



FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

MARCH – MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 11



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Editor's Letter

We are delighted to present the eleventh issue of our Quarterly FETP Newsletter. This issue covers FETP news and events that took place during the last quarter. The news covered in this issue highlight the contribution of the region's FETP residents and graduates to improving public health in their countries, serving as a testimony to their dedication, hard work, and commitment.

This issue features Iraq's FETP Fourth National Conference which took place in March. It also includes sections dedicated to the latest news from different country programs.

The issue also features the recent Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) meetings, the workshop titled "FETP Sustainability in the EMR" organized by EMPHNET, as well as the region's FETPs contribution to the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference, and the outcomes from the latest FETP Board of Directors Meeting.

We hope that you find this issue to offer a valuable reading experience and that it serves as a source of inspiration for you all.

FETP Newsletter Editorial Team,



Feature Story

The Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program Holds its Fourth FETP National Conference

The Fourth National Conference of the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program (Iraq FETP) was held in Baghdad, Iraq, from March 28 to 30, 2022. With aims to utilize modern technologies as a means to break down geographical borders, the conference sessions adopted the hybrid approach, thus accommodating the needs of speakers and participants who were unable to attend in person.



Holding the theme “The Role of Epidemiology in Responding to Emerging Public Health Issues”, the conference’s sessions provided a valuable opportunity for knowledge exchange and networking amongst public health professionals throughout the country and beyond. From another angle, the sessions provided a platform to showcase the scientifically grounded work of FETP residents and graduates, as well as other public health professionals across Iraq.

conducted over the last two years. The conference also provided a space for new FETP graduates to network with other public health professionals in the country. Its agenda also included the graduation ceremony for the eighth and ninth FETP Advanced cohorts.

The main objective of the conference was to present the work of the current residents, graduates, and other public health professionals

The conference was organized by the Iraq Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). It was supported by US-BTRP, while additional partners included the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC), Black & Veatch (B&V), SciLore and Hur Road, and EMPHNET.



AN OPENING TO REMEMBER

In a ceremonial event held on March 28, 2022, the Fourth Iraq FETP National Conference was officially inaugurated. With participants joining from the different governorates of Iraq, and different countries in the region, the ceremony's agenda comprised remarks by H. E, Minister of Health, Dr. Hani Al-Oqabi; EMPHNET Executive Director, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour; Director General of Public Health Directorates, Dr. Riyadh Alhilfi; and Iraq FETP Director, Dr. Yasir Majeed, amongst others.

In his Remarks, H.E, Dr. Al-Oqabi recognized the great efforts of those in charge of Iraq FETP, their partners, and the Iraq Ministry of Health (MoH). He also thanked the program's specialized professors and supervisors for their great efforts

in advancing the field of applied epidemiology, particularly in light of the challenges faced by the MoH during the COVID-19 pandemic and the sacrifices made by many members of the White Army. He congratulated all graduates on this important milestone, wishing them lasting success in the service of Iraq.

The opening was also attended by WHO Regional Director in Iraq, Dr. Ahmad Zouiten; Chair of Public Health and Director of WHO Collaborating Centre, Prof. Salman Rawaf; Public Health Expert, Associate Professor, Baghdad University, Iraq, Dr. Faris Lami; and representatives from Iraq MoH, WHO, and EMPHNET.



A Graduation

Prior to the opening ceremony, Iraq FETP celebrated the graduation of the eighth and ninth Advanced cohorts which comprise 10 graduates in total on Monday, March 28, 2022.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of H. E, Minister of Health, Dr. Hani Al-Oqabi, and also included remarks by professors, program supervisors, and program partners. As part of the event agenda, a video presentation of the

most notable achievements of Iraq FETP was played. The video included a history of the program, and a commemoration of key figures contributing to the program's success.

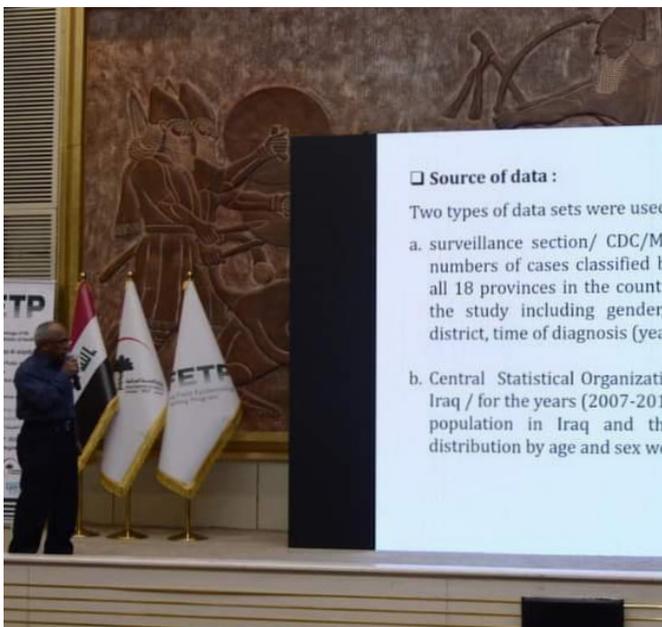
The ceremony concluded with the awarding of certificates to the graduates of the eighth and ninth cohorts, as well as certificates of appreciation to professors, supervisors, and supporters of the program.

A Diverse Agenda

The conference’s diverse agenda included: keynote addresses, panel discussions, as well as oral and poster presentations. The conference sessions were held over a period of two and a half days.

Scientific Sessions

Five scientific sessions were held during the conference with a total of 23 oral presentations that covered a wide spectrum of health-related topics such as Brucellosis in Iraq; COVID-19 Infection Among Health Care Workers; Crimean–Congo hemorrhagic fever, and NCDs, amongst others. On the third day of the conference, a poster session was held.



Plenary Sessions

During the conference, two Plenary sessions were held, each focusing on a different aspect of health. The first session, titled “Prospects of COVID-19 Pandemic in 2022 at Global, Regional and National Levels,” was held on March 29. The second session was held on March 30, titled “Upgrading the Public Health workforce in Iraq: challenges and opportunities”. The sessions were moderated and paneled by public health professionals and experts from different organizations, including Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour and Dr. Haitham Bashier from EMPHNET.

The conference was deemed a real success, as it offered an opportunity for fruitful discourse, networking, and the exchange of knowledge. You can check the conference’s highlights [here](#).





**Country
Program News**

This section
highlights the
region's FETPs'
updates

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan FETP Launches its Third Intermediate Cohort

On May 14, 2022, the Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Afghanistan FETP) launched its third Intermediate cohort. This cohort comprises 26 medical professionals including EPI and Surveillance Officers from 15 provinces in Afghanistan. The intermediate tier of the program aims to improve the participants' capacities to strengthen public health surveillance systems.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by the program's Technical Advisor, Health Promotion Directors, and members of the program's leadership committee. The ceremony also featured a video message given by EMPHNET Workforce Capacity Team Leader, Dr. Haitham Bashier.

In his message, Dr. Bashier highlighted that the participants of this cohort will expand their knowledge and skills in surveillance, outbreak investigation, emergency response, biosafety, biosecurity, and other disciplines of field epidemiology. He also emphasized EMPHNET's commitment to supporting the program's needs.

The cohort's first activity within its one-

Afghanistan FETP Holds a Mentors Workshop for its Intermediate Cohort

Afghanistan FETP conducted a three-day mentors' workshop on April 3, 2022, in Kabul. The mentorship workshop was facilitated by the program's technical advisor, Dr. Khwaja Mir Islam Saeed.

The workshop targeted 11 mentors who were introduced to the different characteristics of good mentorship practices. In addition, the workshop highlighted the role of mentors, mentorship skills, as well as the importance and benefits of mentoring.



year training is a two-week workshop. The workshop offered residents an introduction to epidemiology, biostatistics, surveillance system review, outbreak investigations, and EPI Info tutorials. As part of this workshop, the residents also participated in several group activities. These activities focused on case studies and biostatistics.



Afghanistan FETP Supports the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute

On May 9, 2022, Afghanistan FETP contributed to facilitating sessions within the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute (ANPHI). ANPHI is the academic and intellectual body of the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). It contributes to developing public health workforce capacities across the country.

Afghanistan FETP’s team developed and delivered a presentation on “Conflict Management” as part of a short course on Health Management and Ethics targeting both the newly recruited, and current technical and administrative staff within the Afghanistan MoPH.



Innovative Initiatives from Afghanistan FETP

Coaches Initiative

On May 9, 2022, Afghanistan FETP contributed to facilitating sessions within the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute (ANPHI). ANPHI is the academic and intellectual body of the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). It contributes to developing public health workforce capacities across the country.

Afghanistan FETP’s team developed and delivered a presentation on “Conflict Management” as part of a short course on Health Management and Ethics targeting both the newly recruited, and current technical and administrative staff within the Afghanistan MoPH.



Rotation Program Initiative Conducted During Cohorts' Fieldwork

Afghanistan FETP initiated its first “Rotation Program” in May. This initiative is designed to help residents to enhance their understanding of the work done in other departments within the Afghanistan MoPH while creating a collaborative network of health workers and increasing the quality of field investigations. As part of their one-year training, residents will visit five departments relevant to field epidemiology including the departments of the National Diseases Surveillance and Response, Communicable Diseases Control, National Expanded Program on Immunization, Health Management Information System, and Environmental Health. As part of the Rotation Program, residents will receive further guidance from their mentors and Afghanistan FETP technical staff.



BANGLADESH

Bangladesh FETP Holds Hospital Epidemiology Training for Mentors

In May, the Bangladesh Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETPB) held a hospital epidemiology training for mentors. The session was attended by representatives from EMPHNET and the CDC. This one-day session was provided for five mentors who will move on to train ten physicians in two hospitals.

The training to highlight the roles and responsibilities of mentors, concepts of mentoring and mentorship, and it included several open discussion sessions.



Bangladesh FETP and the Bangladesh FETPV Held a One-day Workshop

On April 11, Bangladesh FETP (FETPB) and the Bangladesh Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FETPV) held a one-day workshop that was designed to find synergies between human and veterinary programs for a One Health Community of Practice.

Hosted at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), the workshop agenda included a session highlighting the FETP and FETPV structures and their implementation in Bangladesh. The didactic sessions were followed by group discussions and group work aimed at finding possible synergies between both programs.



EGYPT

Egypt FETP Starts Selection Process for its Second Intermediate Cohort

On May 17, 2022, the Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program (Egypt FETP) started the selection process for its second Intermediate cohort, with personal interviews conducted in order to select residents. The objectives of the Intermediate program and ways to improve it were also discussed so that participants could make the most of the training.

After their selection and their completion of the one-year training, Egypt FETP's second Intermediate cohort graduates are expected to serve within the Egypt Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to improve the health of the public, and to respond to public health problems in the country. They are also expected to increase the completion and accuracy of surveillance data reporting and analysis to facilitate the effective control of diseases.



Egypt FETP Fifth Cohort of PHEP-BFE Holds a “Basics of Epidemiology and Public Health Surveillance” Workshop

In April 2022, 26 sanitarians from the central, directorate, and peripheral levels, sat for a workshop on “Basics of Epidemiology and Public Health Surveillance” as part of their three-month training within the Egypt FETP's Fifth cohort of Public Health Empowerment Program-Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP-BFE).

During the workshop, the participants were introduced to the requirements of the program, its objectives, curriculum, and core competencies. They were able to gain an understanding of the online training modules, workshops, and fieldwork available [on EMPHNET's Learning Management Systems \(LMS\)](#) after registration.



This workshop is essential for the PHEP-BFE residents as it provides them with an overview of key epidemiological concepts, while giving them the opportunity to enhance their understanding of basic epidemiology, building surveillance data analysis, and data interpretation skills, as well as introduce them to scientific reports' writing approach.

Egypt FETP Celebrates the Graduation of its First Intermediate Cohort

On Tuesday, April 12, 2022, Egypt FETP celebrated the graduation of its first Intermediate cohort. The cohort comprises 16 graduates who completed one year of training, including fieldwork and research projects. During this year, they also expanded their knowledge in different areas of applied epidemiology.

Read more about this [here](#).



Egypt FETP Residents and Graduates Participate in the National Polio Campaign

Egypt FETP residents and graduates participated in the National Polio Campaign which was rolled out by the Egypt MoHP, in collaboration with UNICEF, and the WHO. Participants included FETP residents and graduates from the Advanced level, Intermediate level, and the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP).

The campaign was launched in order to eradicate poliovirus among children, and in response to the virus detection. It also targets more than 16 million children, with an aim to vaccinate children living in Egypt, whether Egyptians or non-Egyptians, between the ages of one and five.

The campaign is implemented across all Egyptian governorates by 90,000 well-trained medical personnel and it included house-to-house visits in all governorates, villages, and remote areas.



IRAQ

Iraq FETP Holds a Field Visit to Busayyah

In May, the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program (Iraq FETP) conducted a field visit to the Busayyah area located within the southwest desert of the Muthanna Governorate. The purpose of the visit was to assess the preparations and response efforts made regarding the hemorrhagic fever epidemic.

The area was chosen within a random sample and is located about 375 km from the city center of which 50 km is an unpaved desert road.



Iraq FETP Celebrates Graduation of the Eighth and Ninth Cohorts of PHEP

Iraq FETP celebrated the graduation of the eighth and ninth cohorts of its Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) in May. The total number of graduates making up these two cohorts is 45.

The three-month PHEP is designed to strengthen the technical capacities of public health workforce to run and manage the local public health surveillance system, conduct outbreak investigations, and respond to common diseases. It equips participants with the necessary managerial and leadership skills



they need to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate public health interventions effectively and efficiently.

First Cohort of PHEP Graduates in Kurdistan

On Saturday, March 26, 2022, Iraq FETP celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of the PHEP-BFE of Kurdistan, Iraq in Erbil.

The cohort consisted of 25 graduates all of whom completed the program's three-month training requirements. Their three-month training included fieldwork as well as sessions on the basic skills needed to conduct effective public health surveillance, outbreak investigation, and other soft skills.



Read more [here](#).

JORDAN

Jordan FETP Get Involved in a Food Poisoning Outbreak in Jerash

On June 2, 2022, the Jerash Health Directorate reported a number of suspected cases of food poisoning seeking treatment at the Souf Primary Healthcare Center (PHC). The patients had symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, abdominal pain, fever, and headache. More cases with the same symptoms visited the emergency department of the Jerash hospital.

The number of cases increased, reaching a high of 44 cases at the end of June 3. In response to the incident, the Jordan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Jordan FETP) and a special team from the health directorate conducted epidemiological investigations and line listing for all cases that came to the hospital. They listed their names, age, gender, residence, symptoms, and date of onset, as well as all foods and drinks they consumed prior to the onset of symptoms.

They collected water samples from suspected water treatment stations, homes of infected cases, and the general water supply line. They also participated in several field visits to schools, restaurants, and the water purification station at the infected area to collect samples. After intensive investigation, the source of infection was unidentified.



LEBANON

Meet Lebanon FETP Director

Dr. Nada Ghosn holds a Diploma of Specialized Studies in Public Health from the University of Lille II, Law and Health, Faculty of Medicine in France. She also holds a Diploma of Medicine from the same university, and a Master’s degree in Biological and Medical Sciences from the University of Paris XI.

Since 2000, she was appointed as the Head of the Epidemiological Surveillance Program. She was WHO’s temporary advisor in Egypt and Tunisia. Within WHO committees and groups, Dr. Ghosn was a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens, and a member of the Contact Tracing Guideline Development Group for COVID-19 Contact Tracing from 2021 to the present. In addition, she taught “Epidemiology” and “Public Health” in different universities from 1999 to the present. Dr. Ghosn has also published multiple scientific papers.



ANNOUNCEMENT



Keep an Eye Out for the EMPHNET FETP Ambassador Program!

EMPHNET is launching the FETP Ambassador Program that will contribute to increasing visibility for the region’s FETP and its achievements. It builds a strong connection across the Eastern Mediterranean Region’s network.

MOROCCO

Morocco Intermediate FETP Completes Module Four

During the month of May, the residents of the Morocco Field Epidemiology Training Program's (Morocco FETP) first Intermediate cohort completed the fourth module of their one-year training. This module focuses on research methods, and data analysis, and comes after previously conducted field work. Within this module, residents also develop concepts for presentations, and analysis plans for the data they had collected. This round of field work focused on COVID-19 cases.

The Intermediate FETP is nine-month to one-year in-service training program that focuses on strengthening epidemiologic capacity at the middle and national level of the health system. The Intermediate FETP program is designed for government public health workers at the middle and national level of the health system who are responsible for: surveillance data compilation, analysis, and reporting.

The training focuses on the management and evaluation of the surveillance system, outbreak investigation and response, and addressing public health priority issues and the communication of health information to managers and decision-makers. This cohort is expected to graduate mid-July.

Morocco FETP Director, Dr. Hassan Chrifi is Part of the Hajj Medical Delegation Responsible for Ensuring Health Care for Moroccan Pilgrims

This delegation was chosen to ensure the physical and mental safety of pilgrims performing the Hajj. This delegation comprises 34 medical workers: 17 doctors, 14 nurses, and administrative and technical staff.

Given the epidemiological situation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the world at large, it is the responsibility of this health delegation to take preventive measures against the spread of diseases and to provide medical care in case of need. They were instructed to closely monitor the state of health and to provide moral and psychological support as needed.

The approach taken by the Moroccan Ministry of Health (MoH) involves the establishment of fixed and mobile health points in order to help Health Mission members to fulfill their



mission by allowing them to strengthen health services, strengthen prevention measures and provide health advice for citizens through close coordination between members.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan FELTP Sits for a GHD|EMPHNET Introductory Session

Public Health Programs Director at GHD|EMPHNET, Dr. Maged Al Gunaid paid a visit to the National Institute of Health (NIH) Pakistan. During his visit, he met the cohort 14 residents and technical advisors of the Pakistan Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (Pakistan FELTP).

Dr. Al Gunaid gave a brief overview of GHD|EMPHNET and its projects. The Knowledge Exchange and Networking team also gave a brief about the increased significance of electronic libraries and introduced the recently launched EMPHNET Electronic Library (EEL). They also explained how Pakistan FELTP can benefit from using the library.



SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi FETP Accepts 14 New Residents to its Upcoming Cohort

The Saudi Field Epidemiology Training Program (Saudi FETP) recently accepted 14 residents in its 35th Advanced cohort. These residents will undergo a two-year in-service training. The Advanced FETP is designed to enhance the epidemiologic capacity of the public health workforce. The training provides residents with hands-on experience in responding to a wide range of disease outbreaks and other public health priorities including disease surveillance and natural disasters. Within this cohort, ten are Saudis and four are Omanis. The cohort includes 11 males and three females this year. Unfortunately, photos are still yet not available.

The main objectives of this training are to:

1. To develop a workforce competent in applied epidemiology and other cross-cutting aspects of public health practice.
2. To fill gaps and perform essential functions in public health practice within priority technical units and programs at national and sub-national levels.
3. To establish/reinforce substantive public health specialist cadres at national, regional/district levels and ensure dedicated funding to sustain the capacity building efforts.
4. To strengthen collaborations across various tiers of the health sector, other national and regional stakeholders.
5. To enhance scientific data driven public health decisions.

Over Thirty Abstracts from the EMR Accepted for Presentation at the 11th TEPHINET Global Scientific Conference

We congratulate the country programs of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR), for the acceptance of over thirty FETP residents and graduates' abstracts for presentation at the 11th Global TEPHINET Scientific Conference, set to be held in Panama City between September 4 and 9, 2022. Abstracts were accepted for presentation within the following categories:

- Special Alumni Oral Presentation Session
- Frontline Oral Presentation Session
- Intermediate/Advanced Oral Presentation Session
- Poster Presentations Session

A detailed list of the abstracts accepted from the EMR can be shown [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENT

SUDAN

Sudan FETP Holds a Mentorship Workshop for its Second Intermediate Cohort

The Sudan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Sudan FETP) held a mentorship workshop for its second Intermediate cohort on May 17, 2022. The cohort comprises 16 residents who must complete a nine-month in-service training as a requirement for the program. Throughout this program, residents will expand their knowledge and skills in different areas of field epidemiology such as surveillance, outbreak investigation, and basic public health management. The Intermediate program includes different didactic workshops and fieldwork in order for residents to practice and implement what they have learned.

As field projects are conducted with the support of trained mentors providing feedback and guidance, Sudan FETP held the mentorship workshop to train future mentors. The objectives of this workshop were to comprehend the roles and responsibilities of mentors, demonstrate the characteristics of an effective mentor, and explain the fieldwork assignment and



assessment tool. The workshop also focused on how to provide constructive feedback on the mentee's skills.

The residents are also doing the first module of their one-year training online. This module offers an introduction to field epidemiology.

Sudan FETP Graduates the First Intermediate Cohort

On April 14, 2022, Sudan FETP celebrated the graduation of its first Intermediate cohort. The ceremony was held under the patronage of His Excellency, the Sudan Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) Under Secretary and Acting Federal Minister of Health, Dr. Heitham M. Awadalla. The cohort comprises seven graduates all of whom completed the nine-month training requirement for the program.

Throughout the training, the graduates broadened their knowledge in multiple areas of field epidemiology, including; surveillance, outbreak investigation, and emergency response. The ceremony was attended by Sudan FMoH Under Secretary and Acting Federal Minister of Health, Dr. Haitham M. Awadalla;



Sudan FETP Director, Dr. Muntasir Osman; Public Health Specialist, Dr. Shahd Osman; WHO representative in Sudan, Dr. Nima Abid; and FETP mentors and graduates. It was also attended remotely by the EMPHNET's Workforce Capacity and Knowledge Exchange Networking Teams. Visit this [link](#) to read more.

Sudan FETP Residents Share their Experience after Interning at WHO EMRO

Three residents from the second cohort of the advanced level of Sudan FETP had the chance to be part of the internship program at the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO/EMRO) in Cairo, Egypt. The residents are Medical Doctor serving at the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) in Khartoum, Dr. Dina Alabgari; Public Health Officer at the River Nile State, Manahil Dahab; and Public Health Officer at the Blue Nile State, Eaitimad Kamal.

In a session held with their fellow residents in attendance, the three residents shared their experiences and the newly learned skills they acquired throughout this period. They also described the importance of developing the skill of investigating and responding to public health threats at a regional level.

Thus, each of the residents highlighted the main tasks assigned to them in relation to their units. They also expressed the usefulness of this experience in terms of building their



capacities in data analysis using Excel, Rapid Risk Assessment, and Grading of Public Health Emergencies.

Meet Sudan FETP New Director

Early this year, Dr. Muntasir Mohammed Osman was assigned as the new Sudan FETP Director. Dr. Osman got his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Gezira in 1999. He obtained his Master of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Witwatersrand (WITS) University-South Africa.

Dr. Osman has a broad knowledge of principles and techniques in epidemiology and public health as well as an excellent knowledge in communicable diseases surveillance, outbreak investigation, and control and prevention programs.

Dr. Osman also has a rich experience in epidemiology and public health as he has filled several positions in different organizations and institutions. He was an Epidemiologist at the WHO Iraq Office, and WHO's Temporary Adviser at WHO/EMRO. He also served in the Sudan



Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) for ten years in various positions. Additionally, Dr. Osman worked in several humanitarian aid organizations such as UNICEF, and he collaborated and coordinated with UN agencies.

TUNISIA

Tunisia FETP's Fourth Intermediate Cohort Starts its Journey

The Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Intermediate program is a nine-month in-service training program that focuses on improving the epidemiologic capacity to evaluate and strengthen public health surveillance systems. It also focuses on building the participants' capacities to investigate and control outbreaks, as well as to conduct field studies that address public health priority issues in their countries.



On March 9, 2022, the Tunisia Field Epidemiology Training Program (Tunisia FETP) started the selection process for its fourth Intermediate cohort. This process included an orientation session about the program's objectives, content, and requirements. It also included a discussion on the importance of conducting a test for the participants and included networking activities. The cohort comprises 14 participants all working at the regional epidemiological surveillance units within the Tunisia Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

After residents were selected, this cohort commenced its one-year training with a two-day mentorship workshop on March 10, 2022. The workshop served to reinforce the integral role of mentors, as residents of the program receive most of their learning through practical training in the field under the guidance of mentors. The primary objective of this workshop was to prepare mentors to support the training of Tunisia FETP residents and equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills they need to better manage their fieldwork.

Furthermore, the workshop was designed to help mentors develop an understanding of mentoring and strengthen their mentoring skills in a way that can effectively put what they learned into practice. During the workshop, mentors practiced basic mentoring skills and they became familiar with supervising in order

to monitor and evaluate trainees' activities, help trainees develop ideas, and help facilitate the implementation of recommendations.

On April 5, 2022, Tunisia FETP's fourth Intermediate cohort held its first two-week introductory workshop titled "Introduction to Public Health Surveillance, Basic Epidemiology and Field Epidemiology." The workshop included different didactic sessions such as interactive lectures, discussions, and case studies. It also focused on the importance of surveillance systems in supporting public health emergency response. Additionally, a great emphasis was placed on how epidemics and outbreaks are investigated, and how graduates of the Intermediate program can implement measures to protect and improve the health of the public.

Following that, the fourth Intermediate cohort of Tunisia FETP continued its training by completing a module on outbreak investigations as part of its one-year training in May 2022. The idea of investigating an outbreak was discussed, as it is related to a set of procedures used to identify the cause responsible for the disease, the people affected, and the circumstances and mode of spread of the disease. The importance of taking effective actions to contain and prevent the spread of the disease, and the requirement for planning and strategy before conducting an outbreak investigation were also highlighted.

YEMEN

Yemen FETP Launches its 15th Cohort of PHEP in Dhamar, Mahweet, and Amran

On March 12, 2022, the Yemen Field Epidemiology Training Program (YFETP) launched the 15th cohort of its Public Health Empowerment Program - Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP-BFE). The cohort included 25 participants coming from the governorates of Dhamar, Mahweet, and Amran.

This program is a three-month online and in-service training that focuses on the detection of and response to public health events. Participants throughout this period learn and practice the fundamental skills used in outbreak investigation and needed to perform efficiently in surveillance systems and principles of leadership and management.



Yemen FETP Conducts the First Mentorship Workshop for its Sixth Advanced Cohort

Yemen FETP launched the Sixth Cohort of the Advanced level on March 12, 2022. The cohort comprised 11 residents coming from Sana'a, Hadramout, Ibb, Taiz, Jawf, and Raymah. Also and in preparation for their two-year training, the residents completed a 12-week English Language course.

As mentorship is one of the integral components of FETP training, Yemen FETP also conducted the first mentorship workshop for the cohort residents on April 7, 2022. Participants learned about principles of leadership and essential



soft skills for mentors. Also, facilitators outlined the roles of mentors and the competencies a mentor needs to carry out these roles effectively. The workshop was attended by directors from 30 national programs and centers.

Yemen FETP Celebrates the Graduation of its 15th Cohort of PHEP in Albaydha and Aldhale

On April 18, 2022, Yemen FETP celebrated the graduation of the PHEP's 15th cohort. The graduates included 24 surveillance coordinators from the two governorates of Albaydha and Aldhale.

This program reinforces and enhances the skills of FETP residents in areas of surveillance, detection, and outbreak response. The skills gained from this training will build public health professionals' capacities to respond to health threats at the provincial, district, and local levels. Thus, this graduation is considered a milestone for Yemen FETP.



Yemen FETP Launches its First Intermediate Cohort

In May, Yemen FETP launched its first Intermediate cohort with the screening of 40 candidates. The candidates come from 19 governorates as well as from central programs within the Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP). By the end of the screening process, only 25 candidates will be accepted as the first Yemen FETP Intermediate cohort residents.



Other News

This section covers regional news and success stories



OTHER NEWS

EMPHNET and CDC Teams Conduct a Field Visit for a Needs Assessment for Oman FETP

EMPHNET, in collaboration with CDC HQ, and the CDC Regional office in Muscat is supporting the Oman Ministry of Health (MoH) in order to build a National Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) in the country.

From March 13 to March 17, EMPHNET and CDC teams went on a field visit in Oman to conduct an assessment of needs for the program and met with various relevant stakeholders.



EMPHNET and CDC teams held meetings with relevant departments within the Oman MoH and conducted field visits and interviews for the purpose of a needs assessment. They also reached a consensus on the structure

and content of the Oman FETP curriculum and agreed on an implementation plan. The first Oman FETP cohort will lay the foundation for future cohorts' implementation.

EMPHNET Concludes Workshop Titled “FETP Sustainability in the EMR”

The numbers and roles of Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) have grown since the establishment of the program, and just recently, FETPs have played an essential role in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. This development has made the sustainability of the FETP more fundamental than ever before.

Among the main factors contributing to FETP sustainability are, institutionalization, political commitment, and funding. Additionally, FETP sustainability is further ensured through strong collaboration between stakeholders of the program.

To shed light on this issue further, the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) recently held a regional workshop titled “The Sustainability of FETP in the EMR”. Taking place in Amman between March 21 and March 23, 2022, the workshop brought together



FETP Directors, Advisors, and representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Read more [here](#).

EMPHNET Hosts Semi-Annual Board of Directors Meeting

The Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) directors convened for the semi-annual FETP Board of Directors meeting for the year 2021-2022.

Hosted at the Grand Hyatt Amman Hotel on March 24, 2022, the meeting saw representation from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen's FETPs.

Read more [here](#).



The Strategic Leadership Group of the FETP Enterprise Meet to Discuss Ongoing Activities

In April, the Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) of the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Enterprise met to discuss their ongoing activities and the progress made toward achieving the recommendations of the Global Field Epidemiology Roadmap over the last year.

During the meeting, working group leads shared updates on key goals and the priority actions being taken to achieve each of the roadmap's eight recommendations. The recommendations are:

- Establish a Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) for the FETP Enterprise.
- The SLG should continually monitor and assure needed improvements and changes in the FETP Enterprise.
- The SLG should promote the development of applied epidemiology workforce targets.
- The SLG should assure the development of a cadre of specially trained FETP fellows and alumni available for rapid response to health emergencies.
- The SLG should work with country partners to accelerate the rate at which FETPs become fully institutionalized.
- The SLG should continue, strengthen, and expand efforts to assure and improve the quality of FETPs and the FETP Enterprise.
- The SLG should assure sustainable funding for the global FETP Enterprise.
- The SLG should foster enhanced alignment and integration of the FETP Enterprise with key global health programs and priorities.

The leadership group continues to showcase its commitment to ensuring that every country in the world has the applied epidemiology capacity needed to protect and promote the health of its own population, and to collaborate with others to promote global health.

Field Epidemiology Training Programs from the Eastern Mediterranean Region Make Notable Presence in the 2022 FETP International Nights

The Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) co-organized this year’s Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) International Nights, which was held virtually between May 10 and May 11, 2022.



A Host of Keynote Addresses

In the event’s opening ceremony, CDC’s FETP Team Leader, Dr. Seymour Williams, and TEPHINET Director, Dr. Carl Reddy both stressed the pivotal role that the FETP International Nights play in showcasing the well-grounded work that FETP residents and graduates around the globe have done over the years.

From his end, the TEPHINET Advisory Board Chair and Executive Director of the National Institute of Health (NIH) Pakistan, Pakistan FELTP Director, Professor Aamer Ikram in his opening remarks stated that “the FETPs play a critical role in advancing global health security and protecting populations from health threats.”

Attendees also heard addresses given by the Director for the Division of Global Health Protection (DGHP), Center for Global Health (CGH), CDC RADM, Nancy Knight, and CDC’s Acting Principal Deputy Director, Dr. Debra Houry. Both speakers highlighted the many contributions that FETPs have made to global health protection while stressing the urgency

for continuing the efforts made towards strengthening and expanding field epidemiology capacity building around the world.

Dr. Houry also expressed gratitude for the work of FETPs and the dedication and passion they bring to protecting populations from public health threats.

Abstracts

Abstracts presented during the two-day event covered a wide range of topics including; COVID-19, HIV, cholera, malaria, leishmaniasis, tobacco use, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR), amongst others. A total of 150 abstracts from 61 countries were submitted out of which 24 were presented as poster presentations and six as oral presentations.

From the EMR

The Eastern Mediterranean Region was amply represented during this event. Two poster presentations were given during the event from the region. The first titled “Determinants of COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Among Pregnant Women in Baldia Town, Karachi, Pakistan, July–November 2021; a Case-control Study” was presented by Dr. Aamir Hussain from Pakistan FELTP while the second titled “Evaluation of Prevention, Mitigation, and Containment

Measures of Infection With SARS-CoV-2 at 10 Egyptian Governmental Hemodialysis Units, 2020–2021” was presented by Dr. Essam Mostafa from Egypt FETP.

Additionally, an oral presentation titled “Transmission of Coronavirus Disease 2019 Among Wedding Attendees in Karachi, Pakistan 2020: a Retrospective Cohort Study” was given by Pakistan FELTP resident, Dr. Jamal Hamza.

Awards of Recognition

During the FETP International Nights, this year’s FETP Directors Award was given to the Yemen FETP. The Director’s Award for Excellence in Epidemiology and Public Health Response is presented in recognition of significant contributions made towards successful responses to public health emergencies (natural and man-made disasters, disease outbreaks, etc.). The award also recognizes excellence in epidemiologic practice or research and contributions that address a public health issue of major importance by applying epidemiologic principles and methods. Nominations recognize accomplishments that improved human health, made a substantial reduction in the burden of disease, or represented innovations to public health practice based on epidemiologic foundations or implementation of epidemiologic approaches. Yemen FETP received this

prestigious recognition in light of the fact that despite the challenges brought on by the war in Yemen, the program was maintained, and it continues to grow.

Similarly, the Sara Lowther FETP Memorial Award was presented to Dr. Alpana Majumder from Bangladesh FETP. The award supports a resident or recent graduate of a Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) to conduct a project that makes significant contributions to infectious disease prevention and control in their country. It honors the memory of Dr. Sara Lowther, who made significant contributions to public health and passed away in May 2020. Dr. Lowther was the acting lead of the Epidemiology Technical Support Unit for FETP at CDC.

The Verdict

This two-day event sheds light on the work done by FETPs around the world, and we are happy to see our region play a major role in enhancing global public health practice.

GHD|EMPHNET Implements FETP Exchange Program

As part of its ongoing aims to contribute to building national and regional capacities in several priority public health areas, with field epidemiology as its main area of focus, EMPHNET established the FETP Residents' and Graduates Exchange Program to provide opportunities for FETPs across the region to exchange knowledge and experience. The program offers opportunities for FETPs to join programs from other countries for a specific period for them to learn from new experiences.

FETPs adopt a “learning by doing” approach which supports residents to participate in outbreak investigations, help to establish and evaluate disease surveillance systems, design, and conduct studies on problems of public health concern in their country, and train other healthcare workers. Thus, it is essential for FETP residents and graduates to witness firsthand how each country deals with outbreaks and public health events.

Furthermore, such experiences will prepare residents and graduates to deal with similar challenges that may threaten the health and wellbeing of communities within their home countries. It also prepares them to work within regional and international public health and epidemiology teams and to reflect on this experience regionally.

Shortly after the program's launch, Intermediate Coordinator from the Yemen FETP spent time with the team of the Iraq FETP Intermediate. The purpose of this



exchange was for the Yemen FETP Intermediate Coordinator to get acquainted with the experience of his peers from the Iraq FETP. The one week visit, that took place between May 27 and June 3, enabled him to gain general information about the activities carried out by the Iraqi FETP at all levels, and to have access to training material relevant to the Intermediate program. As part of the visit, the Yemen FETP Intermediate Coordinator also attended a leadership and management workshop for Intermediate residents.

All in all, the visit was deemed a true learning experience. The Intermediate Coordinator stated that the program offered opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between FETPs in the region. The Iraq FETP strengthened the capacity of the Iraqi health workforce and supported the national health system by integrating of the program in the ministry of health. The Intermediate Coordinator will go to his home country and reflect the experiences gained within his work.

A Regional Public Health Library Launched by EMPHNET

On May 11, 2022, and after months of preparation, EMPHNET launched its Electronic Library (EEL), thus adding another milestone in its journey to spread public health knowledge across the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

EEL is a free digital resource dedicated to empowering field epidemiologists and public health professionals in the region, by providing them with access to resources and tools that benefits their research and practices. It also serves as a space for enhancing the region’s reservoir of public health education and information, which, in the long run, would contribute to bridging the information-to-action gap in the region.

EEL contains multiple resources, including e-journals, e-books from different publishers, and a section dedicated to documents

published by EMPHNET and its partners. This section includes guidelines, manuals, webinar briefs, reports, abstracts, and other literature that is not published in journals. This unique content, or grey literature, is now made open to EEL’s users, thus serving to offer a wider scope of content set to enhance users’ research and work.

As part of EMPHNET’s aims to ensure that the e-library does in fact offer resources of relevance to the region’s public health professionals, EEL was also designed to include a “Request a Resource” form which users can fill to request e-books, e-journals, and articles, amongst other resources. This form will also help library administrators to determine the needs of the users and to expand EEL’s collections accordingly.



We aim to improve public health practice and research by providing access to information through this library. We aim for EEL to be a comprehensive resource in the EMR, supporting field epidemiologists and public health professionals.



Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour, EMPHNET Executive Director

Off to a good start, EEL already has 191 active users from 49 countries across the region and beyond, with a collective number of logins exceeding 1564. Within these logins, users accessed a total of 785 resources. At this rate, EMPHNET can only anticipate an increase in these figures in the months to come, thus further bringing the library closer to realizing its vision

for becoming the region’s comprehensive public health resource in the near future.

EEL’s team will build partnerships with institutes and libraries to further enhance its resource portfolio and create more opportunities for users and researchers in the region to advance their work. You can access EEL [here](#).

GHD|EMPHNET: Working Together for Better Health

Global Health Development (GHD) is a regional initiative created to support countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and to strengthen their health systems to respond to public health challenges and threats. GHD was initiated to advance the work of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) by building coordinating mechanisms with Ministries of Health, International Organizations and other institutions to improve population health outcomes. As an implementing arm to EMPHNET, GHD aligns its strategies with national policies and directions. Serving as a collaborative platform, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serve the region by supporting national efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related services.