



Virtual Library: Public Health
What's New, November 2009

❖ Authors: Ali Farahnak and Mostafa Essalat

Title: [A study on cercarial dermatitis in Khuzestan province, south western Iran](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health*, 2003, 3: 35

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Cercarial dermatitis' or swimmer's itch' is an itchy inflammatory response to the penetration of the skin by non-human schistosome parasites. In the hot season, (May to September) in Khuzestan province in the south west of Iran, swimming in canals and agriculture activities in swampy areas are common. This survey was made on people from villages north of Ahwaz city in south west Iran, to estimate cercarial dermatitis in this region. Methods: 2000 people were observed for clinical signs of cercarial dermatitis. Also 2000 *Lymnaea gedrosiana* snails were collected from agriculture canals and examined for animal schistosome cercariae during 1998–2000. Results: From this survey 1.1% of people had pruritic maculopapular rash on their feet, hands or other parts of body. From the total of examined snails, 2.4% were found to be infected with bird schistosome cercariae including *Trichobilharzia* species. Conclusion: Cercarial dermatitis could be a health problem in this area. This is the first report of cercarial dermatitis from this region of Iran. [author abstract]

❖ Author: Alissar Rady

Title: [Advocacy Needs Assessment for Youth and HIV in Lebanon: Final Report](#)

Publisher: UNFPA and Global Youth Partners, September 2004

Category: [Lebanon](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Lebanon has started responding to the [HIV/AIDS] epidemic since more than 15 years by now. However, the response remains insufficient in certain areas especially in issues related to young people, and needs to be fostered in that respect. In this context, this review aims at identifying gaps and needs for a better advocacy in order to improve the national response to HIV among young people.”

❖ Authors: Yehuda D. Neumark, Catalina Lopez-Quintero, Alexander Grinshpoon and Daphna Levinson

Title: [Alcohol Drinking Patterns and Prevalence of Alcohol-Abuse and Dependence in the Israel National Health Survey](#)

Publisher: *Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci*, Vol 44 No. 2 (2007): 126–135

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Coexistence of disparate religious/cultural mores with regard to alcohol drinking within the changing social milieu of Israel provides an informative environment for investigation of alcohol consumption patterns and alcohol-related mental disorders. Method: A national population-based survey of Israeli adults was conducted as part of the WHO/World Mental Health Survey initiative. Logistic regression models accommodated the complex sampling design and accounted for potential confounders.



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Results: Half of the 4,859 respondents reported any alcohol consumption in the year prior to interview; 5% drink 3 or more times weekly. DSM-IV criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence (lifetime) were met by 4.3% of respondents. Significantly higher rates were found among males (AOR, adjusted odds ratio=7.3), younger adults (AOR=5.0), immigrants from the former Soviet Union (AOR=2.0), and those who were never married (AOR=1.6). Limitations: Under-reporting remains a potential concern in health behavior surveys, particularly in the face of opposing religious norms. Conclusions: The lifetime prevalence of alcohol abuse in Israel is identical to other European countries while drinking levels are considerably lower, suggesting a biological sensitivity alongside socio-cultural factors. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Abla-Mehio Sibai and Kasturi Sen

Title: [Can Lebanon conjure a public health phoenix from the ashes?](#)

Publisher: *BMJ* 2006; 333: 848–9

Category: [Lebanon](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: The recent bombing of Lebanon destroyed much of the country's largely high tech health infrastructure. As services are rebuilt their focus should be orientated towards primary care to meet the needs of the poor and uninsured. [publication summary]

❖ Title: [Cities and public health crises](#)

Publisher: Report of the international consultation, 29-30 October 2008, Lyon, France [World Health Organization 2009]

Category: [Urbanisation](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "The International Health Regulations require countries to strengthen their capacity for surveillance of and response to disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies both at national level and at state or city level too. That is why the World Health Organization (WHO), with the support of Lyonbiopôle, jointly organized an international technical consultation on "Cities and Public Health Crises" in Lyon, France, on 29-30 October 2008. Some 70 health specialists and others experienced in responding to disease outbreaks in cities took part... Crisis management in a city must be coordinated outside between the municipal and national or state authorities and inside between the services that provide health care and those that provide emergency response, as well as with public amenities such as transport services, airport and port authorities, tourism, industry, education, commerce, and the media. A framework for collaboration between national and local authorities in times of crisis must be developed in advance to avoid confusion... In today's largely urban and interconnected world, infectious disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies pose a real threat to large cities but that with a good understanding of the specific issues posed by urban settings, and appropriate preparation from municipal and national stakeholders, that threat can be mitigated."



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- ❖ Authors: Sara H. Al-Mahruqi, Jakko van Ingen, Suleiman Al-Busaidy, Martin J. Boeree, Samiya Al-Zadjali, Arti Patel, P.N. Richard Dekhuijzen, and Dick van Soelingen
Title: [Clinical Relevance of Nontuberculous Mycobacteria, Oman](#)
Publisher: *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol.15, No.2, pp.292-294, February 2009.
Category: [Oman](#)
Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects
Abstract: Little is known about the clinical relevance of nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) in the Arabian Peninsula. We assessed the prevalence and studied a random sample of isolates at a reference laboratory in Muscat, Oman. NTM cause disease in this region, and their prevalence has increased. [publication abstract]

- ❖ Author: Barbara Swirski
Title: [Co-payments for Health Services: Everyone Agrees that Something Needs to be Done but Nobody Does Anything](#)
Publisher: A position paper by Adav Center and PHR-Israel (Physicians for Human Rights – Israel), July 2008
Category: [Israel](#)
Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects
Abstract: There is broad agreement that access to health services should be as egalitarian as possible. There is also broad agreement that co-payments for drugs, visits to doctors and tests make these services less accessible to low-income persons. And there is agreement that the degree of access to health services influences a person's health. Thus, there have been many proposals to improve equality of access to health services by eliminating or reducing co-payments and replacing them with alternative sources of funding. If everyone agrees, the question that begs to be asked is: Why isn't anything being done? Why doesn't the government take the steps needed to improve equality of access to health services?

- ❖ Authors: F. Ansari, M. Sedehi Esfehiani and A Djazayery
Title: [Determination of Dietary Status as a Public Health Problem among Rural Women](#)
Publisher: *Pakistan Journal of Nutrition*, 7 (1): 102-103, 2008
Category: [Iran](#)
Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects
Abstract: Energy, protein and iron intakes and status were investigated in 471 married women, 20-56 years old, selected by 2-stage random sampling, in rural areas in Islamic Republic of Iran. Pre-tested 24-hour dietary recall questionnaire was used to get data on nutrition intakes. Although average total iron intake was acceptable, only 6.4% of women derived at least 4% of their total intake from animal iron. Average energy and protein intakes were inadequate. Fining of this study showed that this group with medium-to-low socioeconomic status should receive particular attention in national health and nutrition planning. [author abstract]



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❖ Authors: Jamshaid Iqbal and Ali Sher

Title: [Determination of the prevalence of lymphatic filariasis among migrant workers in Kuwait by detecting circulating filarial antigen](#)

Publisher: *Journal of Medical Microbiology* (2006), 55, 401–405

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: The main objective of this study was to determine the prevalence of filarial infection among migrant workers in Kuwait. The study was conducted from April 2000 to November 2003. A total of 1050 migrant workers (>90% from the Indian subcontinent) from filarial endemic countries and 260 individuals residing in Kuwait as controls (50 healthy Kuwaiti blood donors, 50 microfilaria-negative individuals from endemic areas and 160 patients with other parasitic infections) were screened for filarial infection. All specimens were tested for microfilaraemia by microscopy of nucleopore-filtered blood (NFB) and detection of circulating filarial antigen (CFA) by an immunochromatographic test (ICT) and the TropBio assay. The overall prevalence of filarial antigenaemia was 18.3% (192 individuals) using the ICT and 20.3% (213 individuals) using the TropBio assay. Thirty-two cases (3 %) of *Wuchereria bancrofti* were detected by microscopy and the mean microfilaria count in these cases was 816 microfilariae ml⁻¹. CFA was detected only in two of the 260 control subjects. Statistical analysis to calculate the sensitivity, specificity and prevalence of infection was carried out using maximum-likelihood statistical methods. The overall sensitivity and specificity of the ICT and TropBio assay to detect CFA were comparable. Compared with NFB microscopy, the sensitivity of the ICT was 93.8% and specificity ranged from 84 to 100%. The sensitivity and specificity of the TropBio assay were 90.1 and 100%, respectively. However, the ICT failed to detect CFA in two cases with a microfilarial load of <20 microfilariae ml⁻¹. In conclusion, the prevalence of filarial infection among the migrant workers in Kuwait was 18.3% as determined by the ICT. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [Diabetes Mellitus: Management Guidelines for Primary Health Care](#)

Publisher: Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman (Second Edition, November 2003)

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Currently, a substantial proportion of the Ministry’s budget is spent on chronic diseases management including diabetes mellitus and its cardiovascular and renal complications. This puts Oman’s health care system at crossroads. A system which has shown great strides in controlling infectious and childhood illnesses and achieved significant reduction in infant and under-5 mortality, has to change gear and face challenges of the 21st century in combating chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, myocardial infarctions and obesity, and its perpetrators in the form of unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and increase in tobacco use. One of the challenges to this objective was integrating and improving the quality of health care provided to people with diabetes. Towards this end, the Ministry has published its 1st clinical practice guidelines in 1996, to help primary care physicians to provide good standards of diabetes care. This 2nd edition comes not only as a guide for primary care professionals to the basic clinical case management, but also goes at great lengths to illustrate management at every stage, be it a first visit, a follow-up or an annual visit. It also attempts to describe the duties of the health care team looking after people with



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diabetes. This will help local teams to perform “process evaluation” of a primary centre. The current guidelines also include a detailed list of standards that ought to be present in each primary health centre and to be used to check each health center’s compliance in providing minimal standards of care for people with diabetes.”

❖ Title: [Diarrhoea: Why children are still dying and what can be done](#)

Publisher: The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) / World Health Organization (WHO), 2009

Category: [Population and family health](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Nearly nine million children under five years of age die each year. Diarrhoea is second only to pneumonia as the cause of these deaths. Why is diarrhoea, an easily preventable and treatable disease, one that in the developed world is considered little more than an inconvenience, causing an estimated 1.5 million under-five deaths every year?... This report sets out a 7-point strategy for comprehensive diarrhoea control that includes a treatment package to reduce child deaths, and a prevention package to reduce the number of diarrhoea cases for years to come. The report looks at treatment options such as low-osmolarity ORS and zinc tablets, as well as prevention measures such as the promotion of breastfeeding, vitamin A supplementation, immunization against rotavirus – a leading cause of diarrhoea – and proven methods of improving water, sanitation and hygiene practices... Saving the lives of millions of children at risk of death from diarrhoea is possible with a comprehensive strategy that ensures all children in need receive critical prevention and treatment measures.”

❖ Authors: Chrystalleni Lazarou, Demosthenes B Panagiotakos, Christiana Kouta and Antonia-Leda Matalas

Title: [Dietary and other lifestyle characteristics of Cypriot school children: results from the nationwide CYKIDS study](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2009, Volume 9:147

Category: [Cyprus](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Dietary and lifestyle behaviors at young ages have been associated with the development of various chronic diseases. Schools are regarded as an excellent setting for lifestyle modification; there is a lack, however, of published dietary data in Cypriot school children. Thus, the objective of this work was to describe lifestyle characteristics of a representative segment of Cypriot school children and provide implications for school health education. Methods: The CYKIDS (Cyprus Kids Study) is a national, cross-sectional study conducted among 1140 school children (10.7 ± 0.98 years). Sampling was stratified and multistage in 24 primary schools of Cyprus. Dietary assessment was based on a 154-item semi-quantitative food-frequency questionnaire and three supplementary questionnaires, assessing dietary patterns and behaviors. Adherence to the Mediterranean diet was evaluated by the KIDMED index (Mediterranean Diet Quality Index for children and adolescents). Physical activity was assessed by a 32-item, semi-quantitative questionnaire. Results: Analysis revealed that 6.7% of the children were classified as high



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adherers, whereas 37% as low adherers to the Mediterranean diet. About 20% of boys and 25% of girls reported "not having breakfast on most days of the week", while more than 80% of the children reported having meals with the family at least 5 times/week. Some food-related behaviors, such as intake of breakfast, were associated with socio-demographic factors, mostly with gender and the geomorphological characteristics of the living milieu. With respect to physical activity, boys reported higher levels compared to girls, however, one fourth of children did not report any kind of physical activity. Conclusion: A large percentage of Cypriot school children have a diet of low quality and inadequate physical activity. Public health policy makers should urgently focus their attention to primary school children and design school health education programs that target the areas that need attention in order to reduce the future burden of metabolic disorders and chronic diseases. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Maren Johanne Heilskov Rytter, Anne-Lene Kjældgaard, Henrik Brønnum-Hansen and Karin Helweg-Larsen

Title: [Effects of armed conflict on access to emergency health care in Palestinian West Bank: systematic collection of data in emergency departments](#)

Publisher: *BMJ*, Volume 332, 13 May 2006, pp.1122-1124

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objective: To assess the impact of restrictions in access to hospital services imposed on the civilian population during the armed conflict in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. Design: Consecutive registration of demographic and medical data, with information about transportation time, delay in access to hospital, and course of hospital contact. Setting: Three hospital emergency departments in Bethlehem and Nablus, in the occupied Palestinian West Bank, during one week in each hospital. Participants: All patients seeking health care in the three hospitals during the study period. Results: A total of 394 of the 2228 emergency department contacts reported being delayed at checkpoints or by detours on their way to the emergency department. Hospital admission was significantly more common for these patients: 32% (n = 125) compared with 13% (n = 205) among those who were not delayed. Conclusion: 18% of the emergency department contacts were delayed because of the occupation. The higher hospital admission rate in this group suggests that restrictions in access to hospital services influence the severity of the medical conditions presented. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Peter Preuss, Henry Falk, Andrew Farmer, Erik Lebret and Jaroslav Volf

Title: [Environmental Health in Israel: Towards Enhancing Capacity and Capabilities](#)

Publisher: Yad Hanadiv (the Rothschild Foundation), c2005

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "At the end of May 2005, Yad Hanadiv (the Rothschild Foundation) hosted a Committee of experts in the field of environmental health, invited to Israel for a week of meetings to offer recommendations as to what is needed to improve capacity in the area of environmental health in Israel... The Committee considered the major components necessary for an effective environmental health programme, assessed the Israeli situation in light of



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these components, and developed a series of recommendations... The Committee heard many concerns about environmental pollution and suspected health impacts. These include air pollution, surface and ground water contamination, worker and public exposure to hazardous chemicals resulting from industrial leaks and explosions, elevated national and regional cancer rates, elevated asthma rates, possibly higher than normal local birth defects, and more. Although the Committee is not aware of quantified estimates of the environmental-health burden in Israel, given what is known about environmental health in other countries and what the Committee learned about pollution and potentially environmental-related disease in Israel, it concluded that Israel's environmental burden of disease is likely to be significant. However, Israel lacks sufficient expertise to assess this burden and has only limited environmental and health policies designed to reduce it."

❖ Author: KP Prakash

Title: [Epidemiology and Antimicrobial Resistance of Enteric Pathogens in Dhahira Region, Oman](#)

Publisher: *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 37, No.3, 2008, pp.60-69

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: We reviewed the monthly laboratory surveillance reports and hospital laboratory database in Dhahira region, Oman. Methods: All patients for whom a stool sample examination request was made from 1st January 2002 to 31st December 2006 (5 years) were included in the study. Antimicrobial resistance pattern was studied for 2 years period. The cultures were done using standard laboratory procedures and antibiotic sensitivity by Kirby Bauer disc diffusion method. Results: Of the 85,210 stool samples examined, 18% showed positive result for one or more parasitic infection. The most common were *E. histolytica* (7.1%), *Giardia* (7.9%) and *E. coli* (1.9%). A total of 7,830 cultures were done, among them 11.4% showed positive result for bacterial pathogen. The most common were *Salmonella* (5.8%) and *Shigella* species (4.4%). The antimicrobial susceptibility patterns of 265 bacterial pathogens were analyzed. Of the *Shigella* strains, 71.8% were resistant to trimethoprim/sulphamethoxazole (SXT) and 39.4% to ampicillin and 32.4% to tetracycline. *Salmonella* and *E. coli* strains were frequently resistant to ampicillin (12.5% and 47.7%, respectively) Conclusion: This study provides important information on the prevalence and antimicrobial resistance pattern of enteric pathogens in Dhahira region population. SXT, ampicillin, and tetracycline are the drugs commonly associated with resistance. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Badria M.Al-Kanderi, Fatma A. Al-Muhaileej and Tahani Al-Khalaf

Title: [Evaluation of asthma clinics in primary care in Kuwait](#)

Publisher: *Eur J Gen Med* 2006; 3(4): 159-166

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Aim: To determine the difference between asthmatics followed in asthma clinics, and asthmatics followed in non-asthma clinics in terms of knowledge about asthma definition, knowledge about provokers, proper inhaler technique, proper medication used and



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impact of asthma on life. Methods: This is a survey study conducted during the period of May 2005 to April 2006. The study included 136 Kuwaiti asthmatics, 12 years and above who are registered in asthma clinics distributed in different health areas. These cases were matched by age and sex with 136 controls collected from non-asthma ordinary primary care clinics. A specially designed questionnaire was developed based on five broad sections: socio-demographic characteristics, asthma history, asthma knowledge, effect of asthma on patient and finally patient satisfaction. Data were collected through interviews with cases in asthma clinics and controls in other clinics who came for asthma or other complaints.

Results: The study showed that there is a significant difference between asthmatics in asthma clinics and those in non-asthma clinics in terms of knowledge about asthma as a disease and its most known provokers. They were more on proper medication especially anti-inflammatory and were more proficient in using the inhaler. Conclusion: Expanding asthma clinics can be used as an opportunity to improve asthma care at primary care level. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [FAO – Nutrition Country Profile: State of Kuwait](#)

Publisher: Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO, 2006

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: UN and multinational

Abstract: Per capita income is high. Access to social services is very good and the Human Development Index is high. Education is free and compulsory for all citizens until the age of 15 years. Health care, including immunization, is free for all Kuwaitis. The socio-economic development which followed the discovery of oil resources brought considerable changes to the food patterns and lifestyles of the Kuwaiti population. Traditional foods have been replaced by energy-dense high-fat foods. Excessive dietary intake and unbalanced diets along with sedentary lifestyles have contributed to the increase in the prevalence of overnutrition and the incidence of diet related non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Currently approximately 80% of adult women are overweight or obese. Overnutrition is also highly prevalent among school children and adolescents. Stunting and wasting do not constitute health problems in Kuwait. While overnutrition is progressing at an alarming rate among both men and women, iron deficiency anemia persists, affecting children, adolescents and women. Since 1985, the government is actively promoting breastfeeding. However, early initiation of breastfeeding is still rare and duration is short. Breastmilk substitutes are subsidized and bottle-feeding is widespread. More efforts are needed for the promotion of breastfeeding and adequate infant feeding practices. Better infant feeding practices could play a role in preventing overnutrition. The government of Kuwait is actively implementing policies to curb the obesity and non-communicable disease epidemic. Nevertheless measures are needed to more effectively promote healthy eating and to increase the population's, and particularly women's, level of physical activity. While the health and nutrition situation of the Kuwaiti population is well documented, that of the non- Kuwaiti population, which represents two thirds of the total population, urgently needs to be evaluated. [publication summary]



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❖ Authors: Anna Rajab and Ali Mohammed Jaffer

Title: [Genetic Diseases in the Sultanate of Oman: Public Health Perspective](#)

Publisher: *Genetic Disorders in the Arab World – Oman*, Volume 3, 2008

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “There has been a significant decrease in the incidence of communicable diseases and in the mortality and morbidity rates of infants and children under 5 years. The national incidence of stillbirths and of congenital anomalies is recorded as 0.9% and 16.9% respectively. The figures are astoundingly high when the incidence of congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities are considered together (73/1000 births). The estimated incidence of children born with congenital and genetic disorders is 7% as compared to 4.4% in Europe. The difference is suggested to be due to the high prevalence of inherited red cell disorders, advanced maternal age, and customary consanguineous marriages.”

❖ Authors: Salim M. Adib, Nagi S. El Saghir and Walid Ammar

Title: [Guidelines for breast cancer screening in Lebanon: Public Health Communication](#)

Publisher: *Lebanese Medical Journal* 2009, 57 (2): 72-74

Category: [Lebanon](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: The accumulation of national epidemiological data since the late 1990s has led to the adoption of evidence-based guidelines for breast cancer screening in Lebanon (2006). Almost 50% of breast cancer patients in Lebanon are below the age of 50 years and the age-adjusted incidence rate is estimated at 69 new cases per 100,000 per year (2004). This official notification calls for breast self-examination (BSE) every month starting age 20, and a clinical breast examination (CBE) performed by a physician every three years between the ages of 20 and 40 years. Starting age 40, and for as long as a woman is in good health, an annual CBE and mammography are recommended. Women with known genetic family history of breast cancer should start screening 10 years earlier than the first young patient in the family, or earlier depending on medical advice. The Breast Cancer National Task Force (BCNTF) recommends certification of mammography centers and continued training of personnel to assure high quality mammograms, and to minimize unnecessary investigations and surgeries. It recommends that a national program should record call-backs of women for annual screening and follow-up data on abnormal mammograms. BCNTF encourages the adoption of these guidelines and monitoring of their results, as well as follow-up of breast cancer epidemiology and registry in Lebanon, and scientific progress in early breast cancer detection to determine needs for modifications in the future. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Ashraf Eljedi, Rafael T Mikolajczyk, Alexander Kraemer and Ulrich Laaser

Title: [Health-related quality of life in diabetic patients and controls without diabetes in refugee camps in the Gaza strip: a cross-sectional study](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2006, 6: 268

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects



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Abstract: Background: Prevalence of diabetes mellitus is increasing in developed and developing countries. Diabetes is known to strongly affect the health-related quality of life (HRQOL). HRQOL is also influenced by living conditions. We analysed the effects of having diabetes on HRQOL under the living conditions in refugee camps in the Gaza strip. **Methods:** We studied a sample of 197 diabetic patients who were recruited from three refugee camps in the Gaza strip and 197 age- and sex-matched controls living in the same camps. To assess HRQOL, we used the World Health Organization Quality of Life questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF) including four domains (physical health, psychological, social relations and environment). Domain scores were compared for cases (diabetic patients) and controls (persons without diabetes) and the impact of socio-economic factors was evaluated in both groups. **Results:** All domains were strongly reduced in diabetic patients as compared to controls, with stronger effects in physical health (36.7 vs. 75.9 points of the 0–100 score) and psychological domains (34.8 vs. 70.0) and weaker effects in social relationships (52.4 vs. 71.4) and environment domains (23.4 vs. 36.2). The impact of diabetes on HRQOL was especially severe among females and older subjects (above 50 years). Low socioeconomic status had a strong negative impact on HRQOL in the younger age group (<50 years). **Conclusion:** HRQOL is strongly reduced in diabetic patients living in refugee camps in the Gaza strip. Women and older patients are especially affected. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Hamed S. Al Bulushi and Daniel J. West, Jr

Title: [Health System Reforms and Community Involvement in Oman](#)

Publisher: *Journal of Health Sciences Management and Public Health*, vo.1, pp.16-29 (2006)

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Community involvement requires participation of people in the analysis, decision-making, planning, and program implementation of health services, as well as in health promotion activities. In Oman, community involvement is not well established and in order to sustain and strengthen MOH achievements, the Ministry of Health must develop mechanisms for involving and strengthening community health. There is a political commitment to meaningfully involve communities in the health system, and one of the MOH priorities is increasing community involvement in health care activities. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Rashed A. Al-Owaish, Shakil Anwar, Promila Sharma and Syed F. Shah

Title: [HIV/AIDS prevalence among male patients in Kuwait](#)

Publisher: *Saudi Medical Journal* 2000; Vol. 21 (9): 852-859

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objective: To determine the prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus infection among male patients with sexually transmitted disease in Kuwait with emphasis on the type of sexually transmitted diseases and sexual partners. Method: A sentinel surveillance was conducted among male sexually transmitted disease patients, randomly selected among all new sexually transmitted disease patients who visited the Family Planning Clinic during June 1996 to June 1997. The patient data was recorded by the attending physician on a specially designed questionnaire. Results: A total of 1984 subjects were screened, out of which not a



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single human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome case was found. Among the screened, 69% were non-Kuwaitis. Most of the subjects (76%) belonged to the age group 15-34 years, were married (53%), were illiterate (37.5%) and belonged to the low SES group (70%). The most common sexually transmitted diseases were non-specific urethritis (45%) and gonorrhea (42%). With regard to sexual practices, the majority of the respondents showed preference for female prostitutes, both inside (50%) and outside (48%) Kuwait. Conclusion: The absence of any human immunodeficiency virus positive case was probably due to the mandatory screening for granting residency in Kuwait, facilitating early detection of virus carriers among non- Kuwaitis. We, as researchers, are not sure if this study is true representation of human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome prevalence among Kuwaiti sexually transmitted disease patients in this country who might seek treatment in private clinics. Moreover, the absence of prostitution as professional trade also tends to show the absence of indigenous circulation of the virus. Nevertheless, continuous surveillance is necessary to maintain and prevent the groups with risky behaviors from contracting the virus through sexual transmission. There is a distinct need to develop public education and awareness programs to serve as measures of prevention and protection. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Orna Baron-Epel, Noga Garty, and Manfred S. Green

Title: [Inequalities in Use of Health Services among Jews and Arabs in Israel](#)

Publisher: *Health Services Research*, June 2007; 42(3 Pt 1): 1008–1019

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objectives: To compare the levels of utilization of health services in Jews and Arabs taking into account differences in levels of socioeconomic status (SES) in a country with a National Health Insurance Law (NHIL). Data Source/Study Setting: Across-sectional National Health Interview Survey was carried out in Israel based on a random sample of telephone numbers as part of the EUROHIS project (WHO European Health Interview Survey 2003–2004). Study Design: A random telephone survey included 9,352 interviews. Questions included use of health care services, health status, and socioeconomic variables. Principal Findings: After adjusting for sex, age, income, education, marital status, and self-reported chronic diseases, Arabs more often reported visiting a family physician (odds ratio [OR] 1.56, 95 percent confidence interval [CI] 1.35–1.81) and less often reported visiting a specialist (OR 0.73, 95 percent CI 0.60–0.89) compared with Jews. In addition, the odds ratio for hospitalization was similar among Arabs and Jews (OR 1.16, 95 percent CI 0.97–1.38). SES was associated with utilization of health care services only in the Jewish population. Conclusions: A different pattern of utilization of health care services was observed in Arabs and Jews. This was not explained by differences in socioeconomic levels. More research is needed regarding the distribution of services between Jews and Arabs. [author abstract]



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❖ Authors: Melinda J. Morton and Gilbert M. Burnham

Title: [Iraq's Internally Displaced Persons: A Hidden Crisis](#)

Publisher: *JAMA*, 2008; 300(6):727-729

Category: [Iraq](#); [Migration](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Internal displacement and refugee flight due to violence and instability have forced approximately 1 in 6 Iraqis from their homes.¹ The plight of persons displaced within Iraq by pervasive violence has received less attention than has the flood of Iraqi refugees into neighboring countries. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Iraq now number 2.8 million² and are far less accessible to aid organizations than Iraqi refugees.³ While the protection and care of refugees are covered in an international mandate, IDPs, fleeing for the same reasons as refugees, are covered by the weaker Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.⁴ Political issues over sovereignty are at the root of this disparity.”

❖ Author: Patricia Weiss Fagen

Title: [Iraqi Refugees: Seeking Stability in Syria and Jordan](#)

Publisher: Institute for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University and Center for International and Regional Studies Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, 2007

Category: [Iraq](#); [Syria](#); [Jordan](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Over two million Iraqis are refugees in the Middle East, living in difficult conditions, primarily in Jordan and Syria. Their unresolved plight and their still largely unmet needs constitute a humanitarian crisis. Their presence has had an impact on the two countries where they are concentrated and, by extension, on the region as a whole. Although long hosts to Palestinian refugees, the countries of the Middle East have not been major refugee destinations in recent decades and this report raises questions about the limited regional response to a major refugee flow. At this point, most Iraqis and their hosts hope for a quick and peaceful end to the insecurity that has precipitated the flight, but events in Iraq raise serious doubts that their hopes will soon be fulfilled. Some Iraqis are hoping for resettlement in the United States and other countries of the west, a hope thus far available only to a very few. The report raises questions about the apparently limited ability of the US and other countries to mobilize a major resettlement effort similar to those that took place during the Cold War. More fundamental to the lives of the vast majority of the Iraqi refugees, it calls on the international community to launch a more robust humanitarian response that will assist and protect the Iraqi refugees while addressing the legitimate economic, political and security concerns of Jordan and Syria as hosts to such large numbers of refugees.”

❖ Authors: Anahita Tavoosi, Azadeh Zaferani, Anahita Enzevaei, Parvin Tajik and Zahra Ahmadinezhad

Title: [Knowledge and attitude towards HIV/AIDS among Iranian students](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health*, 2004, 4:17

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects



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Abstract: Background: Young people are of particular importance in state policies against Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). We intended to assess the knowledge and attitude of high school students regarding AIDS in Iran. Methods: Through a cluster-sampling, 4641 students from 52 high schools in Tehran were assessed by anonymous questionnaires in February 2002. Results: The students identified television as their most important source of information about AIDS. Only a few students answered all the knowledge questions correctly, and there were many misconceptions about the routes of transmission. Mosquito bites (33%), public swimming pools (21%), and public toilets (20%) were incorrectly identified as routes of transmission. 46% believed that Human Immunodeficiency Virus positive (HIV positive) students should not attend ordinary schools. Most of the students wanted to know more about AIDS. In this study knowledge level was associated with students' attitudes and discipline ($p < 0.001$). Conclusion: Although the knowledge level seems to be moderately high, misconceptions about the routes of transmission were common. There was a substantial intolerant attitude towards AIDS and HIV positive patients. We recommend that strategies for AIDS risk reduction in adolescents be developed in Iranian high schools. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Mohammed A Al Shafae, Sulaiman Al-Shukaili, Syed Gauher A Rizvi, Yahya Al Farsi, Mushtaq A Khan, Shyam S Ganguly, Mustafa Afifi and Samir Al Adawi

Title: [Knowledge and perceptions of diabetes in a semi-urban Omani population](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2008, 8:249

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Diabetes mellitus is a major public health problem in the Sultanate of Oman. This study aimed to evaluate the knowledge and perception of diabetes in a sample of the Omani general population, and the associations between the elements of knowledge and perception, and sociodemographic factors. Methods: The study was carried out in two semi-urban localities. A total of 563 adult residents were interviewed, using a questionnaire specifically designed for the present study. In addition to demographic information, the questionnaire contained questions on knowledge related to diabetes definition, symptoms, risk factors, complications and preventative measures, as well as risk perception for diabetes. Results: Knowledge of diabetes was suboptimal. The percentages of correct responses to questions on diabetes definition, classical symptoms, and complications were 46.5%, 57.0%, and 55.1%, respectively. Only 29.5%, 20.8% and 16.9% identified obesity, physical inactivity and a positive family history, respectively, as risk factors for diabetes. A higher level of education, a higher household income, and the presence of a family history of diabetes were found to be positively associated with more knowledge. Conclusion: This study demonstrated that there is lack of awareness of major risk factors for diabetes mellitus. Level of education is the most significant predictor of knowledge regarding risk factors, complications and the prevention of diabetes. Given that the prevalence of diabetes has increased drastically in Oman over the last decade, health promotion seems essential, along with other means to prevent and control this emerging health problem. [author abstract]



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❖ Title: [Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization \(KIMS\)](#)

Publisher: KIMS (website)

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Academic institutions

Abstract: “Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization (KIMS) of the Ministry of Health, State of Kuwait is the authority responsible for organizing all aspects of postgraduate training of medical practitioners and other health professionals in Kuwait. KIMS was established in 1984 under a decree issued by HH the Amir of Kuwait. The institute is engaged in a variety of activities, including the organization of internship training of pre-registration medical graduates, specialty training at various levels in different medical fields, and continuing medical education programs for health professionals practicing in Kuwait.”

❖ Title: [Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health Strategy in Iraq, 2005-2008](#)

Publisher: Ministry of Health in Iraq, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPAP, and WFP, c2004

Category: [Iraq](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “The purpose of this document is to provide strategic directions for policy makers, health care providers on the health of women and children in Iraq in order to act upon achieving the recommended plan of action in order to improve quality of life for women and children in specific, and the total population in general. The strength of this document comes from the fact that the document was developed by Iraqi health planners, health care providers (Physicians, Nurses, midwives, pharmacists) and decision makers. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Higher Education, Iraqi non governmental organizations and International organizations also participated in series of consultations and national seminars in the development of document which has started with 7 days workshop in June 2-7, 2004 on ‘Maternal Child Health and Reproductive Health strategy’. The workshop was organized by WHO in collaboration with MOH/UNICEF/UNFPA.”

❖ Authors: Mohammad Hajizadeh, Luke B. Connelly, Jim R. G. Butler and Ardeshir Khosravi

Title: [Measuring Horizontal Inequities in Iran's Health Care System Using Wealth Index](#)

Publisher: Paper presented at the 31st Australian Conference of Health Economists in Hobart on 1-2 October 2009.

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: This paper uses nationwide survey data derived from the 2003 Utilization of Health Services Survey (UHSS) in Iran (n=16,935) to measure deviations from the horizontal equity (equal health care for equal need) principle in ambulatory care and inpatient utilization in Iran. We estimate indices of horizontal inequity for health care utilization using six measures of health care consumption: hospital admissions, general practitioner visits, specialist visits, dentist visits, any visit to a medical practitioner (“physician visits”), and ambulatory care visits. A measure of income is typically used to construct such concentration indices. The UHSS does not, however, contain income data. To overcome this data limitation, observable household characteristics are used to construct a wealth index (WI). Specifically, we use



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principal component analysis (PCA) to construct a measure of household wealth that is based on household assets, including: the number of rooms of the dwelling per (household) capita, indicators for whether or not the dwelling has a bathroom, separate kitchen, and the types of cooking, heating and cooling devices, the household possesses, as well as car and motorcycle ownership. Indirect standardization is used to generate horizontal inequity (HI) indices in two ways: (i) with only health care indicators (self-reported need for health care services, age and gender) and (ii) with health care need indicators, plus other socioeconomic variables (e.g. income, education, region of residence). Irrespective of which standardization approach is adopted, the computed HIs are positive for all health services except hospital admissions (for which the index is negative when we include both health and socioeconomic and demographic variables in the standardization function). These results suggest that the utilization of health care in Iran is generally – with the exception of hospital admissions – pro-rich. Moreover, we find that not only are doctor visits has a pro-rich distribution but also that the distribution of specialist services is more pro-rich than the distribution of primary health care (GP) services. This work is the first study to employ such a WI measure to generate estimates of health sector inequalities. Thus, in addition to producing novel results for Iran, this approach may be useful in other settings where data on income per se is not readily available. [author abstract]

❖ Author: Peter C Smith

Title: [Measuring value for money in healthcare: concepts and tools](#)

Publisher: QUP (Quest for Quality and Improved Performance) and The Health Foundation, September 2009

Category: [Health economics](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “The concept of value for money (VfM) has been central to health policy and the delivery of healthcare for some time. In its abstract form, the concept of VfM is straightforward: it represents the ratio of some measure of valued health system outputs to the associated expenditure, and few would argue that its pursuit is not a worthy goal. The main reasons for an interest in VfM relate to accountability: to reassure payers, in particular taxpayers, that their money is being spent wisely, and to reassure patients that their claims on the health system are being treated fairly and consistently.”

❖ Authors: Douglas Ball, Klara Tisocki and Nabeel Al-Saffar

Title: [Medicine prices in the State of Kuwait: Report of a survey on medicine prices in Kuwait](#)

Publisher: Health Action International (HAI) and the World Health Organization, March 2005

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: A survey of the availability and prices of 35 medicines was undertaken in the public and private sector pharmacies in Kuwait in 2004 using the HAI/WHO medicines price survey methodology. Methods: Public procurement prices were obtained from the Central Medical Stores (CMS) and 25 private retail pharmacies were



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surveyed for prices that the patient would pay. Availability of innovator brand (IB), most sold generic (MSG; generic product with the highest sales nationally) and lowest priced generic (LPG; generic product with the lowest price at each facility) equivalents was assessed in 25 public health facilities (5 general hospitals and 20 polyclinics) as well as the 25 private pharmacies. Results: Central Medical Stores had over 90% availability of the survey medicines. Availability of the survey medicines at public health facilities on the day of the survey was low (IB 12%, MSG 0%, LPG 12%) but this was mostly related to the restricted distribution of many of the survey medicines within polyclinics. Innovator brands were more likely to be found in private retail pharmacies than generics (IB 84%, MSG 0%, LPG 0%). The public procurement median price ratio (MPR) to MSH reference prices was 5.0 for IB and 1.2 for generic equivalents; in the private pharmacies, the median MPRs for IB, MSG and LPG were 18.3, 16.1, and 15.9 respectively. In private pharmacies, IB beclometasone inhaler had the lowest MPR (3.7) whereas IB ciprofloxacin had the highest MPR of 110. For medicines from private pharmacies, the median MPRs compared to Australian PBS prices were 1.7 (IB), 1.9 (MSG) and 1.9 (LPG). On average, MSG products were 87% of the price of the corresponding IB in private retail pharmacies. The lowest paid government worker of Kuwaiti nationality would need between 0.1 and 3.8 days' pay to afford the model treatments (for example for gastric ulcer, hypertension and asthma) from private pharmacies. For non-Kuwaiti unskilled workers, however, the model treatments were generally not affordable and would require between 0.8 and 22.0 days' wages. There was an error rate of 15.5% in the pricing of IB products compared to official price lists, with a tendency towards higher prices. Generic product pricing showed a similar error rate. However, there appeared to be no systematic attempts of overpricing on a product-wide basis. Private pharmacy medicines prices included a total mark-up of 70% over the CIF price based on 2004 drug prices. Conclusions: Public sector procurement of medicines in Kuwait is effective and efficient although the reliance on some innovator brands does not seem necessary. Increased procurement of generics in the public sector could lead to more cost-effective utilisation of resources. Medicines prices in the private sector are almost twice those in Australian PBS reference prices, with a wide range between individual medicines. Limited generic penetration of the market means some medicines would be unaffordable to low-paid non-Kuwaiti workers if they had to purchase them from private retail pharmacies. When generic pharmaceuticals are available they are often priced only 10-15% below the innovator brand price due to lack of competition and the pricing regulation system. Increased availability of low-cost generic medicines in the private retail pharmacies e.g. through taking advantage of the public sector procurement system, could result in dramatic reduction in out-of-pocket pharmaceutical expenses to patients who need to purchase medicines from the private sector. [publication executive summary]

❖ Author: Lubna Abushaikha

Title: [Midwifery Education in Jordan: History, Challenges and Proposed Solutions](#)

Publisher: *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Vol. 8, no.1, November 2006, pp.185-193

Category: [Jordan](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects



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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to provide a historical overview of midwifery education in Jordan during the past fifty years with an emphasis on the first bachelor of midwifery program in Jordan. Nine challenges of midwifery education that include expanding midwifery educational needs, accreditation of programs, recruiting qualified faculty members, clinical training, midwifery preceptorship, exit examinations, continuing midwifery education, recognition of midwifery graduates, and lack of graduate midwifery programs are presented. Proposed solutions for these challenges are discussed. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [Migration and health: Challenges and trends](#)

Publisher: Reference Number: IS-1663 E: Norwegian Directorate of Health, 2009

Category: [Norway](#); [Migration](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "In the report, the Directorate of Health focuses on the diversity of the Norwegian population today, and the nature of the health challenges faced by society. These challenges concern both the individual circumstances of the patient and health care provider, and the organisation of the health service."

❖ Title: [Ministry of Health, Republic of Cyprus](#)

Category: [Cyprus](#)

Category Topic: Government

❖ Title: [Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman](#)

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Government

❖ Title: [Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Islamic Republic of Iran](#)

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Government

Abstract: In Persian.

❖ Authors: Mohtaram Nematollahi, Nader Khalesi, Hamid Moghaddasi, Mehrdad Askarian and Parvin Afsarkazerooni

Title: [National HIV/AIDS Surveillance Pattern for Iran's Health System](#)

Publisher: *Health Information Management*, Vol 4, No 2 (1386) [2008]

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Introduction: The present research has been conducted to design the HIV/AIDS Surveillance system for Iran applying WHO recommendations, using the experiences of the countries having the lead in the design and implementation of the system. Methods: In this descriptive study of applied kind, we initially investigated the existing circumstances



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governing Iran's HIV/AIDS information system from the Ministry of Health using a checklist. Subsequently, the HIV/AIDS surveillance system of selected countries (USA, United Kingdom and Australia) were studied and based on the country's requirements, a model was proposed and designed for Iran. The Delphi technique was utilized to find the views of 24 experts in infectious diseases and Health Information Management. The validity of research instruments was measured using content validity and the reliability was obtained using attest-retest method. Results: A model for HIV/AIDS surveillance system was presented based on WHO recommendations and using the experiences of selected countries. This was presented in six axes: general specifications of the system, minimum data set, data collection and reporting, data processing, data processing rules, and data distribution. Using Delphi technique, the results were approved obtaining the score of 36.3 out of 44 (82.5 percent). Conclusion: The design and implementation of HIV/AIDS surveillance system at the nation level in Iran is proposed for a better understanding of the epidemic procedure and spreading behaviors as well as focusing on the at high risk subpopulations and designing a prevention and care system using high quality data. Document in Persian.

❖ Authors: A Amirkhani, SM Alavian, M Dashti, T Aminaie, G Ardalan, H Ziaoddini and R Kelishadi

Title: [National Integrated School Health Screening Program in Iran](#)

Publisher: *Iranian J Publ Health*, Vol. 38, Suppl. 1, 2009, pp.88-89

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Screening program in schools are designed to identify children who have early signs of health problems. This study provides information about the findings of national screening program in Iran. Methods: This national program is conducted by the Ministry of Health& Medical Education (MOHME) with collaboration of the Ministry of Education & Training. This program had two major parts including 1) screening of behavioral, hearing and visual disorders, pediculosis and calculating body mass index and 2) physical examination of students, conducted by primary care physicians. All services are offered free of charge. The students' parents are informed about the health status of their children. Results: The screening program conducted in 2007-2008 included 3,124,021 students from 33 cities who were studying in the first- and third- grade- students in elementary schools, first- grade- students in middle and high schools. Of total students studied, 12.48% had weight disorders, i.e. body mass index <3rd percentile or > 95th percentile. 4.77% had visual disorders, 3.95 % had head lice, 2.24% had behavioral disorders, and 0.6% had hearing disorders. Conclusion: In addition to its benefits to the students' health status, the results of this screening program help health policy makers to design interventions for prevention and or early detection and treatment of the most common disorders documented among school students. [author abstract]



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❖ Authors: Sarah Catherine Walpole, Kumanan Rasanathan & Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum
Title: [Natural and unnatural synergies: climate change policy and health equity](#)
Publisher: *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, Volume 87, Number 10, October 2009, pp.733-804.

Category: [Inequalities and health](#); [Environmental health](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Climate change and health inequities represent two of the greatest challenges to human development in the 21st century. As the Copenhagen summit on climate change planned for December 2009 approaches, there are opportunities to use the political momentum of climate change to promote health equity. The broad-ranging policies required to address climate change have both positive and negative implications for health and health equity. Similarly, interventions to reduce health gaps will not necessarily help stabilize the climate. Poorly designed policies could easily undermine both climate and health equity goals, and reduce public support for their implementation. This paper reviews the potential tensions between climate stabilization and improving health equity and discusses how these might be resolved.”

❖ Authors: Saeed Akhtar and Hameed GHM Mohammad

Title: [Nonlinear pattern of pulmonary tuberculosis among migrants at entry in Kuwait: 1997–2006](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2008, 8:264

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: There is a paucity of published data on the pattern of pulmonary tuberculosis among migrant workers entering Middle Eastern countries particularly Kuwait. The objectives of this study were to use routine health surveillance data i) to estimate the prevalence of pulmonary tuberculosis among migrant workers at entry in Kuwait and ii) to determine the occurrence of any time trends in the proportions of pulmonary tuberculosis positive workers over the study period. Methods: The monthly aggregates of daily number of migrants tested and the number of pulmonary tuberculosis cases detected during routine health examinations of migrant workers from tuberculosis high-prevalence countries were used to generate the monthly series of proportions (per 100,000) of pulmonary tuberculosis cases over 120 months between January 1, 1997 and December 31, 2006 and analysed using time series methods. Results: The overall prevalence (per 100,000) of documented pulmonary tuberculosis cases among screened migrants was 198 (4608/2328582). Year-specific prevalence (per 100,000) of tuberculosis cases consistently declined from 456 (95% CI: 424 – 490) in 1997 to 124 (95% CI: 110 – 140) in 2002 before showing a steady increase up to 183 (95% CI: 169–197) in 2006. The second-order polynomial regression model revealed significant ($P < 0.001$) initial decline, followed by a significant ($P < 0.001$) increasing trend thereafter in monthly proportions of tuberculosis cases among migrant workers. Conclusion: The proportions of documented tuberculosis cases among migrant workers showed a significant nonlinear pattern, with an initial decline followed by a significant increasing trend towards the end of the study period. These findings underscore the need to maintain the current policy of migrants' screening for tuberculosis at entry. The public health authorities in Kuwait and perhaps other countries in the region may consider complementing the current



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screening protocol with interferon- γ assays to detect migrants with latent Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection. An appropriate curative or preventive chemotherapy of detected tuberculosis cases may help in further minimizing the risk of local transmission of M. tuberculosis, while contributing in global efforts to control this public health menace. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [Norway and Health - An introduction](#)

Publisher: Reference Number: IS-1730 E: Norwegian Directorate of Health, 2009

Category: [Norway](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "There has been a growing interest abroad in the Norwegian health and care services. This booklet outlines the structure and some key factors that shaped the system into what it is today. It is firmly anchored in the Norwegian traditional political tenet that society is collectively responsible for the welfare of its citizens. Thus, an overarching aim is to provide services of high quality, available within acceptable waiting times and distances, reaching out to everyone regardless of their financial situation, social status, age, gender and ethnic background."

❖ Authors: Motasem Hamdan, Mia Defever and Ziad Abdeen

Title: [Organizing health care within political turmoil: the Palestinian case](#)

Publisher: *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 2003; 18: 63–87

Category: [Palestine](#); Conflict and human rights

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Palestinians were given control over their own health services in late 1994. Since then they have been facing the challenge of reorganizing disordered health services into a cohesive, regulated and sustainable health care system. This paper focuses on the experience of organizing health care during political instability. It considers the ways that health care is currently provided and funded in the Palestinian Territories. The patterns of accessibility to health care services in terms of insurance coverage and provision (physical allocation) of services are discussed. Finally, the major health care policy changes in this transitional period are examined. [author summary]

❖ Title: [Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development](#)

Publisher: Human Development Report 2009 (UNDP)

Category: [Migration](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "Migration, both within and beyond borders, has become an increasingly prominent theme in domestic and international debates, and is the topic of the 2009 Human Development Report (HDR09). The starting point is that the global distribution of capabilities is extraordinarily unequal, and that this is a major driver for movement of people. Migration can expand their choices — in terms of incomes, accessing services and participation, for example — but the opportunities open to people vary from those who are best endowed to those with limited skills and assets. These underlying inequalities, which can



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be compounded by policy distortions, is a theme of the report. The report investigates migration in the context of demographic changes and trends in both growth and inequality. It also presents more detailed and nuanced individual, family and village experiences, and explores less visible movements typically pursued by disadvantaged groups such as short term and seasonal migration.” Available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Portuguese from this site.

❖ Title: [Palestine Red Crescent Society](#)

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Non-government

Abstract: “The Palestine Red Crescent is one of the largest and most reliable provider of health care and social services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is also the only provider of secondary health care services to the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora (Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Iraq). Due to the financial crisis in oPt and serious lack of job opportunities for Palestinians in Lebanon, there are very few options for the Palestine Red Crescent to generate income from its programs and services. This leaves it vulnerable and dependent on external funding. With years of deteriorating economic and humanitarian conditions, and with periods where the authorities could not provide health care and social services, the importance of the Palestine Red Crescent has increased.”

❖ Author: Husseini Rafiq

Title: [Palestinian Health System after Three Years of the Intifada – Survival, Development, or Both?](#)

Publisher: *Ethnicity & Disease*, Volume 15, Winter 2005 pp.S1-84 – S1-85

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “In 1994, following the signing of the Oslo Accords and establishing the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinians had inherited a weak and fragmented health system that was controlled by the Israeli occupation authorities. The system, made of four almost competing/duplicating providers (government, nongovernmental organization [NGO], United Nations, and private) needed immediate rehabilitation and urgent inputs in several areas...”

❖ Title: [Palestinian Medical Relief Society \(PMRS\)](#)

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Non-government

Abstract: “Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) is a grassroots; community-based Palestinian health organization. PMRS was founded in 1979 by a group of Palestinian doctors and health professionals seeking to supplement the decayed and inadequate health infrastructure caused by years of Israeli military occupation. It is non-profit, voluntary, and one of the largest health NGOs in Palestine. PMRS is national health programs emphasize prevention, education, community participation, and the empowerment of people.”



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❖ Author: Sherifa Shafie

Title: [Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon](#)

Publisher: FMO Research Guide, July 2007 (Forced Migration Online)

Category: [Lebanon](#); [Migration](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "The Lebanese Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) estimate that there are around 415,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon... However, these numbers do not accurately represent the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, since many refugees registered with UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] are currently residing in other countries. It is estimated, that the number of Palestinian refugees actually residing in Lebanon to be around 250,000... There are at present 12 official refugee camps in Lebanon, with 214,736 registered refugees living in these camps, making up 52.8% of the total number of registered refugees in Lebanon. There are also about 15 unregistered Palestinian informal gatherings or unofficial settlements, and which were established by refugees settling on plots of land, and are not managed by UNRWA. However, UNRWA does provide direct education, relief, health and social services to registered and non-registered refugees living in these settlements or 'gatherings'."

❖ Title: [Pandemic flu: planning and responding to primary care capacity challenges](#)

Publisher: UK Department of Health, 20 August 2009

Category: [Communicable diseases](#); [United Kingdom](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: "The current swine flu pandemic is likely to present Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and primary care services with increasingly significant capacity challenges: not only in terms of demand pressures from patients who present with influenza-like illness or secondary complications arising from swine flu, but also potentially in terms of supply pressures due to illness amongst primary care staff themselves. This first practical guide to support PCTs in relation to primary care during a pandemic situation covers primary medical care: those services provided by GP practices, GP led health centres and Out of Hours Providers (OOH). Further practical guides will be produced for other independent contractors and to support any vaccination programmes that relate to this pandemic. A guide for pharmacy services and access to medicines is already in development."

❖ Authors: M Theodoridou, A Hadjipanagis, N Persianis, S Makri and C Hadjichristodoulou

Title: [Pertussis Outbreak Detected by Active Surveillance in Cyprus in 2003](#)

Publisher: *Eurosurveillance*, Volume 12, Issue 5, 01 May 2007

Category: [Cyprus](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Pertussis is a disease of substantial public health importance that still lacks an efficient surveillance system. It has been a notifiable disease in Cyprus since 1930, and has had an incidence rate of 1 per 100,000 persons during the last 10 years. In 2001, the Greece-Cyprus Paediatric Surveillance Unit (GCPSU) was established with the aim of active



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surveillance for rare paediatric diseases, including weekly data reporting, zero reporting, and obligatory laboratory tests. From November 2002, pertussis has been included in the active surveillance scheme of GCPSU, resulting in a very early detection of an outbreak in June 2003 that led to immediate and successful action. [author abstract] Available in English, Spanish and French.

❖ Author: Mustafa Afifi

Title: [Positive health practices and depressive symptoms among high school adolescents in Oman](#)

Publisher: *Singapore Medical Journal*, 2006; 47(11): 960-966.

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Introduction: The study aimed to investigate the association of health practices and depressive symptoms among high school adolescents in a national representative sample of 5,409 students in Oman. Methods: Depressive symptoms were screened in 2004 through the application of the self-report 27-item Child Depression Inventory. Health practices scale comprised a simple sum of five healthy practices, namely: sleeping seven to eight hours at night, having breakfast daily, not eating between meals, not smoking the month prior to the study, and doing physical activities more than once per week apart from attending physical education classes in school. Results: Sequential logistic regression models were run to test for the change in the odds-ratio (OR) of having depressive illness with a one point increase in the healthy practices scale, after adjustment for other risk factors of depression. Health practices remained having a significant protective effect on depression (OR is 0.72, 95 percent confidence interval is 0.64-0.80) even after adjustment to other significant covariates in the last model, such as history of chronic medical or mental illness diagnosed by a doctor, high scoring in chance health locus of control (HLC), low scoring in internal HLC, poor relationships with social contacts, and physical abuse during childhood or adolescence. Conclusion: Findings support the protective effects of positive health practices on adolescents' depression. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: H Tamim, G Harrison, M Atoui, G Mumtaz, F El-Kak, M Seoud and K Yunis

Title: [Preconceptional folic acid supplement use in Lebanon](#)

Publisher: *Public Health Nutrition* 2008: 12(5), 687-692

Category: [Lebanon](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objective: The objective of the present study was to assess the prevalence and determinants of preconceptional folic acid supplement use among pregnant women in Lebanon. Design/setting/subjects: The study was a descriptive epidemiological study. Analysis was performed on 5280 deliveries admitted to twelve member hospitals of the National Collaborative Perinatal Neonatal Network during the period September 2003-January 2005. Information on folic acid intake and maternal and neonatal characteristics were obtained from obstetric charts along with direct interviews performed by trained personnel. Logistic regression was performed to determine the predictors of preconceptional folic acid use. Results: The overall use of preconceptional folic acid supplementation was 14.0%



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(18.6% in urban hospitals v. 2.7% in rural hospitals). Higher socio-economic status, lower parity and having a history of previous spontaneous abortions were significantly associated with preconceptional folic acid use. Conclusion: Our study shows that Lebanon currently has a low rate of preconceptional folic acid supplement use. Intervention through the means of awareness campaigns needs to be implemented on a national level. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Costas A Christophi, Ourania Kolokotroni, Hillel R Alpert, Charles W Warren, Nathan R Jones, Philip Demokritou and Gregory N Connolly

Title: [Prevalence and social environment of cigarette smoking in Cyprus youth](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2008, 8:190

Category: [Cyprus](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of morbidity and mortality in humans. Limited data exist regarding the extent of the problem among Cyprus youth. We use the Global Youth Tobacco Survey to assess the prevalence of cigarette smoking among middle and high school students as well as the social environment in which this is taking place. Methods: The survey was conducted by the Cyprus International Institute for the Environment and Public Health in association with Harvard School of Public Health. A two-stage cluster sample design was used to select a representative sample of students from middle and high schools registered with the Republic of Cyprus in 2005–2006. The study questionnaire consisted of 99 questions and participation in the survey was voluntary. Statistical analyses were performed taking into consideration the specific design of the study and the sample weights associated with each completed questionnaire. Results: The prevalence of current smoking, defined as having smoked cigarettes on one or more days of the past 30 days, is 13% among boys and 7% among girls in middle schools, and 36% among boys and 23% among girls in high schools. Furthermore, 16% of middle school students and more than 24% of high school students that had never smoked indicated that they are likely to initiate smoking within the next year. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is also very high with 91% of students reporting being exposed to smoke in places outside home. In addition, more than 95% of current smokers reported that they had bought cigarettes in a store during the past month and were not refused cigarettes because of their age. Conclusion: Smoking prevalence among Cyprus middle and high school students is high and there are indications of an increase in the prevalence of smoking among girls over the last few years. Susceptibility rates, exposure to second-hand smoke, and access to and availability of cigarettes to youth are also high and concerning. The present survey indicates that the problem of cigarette smoking among youth in Cyprus is significant and requires collective action immediately.

❖ Author: The Norwegian Directorate of Health's expert panel – social inequality in health

Title: [Principles of action to tackle social inequality in health](#)

Publisher: The Norwegian Directorate of Health, adopted on 24 November 2005

Category: [Norway](#); [Inequalities and health](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects



Virtual Library: Public Health
What's New, November 2009

Abstract: A small document presenting Action principles to tackle social inequalities in health from a Norwegian interdisciplinary expert group of scientist within the field. Report in Norwegian and English (scroll down document to find the English version).

❖ Author: Noah Samuels

Title: [Routine testing for IgG antibodies against hepatitis A virus in Israel](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2005, 5: 60

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Viral hepatitis is highly endemic in Israel, with the hepatitis A virus (HAV) responsible for most cases. Improved socioeconomic factors, as well as the universal vaccination of infants (introduced in 1999) has resulted in a decline in infection rates in Israel. This study examines the benefits of routine testing for anti-HAV IgG in high-risk population. Methods: A retrospective examination of the files of teenage and adult patients (aged 16–99 years; mean 33.9) in two primary care clinics found 1,017 patients who had been tested for anti-HAV IgG antibodies for either general healthcare screening or ongoing follow-up for chronic illness. Seropositive patients were then asked regarding recall of past hepatitis (i.e. jaundice, regardless of viral etiology); post-exposure prophylaxis with immune serum immunoglobulin (ISG); and active immunization with inactivated virus. Seronegative patients were subsequently sent for active immunization. Results: Of the 1,017 patient records studied (503 male, 514 female), a total of 692 were seropositive (354 males, 338 females; $P = 0.113$). Seropositivity rates increased with age ($p < 0.005$), and were highest among those born in Middle Eastern countries other than Israel (91.3%) and lowest among immigrants from South America (44.1%; $P < 0.005$). 456 of the seropositive patients were interviewed, of whom only 91 recalled past illness while 103 remembered receiving post-exposure prophylaxis (ISG) and 8 active vaccination. Those who were unaware of past infection were more likely to have been vaccinated with ISG than those who were aware (26.3% vs. 7.7%; $p < 0.005$).

Conclusion: The relatively high prevalence rate of anti-HAV seropositivity in our study may be due to the fact that the study was conducted in a primary care clinic or that it took place in Jerusalem, a relatively poor and densely populated Israeli city. Most of the seropositive patients had no recollection of prior infection, which can be explained by the fact that most hepatitis A infections occur during childhood and are asymptomatic. Routine testing for anti-HAV IgG in societies endemic for HAV would help prevent seropositive patients from receiving either postexposure or preventive immunization and target seronegative patients for preventive vaccination. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Yair Morad, Erez Bakshi, Avi Levin, Oren G. Binyamini, David Zadok, Isaac Avni and Yosefa Bar Dayan

Title: [Screening and Treating Amblyopia: Are We Making a Difference?](#)

Publisher: *Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science*, May 2007, Vol. 48, No. 5, pp. 2084-2088

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects



Virtual Library: Public Health
What's New, November 2009

Abstract: Purpose: To determine the rate of amblyopia in native Jewish Israelis compared with those who immigrated from the former Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.) after they were 10 years of age. Methods: Health records of all 16-year-old subjects examined in the Israel Defense Forces Recruitment Center between 1998 and 2003 were analyzed. The number of subjects with best corrected visual acuity (BCVA) of 6/12 or less in at least one eye among native Israelis and among those who immigrated to Israel from the U.S.S.R. after they were 10 years of age was determined. Subjects who had any ocular disease except cataract, corneal opacity, strabismus, or ptosis were excluded. Results: Of 305,712 subjects examined between 1998 and 2003, 292,255 were enrolled in the study. Of those, 260,186 (89%) were born in Israel and 32,069 (11%) were born in the U.S.S.R. and immigrated to Israel after they were 10 years of age. There were 2565 (0.98%) native Israelis and 483 (1.5%) immigrants who had BCVA of 6/12 or less in at least one eye (χ^2 test, $P < 0.00001$). The rate of amblyopia among subjects who had refractive errors was 14.6% among immigrants, as opposed to 8.0% among native Israelis ($P < 0.0001$), whereas amblyopia rates among those with strabismus, cataract, or ptosis were similar in native Israelis and immigrants (34.4%, 38.6%, 12.8% as opposed to 34%, 37.5%, 15.4%, respectively, $P < 0.5-0.61$). Conclusions: The difference in the rate of refractive amblyopia as opposed to strabismic and deprivation amblyopia may be due to the difference in vision screening methods between both countries. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [Selected Health For All Indicators 2003](#) (Israel)

Publisher: The Ministry of Health, State of Israel

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: National policy and related documents

Abstract: This publication presents Health Indicators in Israel as they have been presented at the end of the year 2003 to the WHO European area. The purpose is to update the HFA (Health for All) database that includes indicators about the health system and the health of the population of each country. It reports on such selected demographic and socioeconomic statistics as: Mortality; Morbidity, Disability and Hospital Discharges; Lifestyles; Environment; Health Care Resources; Health Care Utilization and Costs; and Maternal and Child Health.

❖ Authors: Raghu Venugopal, P. Gregg Greenough, Derek Ehrhardt, Daksha Brahmhatt and Fadia Oweis

Title: [State of Emergency Health in the Palestinian Territories](#)

Publisher: *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, 22(1): 9–14, January–February 2007

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: The Palestinian emergency healthcare system faces numerous difficulties in its efforts to develop and improve patient care. The Emergency Medical Assistance Project, a four-year, emergency health capacity-building project, is described in this report. The factors contributing to the current lack of in-hospital emergency care and the measures performed to improve the situation are highlighted. The authors surveyed 48 emergency healthcare providers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on key emergency care development indicators and compared the level of emergency health development with those of Israel and the United



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States using a model of structured development criteria. Survey results and project observations provide a basis for future recommendations in education and infrastructure. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Michael Schoenbaum, Adel K. Afifi and Richard J. Deckelbaum

Title: [Strengthening the Palestinian Health System](#)

Publisher: Rand Corporation, 2005

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “This study examines strategies for strengthening the health system of a potential independent Palestinian state. Successful development of the Palestinian health system is worthwhile in its own right, and it may be a relatively cost-effective way to help demonstrate the tangible benefits of independence and peaceful relations with neighboring countries. Moreover, implementation of many of the strategies described here can begin prior to independence.”

❖ Authors: Daphna Levinson, Ziona Haklai, Nechama Stein, Jacob Polakiewicz and Itzhak Levav

Title: [Suicide Ideation, Planning and Attempts: Results from the Israel National Health Survey](#)

Publisher: *Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci* Vol 44 No. 2 (2007): 136–143

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objectives: To establish the lifetime prevalence rates of suicide ideations, plans and attempts, and to identify the conditional risks of suicide attempts following the prior onset of suicide ideation or planning. Method: A representative sample extracted from the National Population Register of non-institutionalized residents, aged 21 or older, were interviewed at home between May 2003 and April 2004 using the Composite International Diagnostic Interview which included questions on suicide ideations, plans and attempts. The final sample included 4,859 respondents. Results: About 5.5% of the adults reported that they have thought of suicide, and 1.4 % that they have attempted to commit suicide during their lifetime. The year following the onset of ideation constitutes the year of highest risk for suicide attempt. Conclusion: The risk of suicide attempt is highest among individuals with mental health disorders, while the transition from suicide ideation to suicide attempt among them is more likely to be planned. The youngest age group has the highest odds of suicide attempts and the highest odds of impulsive suicide attempts. [author abstract]

❖ Author: Rita Karam

Title: [Survey Report – Prices of Medicines in Lebanon](#)

Publisher: World Health Organization – Health Action International Project on Medicine Prices, c2004

Category: [Lebanon](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects



Virtual Library: Public Health
What's New, November 2009

Abstract: “We have carried out a field study to measure the prices of medicines in Lebanon using an international standardized methodology. Data on prices for 32 medicines were collected in the public and private for-profit sector in the capital Beirut, the North, South and Mount Lebanon. The availability of the medicines was also measured. The cost of treatment was calculated and compared to the daily wage of the lowest paid government worker. In addition, we also identified the components of medicine prices. The results showed that Lebanon public health sector is relatively efficient in procurement and is purchasing medicines at a reasonable price for poor patients and provide drugs free of charge for public health facilities. Unfortunately, availability in this sector is very low and far from optimal, so poor patients are forced to buy expensive medicines from private pharmacies. In the private sector almost all the surveyed medicines are over-priced if compared with the international reference price and the prices of innovator brands are up to 5 times more expensive than the prices of their generic equivalents. Availability of medicines is very good in private sector especially for branded drugs. Medicines that are generally not available in private sector are anti-HIV drugs who are delivered to AIDS patients free of charge through an MOH Distribution Center.”

❖ Authors: Mohammad Movahedi, Ali A. Haghdoost, Omid Pournik, Behzad Hajarizadeh and Mohammad S. Fallah

Title: [Temporal variations of health indicators in Iran comparing with other Eastern Mediterranean Region countries in the last two decades](#)

Publisher: *J. Public Health Med.*, December 2008; 30: 499 - 504.

Category: [Iran](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: The recent significant improvement in most health indicators in Iran has not been explored deeply particularly in comparison with other countries in Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). We aimed to explore the temporal variations of five main indicators in Iran and compare their variations in EMR countries. Methods: Data on DPT vaccination and birth weight were obtained from EMR office reports, and total fertility rate, under 5 mortality rate (U5MR) and adult literacy rate (ALR) were obtained from WHO sources for the time period 1995–2005. Using linear regression, we modeled the temporal variations in Iran and other EMR countries classified by their human development index (HDI) levels. Results: The estimated annual decline rate of U5MR in Iran as a middle HDI country was 2.5 per 1000 live birth which was much greater than the corresponding number in countries with medium HDI (1.85) and very close to countries with high HDI (2.67). The WHO data showed that Iran was very successful in increasing ALR. Conclusion: It seems that most health indicators in Iran have improved more rapidly compared with countries with low and medium HDI in EMR. The improvement rates were also very close to countries with high HDI in the region. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [Ten Questions about Health – Cyprus](#)

Publisher: WHO

Category: [Cyprus](#)

Category Topic: Educational resources



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What's New, November 2009

Abstract: Provides information in response to the following questions: 1. What are the demographic essentials for Cyprus? 2. What do the Cypriots suffer from? 3. Where do the risks lie? 4. Who's who in the Cypriot public health sector? 5. How are services provided? 6. What resources are available? 7. Who pays for what? 8. How have Cypriots been reforming their health care system? 9. What is one of the things Cyprus has learned by doing? 10. What has WHO been doing in Cyprus? "Cyprus is a divided island. Unless stated otherwise, all data, figures and analyses in this chapter refer to those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus exercises effective control."

❖ Authors: Asia S Al Hamdan, Sana M Al Ali, Sana M Al Mansour, Adel M Al Terkit and Majed A Radwan

Title: [The Economic Impact of Smoking on the Health System in Kuwait](#)

Publisher: *Kuwait Medical Journal* 2007, 39 (2):120-125

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objective: To estimate some of the cost and the economic impact of smoking on health services in Kuwait Design: A cross-sectional survey Setting: Al-Saqer and Al-Yarmok Primary Care Centers, Kuwait Subjects: Two thousand two hundred and sixteen (2216) male persons were enrolled in this study. Intervention: Each patient was interviewed by a trained doctor. Main Outcome measures: The incidence of upper and lower respiratory tract system symptoms with current smokers compared to non-smokers. Results: Our study showed a high prevalence of smoking in Kuwait among adult males aged >18 years (40.6 %). It also showed a high incidence of both upper and lower respiratory tract system symptoms with current smokers compared to non-smokers (67.5 and 76.9% respectively compared to 32.5 and 23.1%). Conclusion: Smoking increases health care costs by increasing the number of clinic visits due to respiratory illness thereby increasing health services utilization and leading to additional societal burden. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Basema Saddik, Ann Williamson, Iman Nuwayhid and Deborah Black

Title: [The Effects of Solvent Exposure on Memory and Motor Dexterity in Working Children](#)

Publisher: *Public Health Reports* / November–December 2005 / Volume 120, pp.657-663

Category: [Lebanon](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objectives: Children working in vehicle spray-painting, mechanical, and other trade workshops are at significant risk of exposure to organic solvents and, as a result, may be at significant risk of developing clinical and subclinical signs of neurotoxicity. This study reports on the association between exposure to solvents and neurobehavioral performance on a number of non-computerized tests for working children exposed to solvents in comparison with nonexposed working children and nonexposed children at school. Methods: A convenience cross-sectional sample of 300 male children aged 10–17 years [from industrial areas of the city of Tripoli and its environs in North Lebanon] was recruited for study. The exposed working group and the two nonexposed groups (working and nonworking school) were matched, as far as possible, on geographic location of residence and age. Neurotoxic effects were assessed through a questionnaire and the child's performance on a selection of



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neurobehavioral tests. Results: Exposed working children scored worse on the overall neurotoxicity symptoms score (mean=6.8; standard deviation [SD]=3.6) compared with the nonexposed working children (mean=1.3; SD=2.0) and school children (mean=1.2; SD=1.8). Analysis of the non-computerized neurobehavioral tests demonstrated that exposed working children performed significantly worse than the two nonexposed groups on the motor dexterity and memory tests. Results of the mood test showed that exposed working children were more angry and confused than the nonexposed groups. Conclusion: There is an association between exposure to solvents and lower neurobehavioral performance, with significant neurobehavioral deficits among children exposed to solvents in comparison with working children not exposed to solvents and nonworking school children. Memory and motor dexterity appear to be particularly affected in solvent-exposed working children. [author synopsis]

❖ Authors: Gilbert Burnham, Shannon Doocy, Elizabeth Dzung, Riyadh Lafta and Les Roberts

Title: [The Human Cost of the War in Iraq: A Mortality Study, 2002-2006](#)

Publisher: Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland; School of Medicine, Al Mustansiriya University, Baghdad, Iraq; in cooperation with the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts – 2006

Category: [Iraq](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: A new household survey of Iraq has found that approximately 600,000 people have been killed in the violence of the war that began with the U.S. invasion in March 2003. The survey was conducted by an American and Iraqi team of public health researchers. Data were collected by Iraqi medical doctors with analysis conducted by faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health... The survey is the only population-based assessment of fatalities in Iraq during the war. The method, a survey of more than 1800 households randomly selected in clusters that represent Iraq's population, is a standard tool of epidemiology and is used by the U.S. Government and many other agencies. The survey also reflects growing sectarian violence, a steep rise in deaths by gunshots, and very high mortality among young men. An additional 53,000 deaths due to non-violent causes were estimated to have occurred above the pre-invasion mortality rate, most of them in recent months, suggesting a worsening of health status and access to health care. Methods: Between May and July 2006 a national cluster survey was conducted in Iraq to assess deaths occurring during the period from January 1, 2002, through the time of survey in 2006. Information on deaths from 1,849 households containing 12,801 persons was collected. This survey followed a similar but smaller survey conducted in Iraq in 2004. Both surveys used standard methods for estimating deaths in conflict situations, using population-based methods. Key Findings: Death rates were 5.5/1000/year pre-invasion, and overall, 13.2/1000/year for the 40 months post-invasion. We estimate that through July 2006, there have been 654,965 "excess deaths" — fatalities above the pre-invasion death rate — in Iraq as a consequence of the war. Of post-invasion deaths, 601,027 were due to violent causes. Non-violent deaths rose above the pre-invasion level only in 2006. Since March 2003, an additional 2.5% of Iraq's population have died above what would have occurred without conflict. The proportion of deaths ascribed to coalition



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forces has diminished in 2006, though the actual numbers have increased each year. Gunfire remains the most common reason for death, though deaths from car bombing have increased from 2005. Those killed are predominantly males aged 15-44 years. [publication summary]

❖ Title: [The Jordan Red Crescent \(JRC\)](#)

Category: [Jordan](#)

Category Topic: Non-government

Abstract: “The Jordan Red Crescent (JRC) was established on 27 December 1947, recognized by the IFRC in 1948 and admitted to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 1950. It has its own legislation No 3 for the year 1969 as an independent organization and its statutes were approved by the General Assembly in 1970. [Aim:] ‘To alleviate the suffering of the victims and the vulnerable of natural disasters and armed conflicts and to protect their dignity and rights in a manner that preserves their lives, safety, security and well being.’”

❖ Editors: Allan G.Hill, Adaline Z. Muyeed and Jawad A. al-Lawati

Title: [The Mortality and Health Transitions in Oman: Patterns and Processes](#)

Publisher: A Study Commissioned by the Government of Oman, UNICEF Oman Office and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, December 2000

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “This Report is an attempt to analyze and document Oman's ... achievements in health development. It describes the health status of the Omani people in the pre-Renaissance era (before 1970), and the subsequent changes in different health parameters, which took place since then. It also attempts to establish attribution and furnish understanding for the roles of direct health interventions and indirect social and economic factors on the advent of the observed health transition.”

❖ Author: George A. Kaplan

Title: [The Poor Pay More — Poverty's High Cost to Health](#)

Publisher: Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health - University of Michigan, USA, September 2009

Category: Norway; [Inequalities and health](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “This report describes many of the ways in which being poor is bad for one's health and points to policies that have the potential for restoring the prospect of good health to the lives of the poor. We present compelling evidence that poverty has an impact on not just the *body politic* but the *body corporeal* as well—that being poor leaves a broad footprint on the health of individuals. The health costs of poverty are high. Those among us who are poor tend to have more illness and die younger... Recognizing that the poor disproportionately bear the nation's burden of ill-health is important, but how are we to break the link between poverty and poor health? The answer may lie in the growing recognition, among the public health and medical community, that good health is not merely a function of doctor visits and



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adequate health care coverage. Health is also powerfully affected by a range of other factors such as neighborhood safety, work hazards, housing quality, the availability of social and economic supports during times of need, and access to nutritious food, physical activity, quality education, and jobs that pay livable wages.”

❖ Authors: Tanya L Zakrison, Amira Shahen, Shaban Mortaja and Paul A Hamel
Title: [The Prevalence of Psychological Morbidity in West Bank Palestinian Children](#)

Publisher: *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 2004; 49: 60–63

Category: [Palestine](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objective: To determine the prevalence of psychological morbidity among Palestinian children living in the southern Bethlehem District of the West Bank during July 2000. Methods: We undertook a descriptive study using the Rutter A2 (parent) Scale to determine psychological morbidity. This questionnaire comprises 31 questions that were answered by a parent of the 206 subject children (ages 6 to 13 years). We selected subjects based on a multistage, randomized selection of 8 Palestinian villages and their households in the southern region of Bethlehem, West Bank. We used the Gaza Socioeconomic Adversities Questionnaire to determine differences in economic status among families. Results: For all families interviewed, the father was employed, none were receiving financial assistance, and all but 1 owned their own house. The results of the Rutter A2 Scale revealed a rate of psychological morbidity (“caseness”) of 42.3% among Palestinian children. The rate for boys was 46.3% and for girls, 37.8%. Conclusions: The prevalence of psychological morbidity among Palestinian children in the West Bank was significantly higher (factor of 2; $\chi^2 = 23.26$, df 1, $P < 0.001$), relative to the level of psychological morbidity determined independently for children in Gaza during 2000. We predict that these rates will have increased substantially owing to the escalated violence that began in this region 2 months after we conducted our study. We further predict that children in Israeli settlements in the West Bank will also exhibit elevated levels of psychological morbidity, relative to their counterparts in Israel. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Larisa Moerman, Alex Leventhal, Paul E. Slater, Emilia Anis, Ruth Yishai and Esther Marva

Title: [The Re-Emergence of Pertussis in Israel](#)

Publisher: *IMAJ* (Israel Medical Association Journal), Vol 8, May 2006, pp.308-311

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Pertussis is the only vaccine-preventable disease that has re-emerged in Israel. The reported crude incidence of the disease increased 16-fold since 1998. Objectives: To describe the epidemiology of pertussis and explain the substantial increase in reported pertussis incidence in Israel in recent years. Methods: Crude and specific pertussis incidence by age, patient immunization status, hospitalization rate, and national immunization coverage rate were calculated from information provided by the public health offices of the Ministry of Health. Results: The reported crude incidence of pertussis increased from 1–2/100,000 in 1994–98 to 23/100,000 in 2004. The trend was observed in all age



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groups, being most prominent in infants under age 1 year and in children aged 5–14. The incidence of pertussis was substantially higher in unvaccinated and partly vaccinated compared to fully vaccinated persons. Fifteen percent of notified cases were hospitalized, but in infants under age 1 year the hospitalization rate was 50%. National pertussis immunization coverage by age 2 years was stable during the last 10 years. Conclusions: There are several possible explanations for the re-emergence of pertussis in Israel. The most plausible reason seems to be the waning of vaccine-induced immunity in face of infrequent natural exposure to the infectious agent and lack of a pertussis vaccine booster dose after age 1. [author abstract]

❖ Authors: Khaled F. Al-Jarallah and Mohamed A. A. Moussa

Title: [The role of national medical education in Kuwait](#)

Publisher: *Bulletin of the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization* 2002; 1: 58-62

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Objectives: This study highlights the role of national medical education in the promotion of medical manpower. This was emphasized through tracking the development in the size and professional structure of the main category of the Kuwait national health care delivery system, the physicians, throughout the years 1996 to 2001. Methods: Data were ascertained from three sources: Department of Vital and Health Statistics and Department of Manpower, Ministry of Health for data on physicians, and Department of Statistics and Information Sector, Ministry of Planning, Kuwait for data on population. Results: The study revealed increasing trends toward employment of Kuwaiti female physicians, employment of Kuwaiti physicians to upper and lower ranks, and rarity of Kuwaiti physicians in some specialties, such as anesthesia. Conclusion: The study emphasized the role of national medical education in increasing the number of Kuwaiti graduates. Moreover, the study highlighted the apparent influence of KIMS in enhancement of higher medical specialization training programs as witnessed by the predominance of Kuwaiti physicians in the leading job categories. Besides, the study generated essential information required for planning the qualitative and quantitative pattern of the higher specialization programs. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [The Seventh Five-Year Plan For Health Development – 2006-2010: The National Strategic Plan](#) (Oman)

Publisher: Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: National policy and related documents

Abstract: Addresses the following areas: Domains of the Seventh 5-Year Plan for Health Development; Alleviation of Risks Threatening the Public Health; Promoting Woman and Child Health; and An Efficient Health Information And Research System to Meet the Needs of the Health System



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❖ Author: Jaine Roberts

Title: [They hide things like that from us. The Hidden Epidemic Amongst Former Miners: Silicosis, Tuberculosis and the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act in the Eastern Cape, South Africa](#)

Publisher: Health Systems Trust, June 2009

Category: [South Africa](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: The aim of the research was to assess current and historical surveillance of the pneumoconioses in former miners, in particular silicosis, silico-tuberculosis, and tuberculosis, and to assess the functioning of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act (ODMWA) surveillance and compensation system which is a responsibility of the Department of Health. The research also aimed to assess the impact of the burden of lung disease and disability on the public health system and on the labour-sending communities from which the miners come and to which they return. The main objective was thus to investigate health systems surveillance of the pneumoconioses in former underground gold miners, and to assess diagnostic and compensation systems under the legal framework of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act 78 of 1973 as Amended (ODMWA).

❖ Authors: Abdullah A Al-Maniri, Omar A Al-Rawas, Fatmah Al-Ajmi, Ayesha De Costa, Bo Eriksson and Vinod K Diwan

Title: [Tuberculosis suspicion and knowledge among private and public general practitioners: Questionnaire Based Study in Oman](#)

Publisher: *BMC Public Health* 2008, 8:177

Category: [Oman](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Early detection of smear positive TB cases by smear microscopy requires high level of suspicion of TB among primary care physicians. The objective of this study is to measure TB suspicion and knowledge among private and public sector general practitioners using clinical vignette-based survey and structured questionnaire. Methods: Two questionnaires were distributed to both private and public GPs in Muscat Governorate. One questionnaire assessed demographic information of the respondent and had 10 short clinical vignettes of TB and non-TB cases. The second questionnaire had questions on knowledge of TB, its diagnosis, treatment, follow up and contact screening based on Ministry of Health policy. TB suspicion score and TB Knowledge score were computed and analyzed. Results: A total of 257 GPs participated in the study of which 154 were private GPs. There was a significant difference between private and public GPs in terms of age, sex, duration of practice and nationality. Among all GPs, 37.7% considered TB as one of the three most likely diagnoses in all 5 TB clinical vignettes. Private GPs had statistically significantly lower TB suspicion and TB knowledge scores than public GPs. Conclusion: In Oman, GPs appear to have low suspicion and poor knowledge of TB, particularly private GPs. To strengthen TB control program, there is a need to train GPs on TB identification and adopt a Private Public Mix (PPM) strategy for TB control. [author abstract]



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❖ Authors: Irshad M. Sulaiman, Parsotam R. Hira, Ling Zhou, Faiza M. Al-Ali, Fatima A. Al-Shelahi, Hussein M. Shweiki, Jamshaid Iqbal, Nabila Khalid and Lihua Xiao

Title: [Unique Endemicity of Cryptosporidiosis in Children in Kuwait](#)

Publisher: *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*, Vol. 43, No. 6, June 2005, pp.2805–2809

Category: [Kuwait](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: To understand the transmission of *Cryptosporidium* infection in children, fecal specimens from 62 Kuwaiti children with gastrointestinal symptoms found to be positive by microscopy were genotyped and subtyped with a small subunit rRNA-based PCR-restriction fragment length polymorphism analysis and a 60-kDa glycoprotein-based DNA sequencing tool. The median age of infected children was 4.5 years, and 77% of infections occurred during the cool season of November to April. Fifty-eight of the children (94%) had *Cryptosporidium parvum*, three (5%) had *Cryptosporidium hominis*, and one (1%) had both *C. parvum* and *C. hominis*. Altogether, 13 subtypes of *C. parvum* (belonging to four subtype allele families) and *C. hominis* (belonging to three subtype allele families) were observed, with 92% of specimens belonging to the common allele family IIa and the unusual allele family IId. Thus, the transmission of cryptosporidiosis in Kuwaiti children differed significantly from other tropical countries. [author abstract]

❖ Author: Tze-wai Wong

Title: [War on Iraq: the public health perspective](#)

Publisher: *Hong Kong Med J*, Vol 9, No 4, August 2003, p.306

Category: [Iraq](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “The extent to which public health practitioners and researchers focus on health risks seems to be incongruous with the extent to which they pay attention to war and its atrocities on ordinary citizens throughout the world. Let us examine the war against Iraq waged by the United States, the United Kingdom, and their allies. What are the health consequences for the citizens of Iraq, Israel, Palestine, or elsewhere in the Middle East? Could public health workers have done something to voice their concerns, or at least express their views about the negative health consequences, economic losses, and above all, social injustice? Epidemiologists do not need a case-control study or cohort study to document the magnitude of the risk factor — war. They should be able to evaluate the quantum of the death toll, and the incidence of serious injury and of associated adversity and morbidity — famine, infectious diseases, mental trauma — all atrocities resulting from the breakdown of the social fabric. The list is endless. The environmental health expert should also estimate the consequential damage to the environment—from damage to the flora and fauna to the effects of toxic residue on people, the contamination of the water and soil, and the potential breakdown of the ecosystem.”



Virtual Library: Public Health
What's New, November 2009

❖ Authors: Orna Baron-Epel, Amalia Haviv, Noga Garty, Dov Tamir and Manfred S. Green
Title: [Who are the Sedentary People in Israel? A Public Health Indicator](#)

Publisher: *IMAJ* (Israel Medical Association Journal), 2005; 7: 694–699

Category: [Israel](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: Background: Increasing physical activity and thereby reducing a sedentary lifestyle can lower the risk of chronic diseases. Raising the population's involvement in physical activity is a major challenge for public health and healthcare services. Objectives: To identify subpopulations with a sedentary lifestyle and low levels of adherence to physical activity recommendations. Methods: The Israel Center for Disease Control performed two national surveys during 2002–2003, interviewing 7,307 Jewish Israelis and 1,826 Arab Israelis over age 21. Respondents were asked if they engaged in physical activity lasting at least 20 consecutive minutes, and if so how frequently: less than once a week, once or twice a week, nearly every day or every day. Results: Arab respondents were less physically active than Jewish respondents after adjusting for gender, age, level of religiosity, marital status, education, self-reported health, smoking, body mass index, and type of survey. Multiple logistic regression analysis run separately for Jews and Arabs found a more sedentary lifestyle, in both groups, among women, the less educated, those who were married and those with poor subjective health. Among Jews, younger age, increased religiosity, smoking and high BMI were associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Conclusions: The Jewish population is in need of more targeted and specific interventions for lower adhering subpopulations, such as women, the less educated and those with other risk factors. In the Arab population a more thorough understanding of the benefits of physical activity is needed; however, it seems that a general intervention is required to decrease the prevalence of a sedentary lifestyle all round. [author abstract]

❖ Title: [WHO Health Systems Profile - Jordan](#)

Publisher: Regional Health Systems Observatory- EMRO (WHO), 2006

Category: [Jordan](#)

Category Topic: UN and multinational

Abstract: “Jordan has one of the most modern health care infrastructures in the Middle East. Jordan's health system is a complex amalgam of three major sectors: Public, private, and donors. The public sector consists of two major public programs that finance as well as deliver care: the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Royal Medical Services (RMS). Other smaller public programs include several university-based programs, such as Jordan University Hospital (JUH) in Amman and King Abdullah Hospital (KAH) in Irbid... Each of the health care subsectors has its own financing and delivery system that reflects directly on the delivery of services among these sectors. Problems related to accessibility, equity, duplication of services, poor coordination among major providers, unregulated private sector, low utilization rates in the private sector, limited quality improvement programs, inefficient use of available resources, poor management and inappropriate health information system are the main challenges facing all providers of health care in Jordan.”



Virtual Library: Public Health
What's New, November 2009

❖ Title: [Women and health: today's evidence tomorrow's agenda](#)

Publisher: WHO, November 2009

Category: [Population and family health](#)

Category Topic: Reports, guidelines and projects

Abstract: “Despite considerable progress in the past decades, societies continue to fail to meet the health care needs of women at key moments of their lives, particularly in their adolescent years and in older age. These are the key findings of the WHO report *Women and health: today's evidence tomorrow's agenda*. WHO calls for urgent action both within the health sector and beyond to improve the health and lives of girls and women around the world, from birth to older age. The report provides the latest and most comprehensive evidence available to date on women's specific needs and health challenges over their entire life-course. The report includes the latest global and regional figures on the health and leading causes of death in women from birth, through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, to older age.” [Executive summary](#).