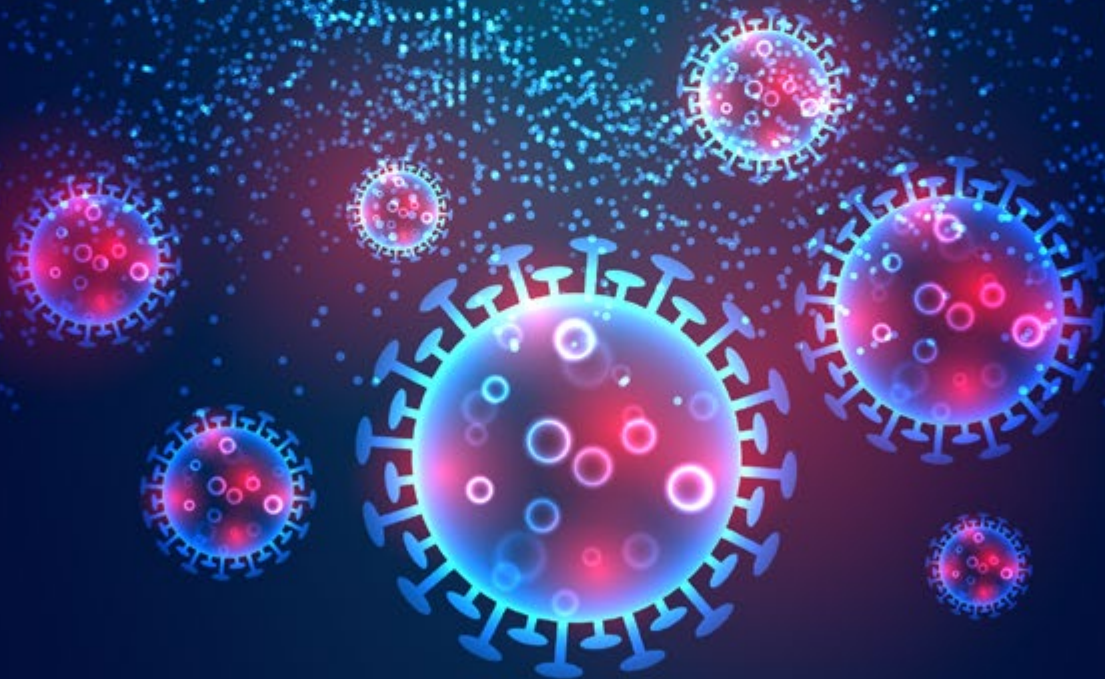




Semi-annual Bulletin

Half year summary (August-December) 2021
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Word of the volume



Prof Mine Durusu Tanriover, MD, FEFIM

Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Ankara, Turkey

Hacettepe University Vaccine Institute, Department of Immunization Policies, Ankara, Turkey

Hacettepe University Vaccine Institute, Board Member

She graduated from Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine in 2000 and finished her residency training in internal medicine in 2005 in the same university. She has been serving as the consultant of the Emergency Department and Acute Care Unit for several years, mainly admitting patients with acute decompensation of chronic diseases; lower respiratory tract infections, organ failure and acute, undiagnosed conditions.

Dr. Mine Durusu Tanriover worked as the Co-Chief of Hacettepe University Oncology Hospital and the Quality Coordinator of Hacettepe University Hospitals, a Joint Commission International accredited, 1200-bed academic medical center between 2016-2020.

Her research area mainly consists of adult vaccination, influenza, quality improvement and patient safety. She has been involved in the Global Influenza Hospital Surveillance Network project as an investigator and site coordinator since 2012 and participated as an investigator in the phase 3 clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines available in Turkey.

Representing the Turkish Society of Internal Medicine, she is the lead of the Medical Specialty Council Curriculum Preparation Task Force. She is the founder and the first chair of the Young Internists Working Group and honorary fellow of the European Federation of Internal Medicine (EFIM). She is a member of the Quality and Professional Issues and the Adult Vaccination (ADVICE) Working Groups of EFIM and Editor-in-Chief of EFIM Academy. Dr. Durusu Tanriover is currently the Secretary of the Middle East, Eurasia and Africa Influenza Stakeholders Network.

She believes that we are what we eat and inhale, and a healthy life begins with healthy food, healthy mind and being a part of the nature. Her main area of interest outside her academic activities is engaging in mindfulness practices and growing her own food in her edible balcony garden. She is married with two children.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me first of all wish you a very healthy, happy and peaceful new year! I hope that hard times will soon be over, and we will return back to our social and family lives, start to travel in joy and meet with friends, and find the courage to move forward with what we have learnt from this pandemic.

MIDDLE EAST, EURASIA AND AFRICA INFLUENZA STAKEHOLDERS NETWORK (ME'NA-ISN) has had several accomplishments during 2021. Two major scientific online events, along with webinars on certain aspects of influenza and influenza vaccination, were conducted; ME'NA-ISN Congress (Flu vaccination: new horizons in the outlook) and ME'NA-ISN Influenza Day 2021, respectively. The Influenza Day hosted high-level discussions on the upcoming flu season and its potential epidemiology and impacts with international experts. I am glad to announce that the Influenza Day is now a flagship activity of ME'NA-ISN and Influenza Day 2022 will be held in October, hopefully in a face to face manner.

ME'NA-ISN is now moving beyond its borders to be a part of a global network and to plan its activities on a wider area of impact expanding from the Asia Pacific Region to North America. In this regard, we are looking forward to every opportunity to establish connections with all of those institutions, societies, associations and individuals who share the same vision with us- a world resilient to pandemic influenza.

Please mark your calendars to meet in beautiful Istanbul on October 7 and 8, 2022 for the Influenza Day 2022!

Sincerely yours,

Mine Durusu Tanriover
Secretary, ME'NA-ISN

International updates on Influenza



Increase in circulating influenza A(H3N2), influenza B, and RSV were associated with increased cardiorespiratory rehospitalization rates among older adults who were hospitalized

Negative binomial regression models were used in a study in USA to quantify the relationship between increasing viral activity for some viruses and cardiorespiratory rehospitalizations from skilled nursing facilities. Although there was a decrease by 1% in the hospitalization rate for every 5% increase in circulating influenza A(H1N1pdm09), other viruses of influenza A(H3N2), influenza B, and RSV were associated with an increase in the cardiovascular hospitalization by 1% for every 5% increase of their activity.

This important report enhances the need for considering further precautionary measures especially the vaccination during the time with higher activity of respiratory viruses to avoid the need for re-hospitalization and increased mortality.

[Read more](#)



COVID-19 patients reported fewer complications than influenza patients, however more caution is still required among high-risk groups.

A retrospective cohort study from South Korea has recently been published in the US CDC. The study compared the number and types of complications from COVID19, with patients who were diagnosed with Influenza viruses.

Generally, lower or similar risk of complications was reported among COVID19 patients, compared to influenza, with only exception of heart failure, mood disorder, dementia and hair loss. The study proposes if the vaccinations were able to reduce COVID19 fatality rate, the countries would be able to adopt less stringent controlling strategy quite similar to influenza viruses.

[Read more](#)



Influenza vaccine is associated with reduced risks of complications and mortality and in elderly patients hospitalized for kidney disease

Generally, the exact effect of influenza vaccine among patients with kidney disease is not completely understood. This population-based cohort study in Taiwan recruited 4386 patients with kidney disease who had received their influenza vaccination, and were matched to other 4386 non recipient controls. Recipients of vaccination were associated with lower risks of 30 day in hospital mortality (OR 0.56, 95% CI 0.39–0.82), septicemia (OR 0.77, 95% CI 0.68–0.87), and intensive care (OR 0.85, 95% CI 0.75–0.96). This group also had a shorter length of hospital stay and less medical expenditure.

[Read more](#)



COVID-19 will continue but the end of the pandemic is near

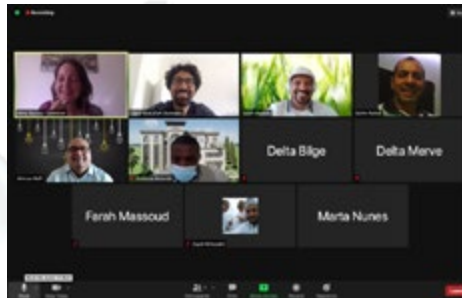
Professor Christopher J L Murray from Washington university, has published a comment in the lancet recently. He said that the time of the stringent measures adopted by different countries are coming to an end, after the current wave of Omicron. Reasons behind that are related to the broad exposure to the virus all over the globe, the availability of different vaccines which were adapted to new variants, the advent of antiviral medications, and that people have learnt how to protect themselves through masks and physical distancing for any future episodes. Another important reason is the less mortality rate associated with Omicron, to the extent that it is comparable to deaths of a bad influenza season in some of northern hemisphere countries.

[Read more](#)

Activities of ME'NA-ISN

Synopsis of the Second General Assembly

The MENA-ISN Second General Assembly was held virtually on September 4th, 2021 at 9:30 - 10.30 AM Istanbul time. The meeting started with the welcome remarks from the chairman. The new member of the network, Farah Massoud introduced herself and talked about her career and interests. Our co-opted member (Treasury) Salim Parker made a presentation about ME'NA-ISN's legal status as a non-profit organization since 25 November 2019 into the Department of Social Development in Africa that may



receive funding and make payments, has an active bank account and can trade. He stated the ME'NA-ISN's vision and mission as "a world resilient to pandemic influenza" and "to empower countries to protect their people against influenza threats". Report of the Chairperson and the secretary were presented by Mine Durusu Tanriover. Governance, members, events (Congress/Influenza Day, training modules, publications) were discussed respectively. Annual financial statements were reported by treasurer Marta Nunes. Website, social media accounts and visibility, new and ongoing projects were discussed.

The Biennial Work Plan and Calendar were presented and the meeting was ended with closing remarks.

Influenza in the spotlight, webinar, September 4th 2021



The ME'NA-ISN Scientific Event "Influenza in the Spotlight" was held virtually on September 4th, 2021 at 14.30-16.30 Istanbul time (UTC/GMT+3).

The congress language was English.

The date September 4th, 2021 was also accepted as "ME'NA-ISN Influenza Day 2021" and expert panelists were invited to the meeting.

The meeting were moderated by ME'NA-ISN Governing Board members by Mine Durusu Tanriover, Salah al Awaidy and Marta Nunes.

The panelists were John McCauley (WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Reseach on Influenza in UK), Pasi Penttinen (ECDC), Belinda Louise Herring (WHO AFRO), Joseph Breese (CDC), Salim Parker (ME'NA-ISN) and Parvaiz Koul (ME'NA-ISN).

In order to be interactive during the meeting, online questions were asked to the participants and their answers were received. The opinions of the panelists were received on the answers.

In addition, the panelists were asked specific questions about influenza such as the following;

- Was there a difference between the southern and northern hemisphere about influenza epidemiology during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What factors we are operating in moderating the influenza epidemiology during the COVID-19 pandemic?

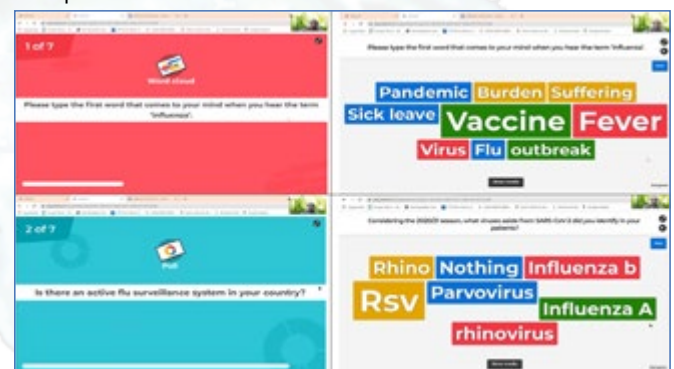
time and how the COVID-19 is still infected individual with a transmission similar to influenza?

- What happened to all other viruses during COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are your expectations from an upcoming influenza season?
- What are the major barriers that you think still needed to be addressed by international organizations and global partners about maintaining the resources for the influenza?

Almost everything related to influenza was discussed, such as prevention methods, countries' preparations for a new influenza pandemic, mutations of the influenza virus, and vaccines.

A total of 38 participants from 18 different countries all around the world attended the meeting.

The meeting was closed with thanks to the participants and panelists.



Some pooled questions to the audience



Minutes from the meeting

Activities of ME'NA-ISN

Middle East, Eurasia & Africa Influenza Stake Holders Network (ME'NA-ISN) & Indian Chest Society (ICS) 3rd January 2022

Managing influenza has always been difficult, and it will be even more difficult after the COVID-19 pandemic. The epidemiology of influenza, vaccination and barriers, the relationship between diabetes and influenza, which changed after the pandemic, were discussed in all aspects. You still have the chance to watch to these breathtaking talks and presentations from the perspective of Indian pulmonologists in collaboration with ME'NA-ISN members.

Link;
<https://mena-isn.org/influenza-newer-challenges-webinar/>



UPCOMING EVENT

ME'NA-ISN Influenza day 2022 7-8 October 2022

Please mark your calendars to meet in beautiful Istanbul on October 7 and 8, 2022 for the Influenza Day 2022! We are sure that concerns about the current pandemic and its relation and subsequences on other viruses, particularly influenza, are still ongoing. We will be discussing several issues in this regard with the participation of internationally well-renowned experts in this field. We wish to see you all in our Influenza Day 2022.



NEW PUBLICATION

- 1 **A Case for Enhancing Coverage of Influenza Vaccination in Gulf Cooperation Council Countries in Patients with Diabetes Mellitus during COVID-19**
<https://doi.org/10.1111/irv.12628>
<https://mena-isn.org/new-article-of-mena-isn-working-group/>



Publications of ME'NA-ISN

- 1 **Influenza surveillance in Middle East, North, East and South Africa: Report of the 8th MENA Influenza Stakeholders Network**
<https://doi.org/10.1111/irv.12628>
- 2 **Influenza vaccination situation in Middle-East and North Africa countries: Report of the 7th MENA Influenza Stakeholders Network (MENA-ISN)**
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jiph.2018.07.003>
- 3 **Addressing Influenza Vaccination in MENA Region during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Decreasing the Effects of the Collision**
[doi: 10.5001/omj.2020.132](https://doi.org/10.5001/omj.2020.132)
- 4 **A Snapshot of Influenza Surveillance, Vaccine Recommendations, and Vaccine Access, Drivers, and Barriers in Selected Middle Eastern and North African Countries**
[doi: 10.5001/omj.2018.54](https://doi.org/10.5001/omj.2018.54)



Current projects of ME'NA-ISN

ME'NA-ISN Research Award 2021

ME'NA-ISN aimed to honour research by awarding 2 (two) researchers with the ME'NA-ISN Research Award in 2021. Aimed at motivating young and active researchers towards meaningful research in the MENA region, the award aimed to recognize high-quality publications with the potential to inform policy about influenza prevention and vaccination. In 2021, the award was conferred to individuals who have published research in the field of influenza and influenza vaccination in the past two year (2020 or 2021).

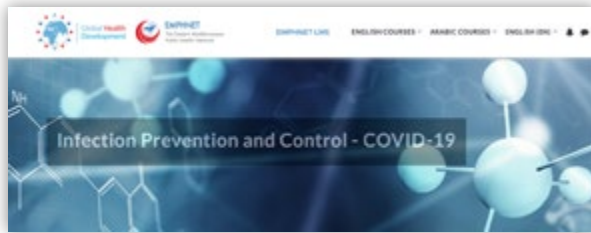
All applications were evaluated by the selection committee and two candidates, Dr. Ines Cherif from Tunisia and Dr. Hyder Mir from India were awarded.

The winners were awarded a 2500 Euro prize money and award certificate along with complimentary registration to ME'NA-ISN 2022 Annual Congress and an oral presentation.

They will attend the Influenza Day that will be held in October 7th-8th, 2022 in Istanbul and present their works at the awards session.



Learning tools



Infection Prevention and Control - COVID-19

All health care professionals must understand the principles and demonstrate competence in preventing and controlling infections, including healthcare associated infections. This course is developed by the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) to provide the trainees with the basic knowledge and skill needed to prevent the transmission of infections in health care settings. EMPHNET supports countries in the Eastern Medi-

terranean Region (EMR) to strengthen their health systems in response to public health challenges and threats. EMPHNET contributes to improving the health status of the population in the region by building the capacity of public health workforce through training in applied epidemiology, improving surveillance and outbreak investigation, partnership and exchange of experiences with associations, institutions, networks and organizations that have similar aspirations, developing and implementing public health intervention, and promoting and supporting applied public health research in response to public health challenges and needs.

<https://lms.emphnet.net/mod/page/view.php?id=750>

Pandemic Influenza: Applying the Knowledge

The course “Pandemic Influenza: Applying the Knowledge” is a modified version of a Problem-Based Learning or PBL case previously completed by multidisciplinary groups of health care students and professionals. PBL is a process of self-directed learning through identification and research of issues relevant to particular disciplines. This particular case explores the questions and consequences evoked by the potential arrival of Pandemic Influenza in the Hawaiian Islands. The course is approximately 21 minutes long.

This course was created by Pacific EMPRINTS, at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Department of Anthropology with the aid of Dr. Seiji Yamada and Megan Inada. Creation of the course was funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources.

<https://www.train.org/cdctrain/course/1009775/>



Rapid Response Teams for COVID-19



WHO has declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic in March 2020. This COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and one of the greatest challenges we are facing recently. Governments across the world took concerted actions to protect their citizens and flatten the curve to stop the spread of the virus. The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) supports countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) to strengthen their health systems in response to public health

challenges and threats. EMPHNET contributes to improving the health status of the population in the region by building the capacity of public health workforce through training in applied epidemiology, improving surveillance and outbreak investigation, partnership and exchange of experiences with associations, institutions, networks and organizations that have similar aspirations, developing and implementing public health intervention, and promoting and supporting applied public health research in response to public health challenges and needs.

<https://lms.emphnet.net/enrol/index.php?id=11>



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**YOU ARE VERY WELCOME TO CONTRIBUTE
TO THE ME'NA-ISN BULLETIN!**

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