



FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

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Editor's Letter

Dear Reader,

We are thrilled to share with you the latest issue of EMPHNET's Quarterly Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Newsletter. This newsletter highlights notable updates, and achievements from FETPs in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and beyond.

It sheds light on the dedication and efforts of the FETP residents and graduates in the EMR and beyond, showcasing their significant contributions to public health. Additionally, it covers the graduations celebrated, the cohorts launched, as well as the workshops conducted by various country programs.

As you read through the pages that follow, we trust that you will find not only valuable insights, but also a source of inspiration.



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Feature Stories

A Word of Gratitude to Dr. Sahar Sami, the Egypt FETP Coordinator

It is with a heavy heart and sincere hopes that she celebrates more successes in her future, we bid farewell to Dr. Sahar Sami as she steps down from her role as the Coordinator of the Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program (Egypt FETP). Dr. Sahar's journey in public health, marked by her commitment and pioneering contributions, has left a lasting impact on Egypt's public health landscape.

Graduating from the Faculty of Medicine at Ain Shams University in 1987, Dr. Sami embarked on a career that placed her at the forefront of Egypt's battle against public health challenges. Dr. Sami's tenure as the head of the Viral Hepatitis Prevention and Control Unit at the Egypt Ministry of Public Health and Population from 2009 to 2011 was marked by critical advancements, including the launch of the National Plan for Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis in Egypt. This initiative, among others, showcased her ability to lead and innovate in the face of public health challenges.

Since 2014, Dr. Sami served as the coordinator of the Egypt FETP, where she played a pivotal role in the program's success by nurturing a community of professionals dedicated to advancing public health. Her leadership not only enhanced the FETP, but it also fostered stronger connections within the region's epidemiological community.



Beyond her national contributions, Dr. Sami's collaborations with EMPHNET have been pivotal. Her role in establishing the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) and her efforts towards the development of an action plan for the workforce development indicator for the International Health Regulations (IHR) Tools are testament to her perspective on public health challenges and solutions.

As we bid farewell to Dr. Sahar Sami in her role as FETP Coordinator, we also celebrate her new beginning and look forward to her continued contributions to the field of public health. Her impact on the Egypt FETP, her visionary leadership, and her dedication to improving public health outcomes are a legacy that will continue to benefit the region for years to come.




Save the Date

The Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference

September 15 - 18, 2024

Advancements and Initiatives in Polio Eradication: Updates from the Afghanistan FETP

Strategies and Successes:

The Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program continues to play a leading role in the country's polio eradication efforts. Its commitment is reflected in their activities and the capacity-building measures they take. Within Afghanistan's complex health landscape, the program's residents and graduates continue to make significant strides using innovative approaches to fight polio.

Enhancing the technical skills of polio staff at both central and provincial levels is key to Afghanistan FETP's strategy. The fifth intermediate cohort underwent focused training initiatives aimed at empowering polio technical staff with data management capabilities and investigative methods for outbreak response.

Training sessions for graduates from previous intermediate FETP cohorts were conducted in the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). Additionally, the program's residents and graduates conducted and supported group projects addressing critical facets of polio eradication. Their contributions include conducting a Knowledge, Attitudes, and



Practices (KAP) survey on polio across various provinces, an evaluation of the Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance system, and an analysis of the reasons behind vaccination refusals in certain provinces. These projects offer crucial insights into the challenges at hand, and they serve to guide strategies to improve vaccine acceptance and surveillance efficacy.

Through this work, the Afghanistan FETP residents and graduates have been instrumental in the planning and execution of polio vaccination campaigns across central and provincial levels.

What's next?

The Afghanistan FETP is preparing to launch the inaugural cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) for Polio and Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) officers. This program is set to train 30 residents, further enhancing the country's capacity to address polio effectively.

The ongoing and future activities of the Afghanistan FETP represent a dedicated and

strategic response to public health challenges, with a focus on polio eradication. Through continued training, research, and practical engagement, the program is committed to the goal of eliminating polio in Afghanistan and ensuring a healthier future for global communities. The path towards eradication is challenging, but with each step forward, the vision of a polio-free world becomes increasingly attainable.



Country Program News

This section highlights the region's FETPs' updates

AFGHANISTAN

In this quarter, the Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Afghanistan FETP) residents continued their one-year training. The program’s graduates were also actively involved in outbreak investigations, and in responding to natural disasters. These experiences showcased their dedication to public health, as well as the valuable skills they have learned through the FETP.

Strengthening Skills: The Fifth Intermediate Cohort’s Training Journey

The Fifth Intermediate cohort of the Afghanistan FETP attended their third workshop. This workshop was designed to enhance both the residents’ scientific and non-scientific communication skills. Its sessions were held over one week, during which they engaged in various didactic and interactive exercises, including discussing and reviewing presentations from previous workshops and developing group projects. The workshop also offered a space for residents to hone their teaching and mentoring techniques. It provided them with the skills they need to make significant contributions to their ongoing fieldwork with confidence and proficiency.



The Afghanistan FETP Graduates Lead Response to Measles Outbreak

During a measles outbreak investigation in one of the districts of the Bamyán Province, Afghanistan FETP graduates took immediate action. They played a significant role in assessing the situation, conducting epidemiological investigations, and implementing control measures to contain the spread of the disease.



The Afghanistan FETP Kicks off PHEP-SPO Mentorship Workshop

The Afghanistan FETP has initiated a three-day mentorship workshop in Kabul, aimed at preparing its participants to become effective mentors for the upcoming cohort of the new Public Health Empowerment Program – Surveillance for Polio Officers (PHEP-SPO). This workshop included interactive sessions and practical training to enhance mentorship skills and support the success of the program.



Crisis Response and Disaster Mitigation

The graduates of the Afghanistan FETP contribute to responding to crises within their communities, playing crucial roles in mitigating the effects of various natural disasters. Such disasters included the devastating landslide and the avalanche incident that occurred in the Nuristan and Panjshir provinces. With their comprehensive training in epidemiology and disaster management, these graduates facilitated coordinated response efforts and applied effective strategies to minimize the impact of such events.



BANGLADESH

The Bangladesh Field Epidemiology Training Program (Bangladesh FETP) and the Bangladesh Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (Bangladesh FETPV) are instrumental in building a skilled workforce equipped to address public health challenges at both human and animal health interfaces.

Insights on the Intermediate Cohorts of the Bangladesh FETP

The Bangladesh FETP celebrated the graduation of the second Intermediate cohort following the successful completion of six training workshops. This event was held at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control, and Research (IEDCR), and was attended by esteemed guests and stakeholders from various sectors, highlighting the program's significant achievements and the dedication of its residents.

Simultaneously, the program also conducted the second and third workshops for the third Intermediate cohort. The second workshop centered on providing residents with the key concepts of epidemiology, surveillance, outbreak investigation, research methods, and data management, utilizing Epi-Info.

The third workshop focused on reviewing all presentations from the second workshop, supporting residents in developing group projects through protocol development, as well as facilitating sessions on the basics of both scientific and non-scientific communication. Such comprehensive training initiatives highlight the program's commitment to preparing future public health leaders.



The Bangladesh FETPV: Advancing Professional Development

During this quarter, the Bangladesh FETPV fostered the professional growth of its second cohort through a series of targeted training workshops. The residents actively participated in three workshops focusing on disease surveillance, communication and stakeholder management, and outbreak investigations. These workshops not only enhanced their skills, but also reinforced their commitment to advancing public health in Bangladesh.



EGYPT

In this quarter, the Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program (Egypt FETP) made significant strides in training and community engagement, launching new cohorts, and fostering connections with the program's graduates.

Launching A New Cohort

In an inaugural workshop, the Egypt FETP officially launched its 22nd Advanced cohort, marking the beginning of an enriching two-year training program for the residents. After the first workshop, they gained a deep understanding of public health principles and their role in disease prevention and control. Subsequently, they attended a workshop titled “Basics of Biostatistics,” where they honed their proficiency in descriptive statistics and report writing.

From another angle, the program initiated the selection process for candidates of the third intermediate cohort, aiming to identify individuals who are dedicated to contribute effectively to the program's objectives.



Egypt FETP's Reunion with PHEP-BFE Graduates

The Egypt FETP held a follow-up meeting with the graduates of the first Public Health Empowerment Program – Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP-BFE) cohort. This meeting aimed to assess the graduates' experiences and their contributions to public health activities in the field since their graduation. It also served as a valuable assessment tool for the program and fostered a sense of community among the graduates.

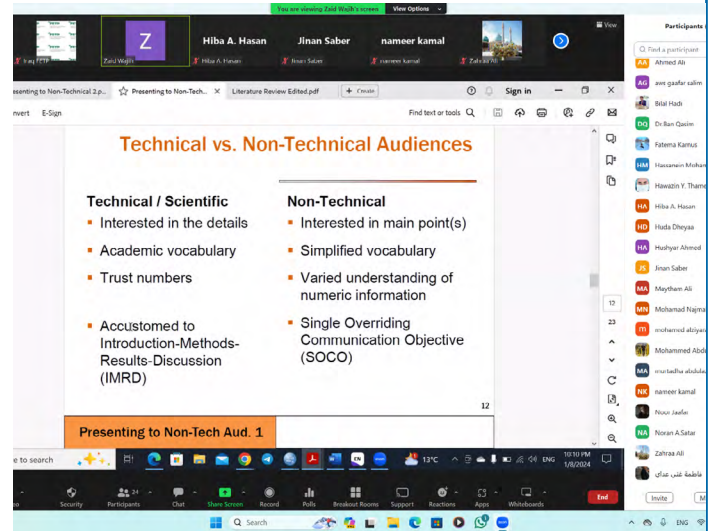


IRAQ

This quarter showcased the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program’s (Iraq FETP) proactive efforts. The conducted workshop and assessments demonstrated the program's dedication to fostering expertise and driving positive change in public health practices.

Empowering the Intermediate Cohort of the Iraq FETP

The Iraq FETP held a five-day virtual workshop that served as a valuable addition to the training curriculum for the fourth Intermediate cohort. This workshop focused on reviewing previous sessions, improving scientific presentation abilities, providing strategies for presenting to non-technical audiences, crafting scientific abstracts, conducting public health literature reviews, and enhancing teaching and mentoring skills. Following the workshop, the residents were requested to develop their own presentations, executive summaries, and memorandum, which were then reviewed and evaluated by their mentors.



Engaging in Evaluating Family Health Care Centers

Aligning with the national plan of the Iraq Ministry of Health (MoH), the Iraq FETP residents participated in evaluating family health care centers by utilizing electronic evaluation forms. Analysis and situational reports will be prepared after completing the evaluation process, contributing to informed decision-making in public health management.



From Trainees to Trainers

The graduates of the Iraq FETP, in collaboration with the Training and Research Unit of the Public Health Directorate, organized a workshop on data management and analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Its primary focus was to enhance the data analysis skills of physicians across various departments within the directorate. This initiative represented a significant step in the transition of graduates from trainees to trainers within the public health sector.



JORDAN

The Jordan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Jordan FETP) residents demonstrated their dedication through active involvement in weekly scientific days, and lectures that covered essential public health topics. The program also welcomed the 21st Advanced cohort, reinforcing its commitment to training future public health leaders.

Engaging in Diverse Workshops

During their second-year training, residents of the Jordan FETP participated in a workshop focusing on seasonal influenza. Through its sessions, the residents learned about case definitions of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and severe acute respiratory illnesses (SARI). The workshop also highlighted the crucial role of epidemiologists in monitoring ILI and SARI cases.

In addition, the residents took part in a session that addressed priorities in humanitarian crises, aimed at providing them with the necessary tools to tackle critical challenges in humanitarian settings, and to develop effective response strategies.

They also attended a lecture on leishmaniasis, which focused on the disease's historical background and epidemiology. The lecture offered residents an opportunity to learn more



about the contribution of the vector-borne diseases department to surveillance and prevention efforts in Jordan.

Through these workshops and lectures, the residents gained valuable insights into enhancing disease surveillance, prevention, and response capabilities.

The Twentieth Cohort's Field Activities

During their field visits, the 20th cohort of the Jordan FETP explored various aspects of public health. They visited the Central Laboratory Directorate to learn about its role in outbreak response and preparedness, including biosafety protocols. Additionally, they visited the Environmental Health Directorate, gaining insights into its functions within the Ministry of Health (MoH). Their visit covered departments responsible for water treatment, drinking safety, medical waste management, and chemical and microbial labs.



Launching A New Cohort

In this quarter, the 21st cohort of the Jordan FETP was inaugurated. Their journey commenced with an introductory lecture from the program's Director, outlining the program's goals. Additionally, they participated in weekly scientific days, and engaged in lectures on radiation safety and food poisoning.



LIBYA

Recent Highlights from the Libya FETP

The Libya Field Epidemiology Training Program (Libya FETP) is in the final stages of preparation for the launch of its third Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) cohort, supported by the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) in Libya. As the program prepares for this milestone, the first and second PHEP cohorts are expected to graduate soon.



OMAN

Six Months of Achievements

Since its establishment, the Oman Field Epidemiology Training Program (Oman FETP) witnessed significant accomplishments. The program has successfully launched two Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) cohorts and celebrated their graduation upon completing their training. Moreover, the program actively engaged in conducting mentorship workshops, aimed at providing valuable guidance and support to the mentors. With a firm commitment to enhancing public health capacities, the Oman FETP plans to continue its efforts and initiatives in the upcoming months.



PAKISTAN

The Pakistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Pakistan FETP) organized impactful workshops across various provinces and launched new cohorts, marking significant strides towards elevating public health efforts.

The 14th Advanced Cohort Training Session

In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH), the Pakistan FETP conducted the third contact session for the 14th Advanced cohort. This session focused on disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, and data collection. The trained residents are now prepared to strengthen disease surveillance and outbreak response capacities in their respective districts, benefiting both the province and the country.



The Pakistan FETP Residents' Contributions to Public Health

The Pakistan FETP residents and graduates contributed to the development of a five-year Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) Roadmap, aiming to address the system's needs, gaps, and challenges. Also, they actively participated in several events, including the Global Health Security Summit, and the national conference on "Integrated Approach for Evidence Based Public Health, as well as the First Technical Working Group Meeting for the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS), demonstrating their commitment to advancing public health initiatives.



Enhancing Mentorship Skills

Hosted at the NIH in collaboration with the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), a two-week Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop was conducted for mentors of the immunization cohort of the Field Epidemiology Training Program-National National Stop Transmission of Polio (N-STOP). This workshop focused on discussing this cohort's course curriculum and enhancing facilitation skills. Through this training, mentors became better equipped to support the professional development of public health professionals in immunization.



The Pakistan FETP Initiates Training for Two New Cohorts

This quarter marked the initiation of the 18th and the 19th Frontline cohorts of the Pakistan FETP in KPK and Balochistan provinces. The residents will receive training in disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, data collection, public health response measures, as well as community engagement and risk communication. They will then apply these skills in their districts, strengthening disease surveillance and outbreak response capacities at the provincial and national levels.



QATAR

Insights on the PHEP Cohorts of the Qatar FETP

The Qatar Field Epidemiology Training Program (Qatar FETP) organized two workshops for its second and third Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) cohorts. These workshops were designed to equip the residents with essential technical and practical expertise for conducting disease outbreak investigations. Additionally, the workshops showcased presentations of fieldwork projects and facilitated discussions on leadership and management within the field of public health.

Following the completion of the workshops, the program celebrated the graduation of these cohorts in a remarkable ceremony. Equipped with fundamental skills in surveillance, outbreak investigation, and emergency response, the residents can now contribute effectively to national public health efforts.



SAUDI ARABIA

The Saudi FETP's New Cohort Initiative

During this quarter, the Saudi Field Epidemiology Training Program (Saudi FETP), overseen by the Assistant Agency for Preventive Health at the Saudi Ministry of Health (MoH), initiated registration for a new advanced cohort in collaboration with the College of Medicine at King Saud University in Riyadh. This initiative aims to further strengthen epidemiological capacities and enhance public health preparedness in Saudi Arabia.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Check out our Latest Periodicals!

- [EMPHNET's Emergency Bulletin](#)
- The April Pick of the Monthly [NCDsRC Research Digest: Implementing and evaluating Integrated Care Models for Non-communicable Diseases in Fragile and Humanitarian Settings](#)



SUDAN

The Sudan Field epidemiology Training Program (Sudan FETP) achieved significant milestones with the graduation of its second and third Intermediate cohorts, showcasing the resilience of its graduates. Furthermore, the launch of two cohorts of the Public Health Empowerment Program – Surveillance for Polio Officers (PHEP-SPO) highlights Sudan's commitment to strengthening public health emergency response capabilities.

Milestone: The Second and Third Intermediate Cohorts' Graduation Ceremony

The Sudan FETP celebrated the graduation of its second and third Intermediate cohorts. This occasion provided an invaluable opportunity to recognize and commend the dedication, hard work, and remarkable accomplishments of the graduates as they successfully completed their training under the challenging circumstances of an emergency context.

[Check out the video here!](#)



Empowering Public Health Response: Launching the PHEP-SPO Cohorts

Two cohorts of the PHEP-SPO were launched in Sudan by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), and with support from EMPHNET. This milestone serves to build the capacities of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) officers to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health emergencies. Recently, the program conducted its mentors workshop and two workshops for the residents. The first workshop highlighted the principles of public health and epidemiology, the mechanisms of vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs) transmission, control, and prevention, as well as the basics of biostatistics. In addition, the second workshop aimed to introduce the role of the laboratory in surveillance and outbreak investigation, alongside essential health indicators and the structure of rapid response teams, within public health emergency management.



TUNISIA

The Tunisia Field Epidemiology Training Program (Tunisia FETP) is embarking on a comprehensive evaluation to assess its operations, review the curriculum, identify any existing gaps, and prioritize strategies for sustainability. By analyzing its curriculum and framework, the program aims to strengthen its capacity to address emerging public health challenges effectively. This initiative reflects the Tunisia FETP’s commitment to continuous improvement and its dedication to ensuring the highest standards of epidemiological training and practice.



YEMEN

Through its different initiatives, the Yemen Field Epidemiology Training Program (Yemen FETP) celebrated notable accomplishments and implemented proactive measures to tackle public health issues.

Celebrating Success!

The Yemen FETP celebrated the graduation of its second Intermediate and sixth Advanced cohorts in Sana'a. This milestone was part of a larger conference that highlighted the program's achievements and collaborative efforts in field epidemiology. The event, held at the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoHP) in Sana'a, brought together key health officials and program directors from across the country, marking a significant step forward in public health capacity building in Yemen.



Simultaneously, the program also marked the graduation of the first Intermediate cohort in Aden with a memorable ceremony. Distinguished experts from various fields were present at the event, highlighting the importance of this accomplishment and the dedication of those graduates in advancing public health in Yemen.

Conducting Measles Outbreak Investigation

in Loder District, Abyan Governorate, the Yemen FETP conducted a measles outbreak investigation. This crucial initiative aimed to identify the outbreak's extent, sources, and transmission dynamics to implement effective control and prevention measures.



GHD|EMPHNET: Working Together for Better Health

The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) is a regional network that focuses on strengthening public health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and beyond. EMPHNET works in partnership with ministries of health, non-government organizations, international agencies, private sector, and relevant institutions from the region and the globe to promote public health and applied epidemiology. To advance the work of EMPHNET, Global Health Development (GHD) was initiated to build coordination mechanisms with partners and collaborators. Together, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serving the region by supporting efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related areas.

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