited Pakistan and began helping patients and their families. She did tremendous work to establish a hospital for leprosy patients, called the Mary Adelaide Leprosy Centre, and around 157 clinics. She decided to stay in Pakistan forever and dedicated her entire life to taking care of the sick and whoever needed health care.

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

Dr. Hiba Parvez: During this pandemic, Public Health has played the most important role of the modern century. Educating people, spreading awareness, limiting the spread of the disease, preventing disinformation and diminishing vaccine hesitancy have all greatly contributed to overcoming this public health crisis.



Research Training and Consultancy Service

Advance your knowledge and research capacity and skills 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 designing and execution of scientific research, 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.

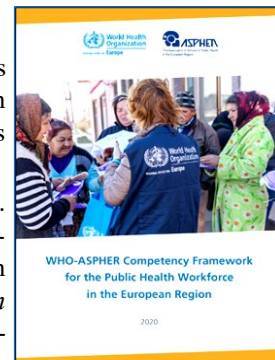
To visit profile of and contact faculty members at the IPH, please [Click here](#).

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 has become an Institutional Associate Member of the ASPHER.

WHO-ASPHER Competency Framework for the Public Health Workforce

The WHO-ASPHER Competency Framework for the Public Health Workforce in the European Region is aimed at policy-makers, human resources for health planners and professionals with a particular interest in the public health workforce, and other stakeholders, such as education institutions, public health institutes and others responsible for implementing policy and professional organizations.

EU Member States are requesting guidance on how to build the capacity of the public health workforce. The WHO-ASPHER Competency Framework can serve as a point of departure for developing more context-specific competencies. This publication is designed to support the application to the public health workforce of the tools presented in *The toolkit for a sustainable health workforce in the WHO European Region*, including measures to strengthen education and performance, planning and investment, capacity-building, analysis and monitoring.



For more reading: https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/444576/WHO-ASPHER-Public-Health-Workforce-Europe-eng.pdf

“COVID-DO-IT-ALL”

We need Integrated Protection Systems and Strategies against Omicron and other COVID-19 variants

Vigorous measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic winter resurgence in Europe 2021/22 are needed at international, regional and local levels, using all the evidence-based tools available to Health Authorities. In November, the Regional Director of the European office of World Health Organization warned Europe risked around 500,000 extra deaths from COVID, and the main concern was the delta variant. On the 26th of November, a new COVID-19 Variant of concern (VOC) was named by WHO ‘Omicron’ and highlighted as being of “high to very high risk”. On December 14th 2021, WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said *‘vaccines alone will not get any country out of this crisis. Countries can – and must – prevent the spread of Omicron with measures that work today. It’s not vaccines instead of masks. It’s not vaccines instead of distancing. It’s not vaccines instead of ventilation or hand hygiene. Do it all. Do it consistently. Do it well.’*



Read the ASPHER Statement ‘Do It All’: <https://www.aspher.org/download/989/aspher-covid-do-it-all.pdf>

COVID-19 Pandemic waves surveillance in another severe winter of 2021: A basic guide to understand epidemic contexts, interpret pandemic waves and trends, ahead of the curve

Interpretation of COVID-19 epidemic situations, trends and pandemic waves poses a challenge to epidemiologists and public health specialists around the world. The multiple mechanisms that shape pandemic waves characteristics are complex and it is often difficult and time consuming to create reliable predictive models, accurate forecasts and scenarios. However, a series of insights from field and intervention epidemiology can help interpret trends and signals by considering common pitfalls associated with context-free models. Better interpretation of wider emerging data may help decision makers to be ahead of the curve and reduce the negative impact of further epidemic waves in public health and mitigate the broader social impact of the disease. This article provides deeper insights into the interpretation of pandemic waves and epidemic situations in context and may be used as a guide for training and surveillance reporting, while generating further research hypotheses.

Read the full pandemic waves surveillance guide here: <https://www.aspher.org/download/989/aspher-covid-do-it-all.pdf>

Michael J Ryan, Andrija Stampar Medallist 2021

Michael J Ryan, Executive Director of the World Health Organization's Health Emergencies Program has been selected by ASPHER as the "2021 Andrija Stampar Medallist". Dr. Ryan hails from Ireland where he trained in medicine at the National University of Ireland in Galway. He studied for a Masters of Public Health at University College Dublin and later completed specialist training in communicable disease control, public health and infectious disease at the Health Protection Agency in London. Ryan also completed the European Program for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET). Dr Mike Ryan has been at the forefront of managing acute risks to global health for 25 years. He served as Assistant Director-General for Emergency Preparedness and Response in WHO's Health Emergencies Program from 2017 to 2019. Dr Ryan first joined WHO in 1996, with the newly established unit to respond to emerging and epidemic disease threats. He has worked in conflict affected countries and led many responses to high impact epidemics. He is a founding member of the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), which has aided the response to hundreds of disease outbreaks around the world. He served as Coordinator of Epidemic Response (2000-2003), Operational Coordinator of WHO's response to the SARS outbreak (2003), and as WHO's Director of Global Alert and Response (2005-2011). He was a Senior Advisor on Polio Eradication for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative from 2013 to 2017. He is currently leading the WHO team responsible for the international containment and treatment of COVID-19.



The 2021 European Public Health Conference Statement

ASPHER has officially co-signed the 2021 European Public Health Conference Statement. The Conference Statement urges all governments to build back better and fairer after the COVID-19 pandemic, and in ways that will limit climate change and its impacts.

It calls upon national and international decision-makers to:

- Base decisions and actions on the best available evidence, acknowledging that this may change;
- Invest in health systems, information systems, and a qualified (public) health workforce;
- Acknowledge public health and the public's health as cornerstones for a healthy and functioning society;
- Follow the guiding principles of Health in All Policies to ensure a whole-of-society approach to public health; and
- Focus on reducing health inequalities within and between countries by direct policy action.

To read more: https://eupha.org/repository/conference/2021/Statement/2021%20EPH%20Conference%20statement-final_Signed.pdf

ASPHER Working Group on Economic Evaluation in Healthcare in Europe webinar series

The ASPHER Working Group on Economic Evaluation in Healthcare in Europe (EEHE) launched a webinar series on Wednesday 15 December with a webinar on the topic of Personalized medicine and HTA: Economic evaluation and reimbursement. If you are interested in future EEHE webinars, contact m.pavlova@maastrichtuniversity.nl or post a message to @EEHE_WG



Statement of the Global Network for Academic Public Health - Global Governance for Improved Human, Animal, and Planetary Health: The Essential Role of Schools and Programs of Public Health

The Global Network for Academic Public Health (GNAPH) is an alliance of regional associations that represent schools and programs of public health around the world. GNAPH is focused on enhancing academic public health worldwide through mutual learning and collaborations between academic public health institutions globally to improve and protect the health of people and the planet. Global leaders' aspirations for better surveillance, greater response capacity, better global preparedness and preventive skills, better governance, and interdisciplinary collaboration must be translated into practical learning and professional development. Schools and programs of public health have extensive expertise in delivering education and training as well as building capacity for the many roles that will require public health professionals in the future. An important role of academic public health institutions is to serve our local, national, and global communities—from educating journalists and the public about important public health issues to collaborating with health departments on just-in-time training to providing expert guidance for decision-makers in government, non-profit, and for-profit sectors. Indeed, the public health experts on whom we have all come to rely during the pandemic were educated by, and work for and with, schools and programs of public health around the world. Major investment is required in a professional expert public health workforce. We set out some of the actions which schools and programs of public health are uniquely placed to deliver if the goal of better health is to be achieved.

To read more: <https://www.sspj-journal.org/articles/10.3389/phrs.2021.1604610/full>

The Global Network of Academic Public Health believes that

1. There must be increased understanding and recognition of the unique role of public health professionals, including recognition by governments and health systems for the profession of public health and for professional codes of conduct.
2. There must be a global willingness for public health professionals to be able to work across jurisdictional boundaries, with mutual recognition of qualifications.
3. There must be a strengthening of the public health profession, systems, data, and services in all countries.
4. There must be recognition of the multidisciplinary nature of the public health profession, systems, services, and all activities related to health improvement and protection.
5. The strengthening of public health systems and services will require research into workforce capacity, skills, and knowledge, and job and career opportunities at local, national, and global levels. The gaps in workforce capacity and skills identified must be addressed by investment in schools and programs of public health and other academic centers to grow the new public health workforce for local, national, and international deployment.
6. Necessary improvements in public health capacity require rapid investment in high volume, short course training for public health and other health professionals in preparedness, surveillance, and emergency response. There should be basic public health knowledge and awareness-raising training for others in related fields affecting the public's health including economics, finance, law, trade, and journalism; for political leaders and their advisors; and the public.
7. There must be increased understanding of public health amongst other disciplines, political decision-makers, the media, and the public.
8. There must be investment in education and training for lawyers and public health experts to develop the body of national, regional, and international public health laws and regulations.
9. There must be investment in public health leadership training to develop a cadre of new leaders at local, national, and global levels capable of conveying public health knowledge, building partnerships across agencies and with the public, and organizing the action required to protect and improve the public's health.
10. These requirements can only be met by recognizing the key role of, and investing in, schools and programs of public health as leaders in education, training, and research.

International Health Awareness Days

By Dr. Iffat Elbarazi – Assistant Professor at the IPH

World Diabetes Day

Every year on the 14th of November, the world celebrates the “*Diabetes Awareness Day*”. November is the Diabetes awareness month. This year the World Health Organization launched a campaign to improve access to medicine and care. This year the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of Insulin discovery and it was an opportunity to remind the world of the importance of advocacy and equity in care and cure provision for diabetes.



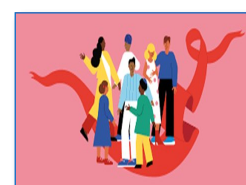
World AIDS Day

First of December is the “World AIDS Day”. In 2021, the year’s campaign theme was “*End inequalities – End AIDS*”.

The *End inequalities – End AIDS* campaign aimed to call against inequalities in access to essential HIV services, and focused on reaching those who are left behind. According to the WHO, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities and disruptions to services and access to vaccinations affecting the lives of many people living with HIV.

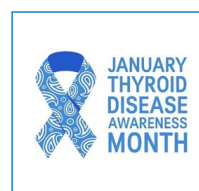
“The WHO is calling on global leaders and citizens to rally to confront the inequalities that drive HIV and to reach people who are currently not receiving essential HIV services.”

To read more: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/news-room/events/detail/2021/12/01/western-pacific-events/world-aids-day-2021>



Upcoming World Health Awareness Days

In January, the world celebrates the Thyroid Awareness Day. The Thyroid gland is an essential endocrine organ in our body. It controls body’s metabolism, maintains heart rate, sugar level and protects against bone loss by secreting and balancing thyroid hormones. As thyroid diseases are on the increase, the IPH recommends early screening and check-ups to detect and prevent thyroid diseases at early stage.



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Volume 2, Issue 4

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The Institute of Public Health Newsletter (IPHNL) quarterly published by the Institute of Public Health (IPH), College of Medicine and Health Science (CMHS), United Arab Emirates University (UAEU).

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