

Semi-annual Bulletin

Half year summary (August-December) 2022 Volume 2; Issue Number 2; 2022





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Word of the volume



Dr. Oğuz Abdullah Uyaroğlu is a young internist working at Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine in General Internal Medicine Unit (Ankara, Turkey). His research area mainly consists of acute care and adult chronic diseases. He is serving as the consultant of the Acute and Emergency Care Units, mainly admitting elderly patients with acute decompensation of chronic diseases; lower respiratory tract infections, organ failure, and acute, undiagnosed conditions. He also interests in Influenza and adult vaccination and has been involved in the Global Influenza Hospital Surveillance Network project as an investigator this year. He is the representative of Turkey (Turkish Society of Internal Medicine) in the Young Internist (YI) group of the European Federation of Internal Medicine (EFIM) and also a member of the Ultrasound Working Group of the EFIM.

Dear collegues;

I am delighted and proud to share the 4th ME'NA-ISN bulletin with you. As we bid farewell to 2022 with this bulletin, we welcome 2023 with new plans, projects and hopes. First, I wish you a very healthy, happy, and peaceful new year! It is very meaningful for us to meet you again with the awareness of the duty of constantly improving the scientific excellence of our ME'NA-ISN area.

As we slowly come to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, we see our old but not forgotten enemy Influenza has come back at the end of 2022 all over the world. It would not be wrong to say that we are now at the beginning of a new influenza epidemic. This once again showed how right and great vision MENA-ISN has. The ME'NA-ISN vision is that the countries in the area have realism and implementation of an influenza immunization program and pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan, with informed incorporation of seasonal influenza vaccination into national vaccination programs as a basis to minimize health, the economic and social repercussions of a possible influenza pandemic. This undoubtedly plays an essential role in mitigating the health, economic and social impacts of a potential influenza pandemic.

I can clearly state that ME'NA-ISN has left its mark on 2022 with the events it organizes. Along with online webinars on certain aspects of influenza and influenza vaccination, the major scientific event ME'NA-ISN Influenza Day 2022 was held in İstanbul on 7-8 October 2022 with participants from many different countries. We have gladly seen that ME'NA-ISN is now part of a global network and an institution that has an impact in a wider area. In this context, we continue to establish and expand our connections with all of those institutions, societies, associations and individuals who share the same vision with us- a world resilient to pandemic influenza.

To achieve our goal, we believe our bulletins address the most recent influenza information in the region.

With this issue, you will be informed about ME'NA-ISN's Influenza Day 2022 that marked the year 2022, other activities, publications, future plans and many other things about Influenza.

As the editor of the previous issues, I would like to welcome Farah Massoud, Hyder and Tendai who joined the editorial team with this issue, and wish you all a pleasent reading.

Oğuz Abdullah UYAROĞLU

The Vice-Secretary of the ME'NA-ISN









Influenza day September 22



It is my great pleasure and honor to host the second annual ME'NA-ISN Influenza day in the fabulous city of Istanbul. We consider it our responsibility to ensure that the ME'NA-ISN region remains at the forefront of scientific achievements.

The ME'NA-ISN's vision is for the region's nations to realistically implement pandemic preparedness and response plans as well as influenza immunization programs, with the informed incorporation of seasonal influenza vaccination into national vaccination programs as a foundation to reduce the health, economic, and social effects of a potential influenza pandemic. This unquestionably has a significant impact on impeding the negative effects of a probable influenza pandemic on people's health, the economy, and society.

The 'Influenza day 2022' seeks to enable nations to defend their people from influenza threats and ME'NA-ISN is committed to aggressively pursue this goal. In order to improve national pandemic influenza preparedness and response capabilities, it also seeks collaboration with and across nations through global and regional efforts. The accomplishment of this goal will be made possible by the synergy of public-private partnerships that are in line with national policies, goals, and objectives.

To that end, during the two days on influenza day, experts shall share knowledge and experiences regarding the most recent developments in the field of influenza across the world and in the ME'NA region.

The agenda for the Congress has been developed to include more interactive components, that is aimed to allow everyone to take an active part and get the most out of the Congress' sessions. In addition, participants in the interactive workshops will share a variety of opinions and experiences on the most effective ways to deal with the difficulties presented by the influenza.

The interactive feature of the congress will allow everyone to participate actively in the discussions and all attendees can contribute to and learn from each part of the meeting. The seminars also feature a range of perspectives and experiences on how to address the challenges posed by influenza, including those gained through the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. I am confident that the congress will serve as an excellent knowledge-sharing platform for the overall benefit of all the participants.





Annual General Meeting 2022





The Annual General Meeting of ME'NA-ISN was held on October 7th, 2022 at 10:00-13:00 Istanbul time (GMT+3) in Polat Renaissance Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey.

The full voting member number of the Association is 144 and the quorum for the Annual General Meeting of the Association should be one quarter of the full voting members of the Association.

The quorum was attained by the attendance of the members who were present physically and online and the meeting was convened.









It was declared that an election would be held for ending terms and new offices in the Annual General Meeting. As per the timeline with regards to the bylaws, the deadline for application was September 13th, 2022 and the candidates were announced on September 23rd, 2022.

The election process in the bylaws is referred as below:

- A. Candidates for the offices of the Governing Board should be members of the Association and shall be announced in 14 days notice.
- B. The Governing Board must be elected by the members of the Association at the Association's AGM.
- C. Employees of pharmaceutical companies or organizations funding the Association are not permitted to be members of the Governing Board. Such persons may participate in the Governing Board's meetings and the AGMS of the Association as non-voting observers and upon invitation only.
- D. Voting shall be by mail or electronic ballot. A majority vote shall elect when there are less than three candidates. A plurality vote shall elect when there are three or more candidates.

Governing Board members hold office for a term of three years and may stand for re-election for a maximum of two three-year terms in the same office.

The terms of the following Governing Board Members will end in November 2022. They standed for re-election for the second three-year terms in the same office.

- Salah Al Awaidy (Chairperson)
- Mine Durusu Tanriover (Secretary)
- Marta Nunes (Treasurer)
- Salim Parker (Coopt member)
- Fatima Al Slail (Ordinary Member)

As there were no other candidates for these offices, they were re-elected by acclamation for another three years term.

Zayid Al-Mayahi (Ordinary Member) has resigned with apologies due to his new appointment and his office was available for a new Governing Board member. Additionally, as ME'NA-ISN is growing and expanding its activities two new positions were announced for ordinary members for the first three-year terms of new Governing Board members.

The following candidates applied for these offices with a brief Statement of Intention, a biography, and a declaration of interest statement (Employees of pharmaceutical companies or organizations funding the Association are not permitted to be members of the Governing Board.). None of the candidates had any conflict of interest that would prohibit the holding of an office in the Governing Board. Farah Massoud, Hyder Mir, Vicky Baillie, Ramy Ghazy.

As the bylaws state a limit up to 15 members in the GB and there is no statement in the bylaws about the process of election with this regard, it was mutually agreed that all of the four candidates can have the ordinary member position and they were elected by acclamation.





Meet the new GB Members



Farah Massoud

Farah Massoud is a public health professional working as a technical officer at the Public Health Emergency Management Center at GHD|EMPHNET. In this position, she participates in advancing emergency management efforts, knowledge, and practices in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Specifically, Farah is spearheading a range of projects in the EMR including strengthening event-based surveillance of respiratory diseases with a focus on COVID-19; supporting multisectoral coordination to strengthen prevention and response to future outbreaks in Pakistan and Iraq; elimination of Onchocerciasis in Yemen; and supporting WaSH activities to support polio eradication in Afghanistan.

Farah holds a Master of Public Health from Imperial College London and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health from the American University of Beirut. She is an active MENA-ISN member since 2021. Other areas of expertise include: noncommunicable diseases, climate change, tobacco control and wider determinants of health.



Hyder Mir

Dr Hyder Mir is a Post-Doctoral Scientist in Di Paola Lab at Washington University, St Louis, USA. Earlier he was working as Research Scientist and laboratory Head of Influenza Lab at Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences. Dr. Hyder has an M-Tech and Ph.D. in Biotechnology and 10 years of expertise in Virology and Molecular Biology. His research area mainly focuses on epidemiological surveillance of Influenza and other respiratory viruses and vaccine effectiveness of flu vaccine. He also studies the biology and genetics of telomeres in relation to COPD. In addition to reviewing for many international journals, he has authored/co-authored more than 27 peer-reviewed articles with an RG score of 25. He has presented his work in various international conferences including Latvia and China and has been awarded the ESWI Young Scientist Award twice (2017 and 2021). He is a member of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Control of Influenza (APACI) and the first international scientist to receive the MENA ISN Research Award 2021.



Vicky Lynne Baillie

Vicky Baillie is a senior researcher at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Analytics (VIDA) researcher unit, South Africa. She qualified with a Bachelor in Science and Honours degree with distinction from Rhodes University, South Africa. After completing her Master of Science degree with distinction at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, she joined VIDA as a full time research scientist in 2010 and subsequently went on to complete her PhD in Clinical Virology in 2017. Dr Baillie has extensive laboratory experience in both microbiology and molecular biology and the focus of her research has been the identification of the aetiology of disease in children hospitalised with respiratory and gastrointestinal disease as well as an exploratory study into the specific causes of death in stillbirth, neonatal and paediatric patients using minimally invasive tissue sampling. She is also involved in exploring potential vaccine strategies aimed at protecting babies and children and studies looking for interventions for reducing adverse birth outcomes.



Ramy Mohamed Ghazy

- Lecturer of Tropical Health Department, High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University, Egypt (Dec 2020)
- WHO-EMRO Consultant (Data analysis): 21/9/2021-14/10/2022
- Member of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Collaborator Network.
- Member of ME'NA-ISN

Education

- Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (M.B.B. Ch), excellent grade with honors. Faculty of Medicine, Alexandria University, Egypt (Sept. 2003-Nov. 2009).
- Master of Public Health-Tropical Health Major- High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University 2015.
- Master of pediatric hepatology, gastroenterology and nutrition, National Liver Institute, Menoufia University 2018.
- Professional diploma majoring Data Analysis, Faculty of statistical studies and Research, Cairo University 2019.
- Doctor of Public Health-Tropical Health Major-High Institute of Public Health Alexandria, University 2020.









ME'NA-ISN RESEARCH AWARDS 2021

ME'NA-ISN aims to honour research by awarding researchers with the ME'NA-ISN Research Award. Aimed at motivating young and active researchers towards meaningful research in the MENA region, the award recognizes high quality publications with the potential to inform policy about influenza prevention and vaccination. In 2021, the award was conferred to two individuals who had published research in the field of influenza and influenza vaccination in the past year. The researchers who won the ME'NA ISN Research Award 2021 were Dr Hyder Mir (India) and Dr Ines Cherif (Tunisia). Each winner was presented with a monetary award of 2500 Euros and sponsored to present their work at MENA ISN Influenza Day 2022 at Istanbul.

Application and selection process:

- · A completed ME'NA-ISN Research Award application form must be submitted by the applicant along with the full PDF text of the published manuscript.
- Submitted applications are subjected to a peer-review process by an Award Committee of Experts.
- · Applications are evaluated based on the quality, novelty, and potential impact of the published research to the influenza field in the extended MENA region.
- The final selection is presented to the members of the ME'NA-ISN Governing Board for approval and formal endorsement.

Who was eligible to apply:

- The applicant should be the first author or co-author, last or corresponding author of the publication.
- The applicant should be aged 45 years old or younger.
- The published manuscript needs to describe research emanating from a country belonging of the extended MENA region.
- Only publications in ISI-indexed journals will be considered.
- Online first publications are eligible to apply.
- · Manuscripts appearing as pre-prints and that are not yet peer reviewed shall not be considered for the award.
- Members of the ME'NA-ISN Governing Board and other Scientific Councils are not eligible for the ME'NA-ISN Research Award, they can however be co-authors in the publication.

Awardee recognition and benefits:

- · Monetary award of 2 500 Euros and award certificate.
- · Free registration to the ME'NA-ISN Annual Congress.
- · Oral presentation during the congress.
- · Mandatory attendance at the Annual Congress/Influenza Day.









MENA ISN Research Award Recipients





Q1. Tell us about Yourself?

I am working as Scientist-C at Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Srinagar. My main project focuses on the epidemiological surveillance of Influenza and other respiratory viruses among hospitalised patients and vaccine effectiveness studies.

Q2. How does it feel to win the inaugural

I am elated to have received this honour at this stage in my career, and I see it as a privilege and great recognition of my scientific work. Also the attention that it bought me enabled me to connect to many scientists worldwide and I got a postdoctoral position in Washington University, St Louis, USA.

Q3. How was your experience during MENA ISN Influenza Day at Istanbul?

Being present for Influenza Day 2022 was an incredible experience. It provided me with the chance to interact with the world's top influenza researchers who had convened there. I'm grateful to the governing body for giving me the opportunity to present my work in a global setting. Undoubtedly, it was a memorable experience.

Q4: What are your future plans as a Scientist working on Influenza?

As we are well aware now that every virus today has the potential to start a pandemic. It would be an accomplishment for me to contribute to the global challenges that viruses pose by studying their nature and how they behave so differently.



INES CHERIF

Q1. Tell us about Yourself?

My name is Ines Cherif. I am a medical doctor specialized in preventive and community medicine in Tunisia.

Q2. How does it feel to win the inaugural

I was very glad and honoured to win the MENA ISN Research Award and I hope that it will open the path and for new opportunities in the field of public health and scientific research on influenza particularly.

Q3. How was your experience during MENA ISN Influenza Day at Istanbul?

It was a wonderful experience. It gave me the possibility to present our work in an international event and was an opportunity to assist to interesting conferences on influenza.

Q4: What are your future plans as a Scientist working on Influenza?

I am willing to broaden my experience in the area of scientific research and do further research projects on infectious diseases in general and on influenza in particular.







News, social media, learning tools

2022-2023 Flu Vaccination Campaign Kickoff

October 4, 2022–The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) kicked off the 2022-2023 flu vaccination season during a press conference held in person at the National Press Club for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Leading infectious disease experts, including CDC Director Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, emphasized the importance of flu vaccination and getting up to date on other routine immunizations, including pneumococcal vaccination.

Read more: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2022-2023/2022-23vaccination-kickoff.htm





Ad Council, AMA, and CDC Urge Flu Vaccinations with "Get My Flu **Shot**" Campaign

The Ad Council, American Medical Association (AMA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and CDC Foundation today launched their annual campaign to motivate more people to get vaccinated against seasonal influenza (flu) to protect themselves and their loved ones.

As the holidays approach, the organizations are reissuing their Get My Flu Shot campaign PSAs nationwide to reach people with the message that a flu shot can help you stay healthy, reduce your risk of severe outcomes, such as hospitalization and death, and avoid missing work, school, or special moments with family and friends.

Read more: GetMyFluShot.org







News, social media, learning tools

National Influenza Vaccination Week 2022

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is an annual observance in December to remind everyone 6 months and older that there's still time to get vaccinated against flu. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, including young children. Millions of children get sick with flu every year, and thousands will be hospitalized as a result.

Since flu viruses are constantly changing and protection from vaccination decreases over time, getting a flu vaccine every year is the best way to prevent flu. Flu vaccines are the only vaccines that protect against flu and are proven to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death.

Together, we can use NIVW as a nationwide call to action to encourage everyone 6 months and older to get their annual flu shot, especially young children and others at higher risk. The more people vaccinated against flu, the more people are protected from flu.

Read more: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/nivw/index.htm



What Covid taught scientists and the public about the flu

For nearly three years, the medical and scientific world scrutinized Covid. That research helped experts gain a new understanding of a much older virus: the flu.

Read more: https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/what-covid-taught-us-about-flu-rcna57524

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky is joined by CDC's Domestic Influenza Surveillance Team Lead, Lynnette Brammer, to discuss flu activity this season and the importance of getting a flu vaccine.

This video can also be viewed at https://www.cdc.gov/video/media/Direc



Course; Influenza prevention and control

OpenWHO aims to equip all frontline responders with the knowledge they need to better contain disease outbreaks and manage health emergencies. It also aims to foster discussions, feedback and sharing of expert knowledge on public health.

This course provides an overview of the tools to prevent and control influenza. The training is intended for health workers and other stakeholders involved in preventing and treating influenza.

Read more:

https://openwho.org/courses/influenza-prevention-control





News, social media, learning tools

Global influenza strategy 2019-2030

Building on its 70 years of global health leadership and six critical functions, WHO developed the Global Influenza Strategy for 2019–2030 to enhance global and national pandemic preparedness, to combat the ongoing threat of zoonotic influenza, and to improve seasonal influenza prevention and control in all countries. The strategy presents a unifying vision, and global goals and priorities that will rely on commitments from WHO, countries and partners for full implementation.

Read more: https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/311184



The Global Influenza Initiative (GII)

The GII is a global expert scientific forum that was established in 2012 with the principal goal of generating, collating and communicating compelling and engaging data on the broader burden of influenza and its prevention to all relevant stakeholders in order to reduce the burden of influenza on individuals and society. The GII is co-chaired by Dr John Paget (Nivel, Utrecht, The Netherlands) and Prof. Bruno Lina (University Claude Bernard, Lyon, France) and comprises international scientists, researchers and clinicians with expertise in epidemiology, virology, infectious diseases, immunology, health



Photo: GII members and invited speakers who attended the GII Annual Meeting 2022.

economics, public health, primary care and geriatrics. The initiative receives financial support from Sanofi.

The GII recently held their Annual Meeting in Berlin, Germany and were excited about the opportunity of meeting face-to-face for the first time in three years. Key topics of discussion at the meeting included: unusual patterns of influenza circulation that are emerging across the globe, the impact of COVID-19 on influenza and influenza surveillance, the clinical burden of influenza 'beyond flu', the future of influenza vaccines and vaccine policy after COVID-19 and influenza communication. The GII Steering Committee and invited speakers from across the globe enjoyed a lively mix of presentations, discussion and workstream activities enabling them to set priorities for the coming year.

For access to the GII monthly newsletter InFluNews covering a range of interesting topics and to find out more about the GII, please visit the <u>GII LinkedIn page</u>.







NEW PUBLICATION

1 The Role of Psychological Factors and Vaccine Conspiracy Beliefs in Influenza Vaccine Hesitancy and Uptake among Jordanian Healthcare Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10081355

Read

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



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











Activities of ME'NA-ISN



ME'NA-ISN held its last webinar titled "Influenza is back: The current epidemiology and disease burden in the ME'NA Region" on December 13th, 2023 at 15:00 GMT. The webinar hosted experts from the field to discuss influenza trends at the international and regional levels. It was started by Dr. Salah Alawaidy who is the chairperson of ME'NA-ISN. The

eminent panelists were Prof. Abdellatif Elmor, a profressor of public health at Zagazig University; Dr. Ekhlas Hailat, public health specialist with a focus on zoonotic diseases at GH-D|EMPHNET; and Dr. Noore Alam regional focal point for influenza and other high threat respiratory pathogens of endemic and pandemic potential at WHO EMRO. The focus of this webinar is influenza's increased incidence in most EMR countries and beyond with a specific focus on Egypt. Panelists discussed the global and regional influenza situation. Influenza occurs globally with an estimated annual attack rate of 5% - 10% among adults and 20% - 30% among children. Seasonal influenza results in about 3 M - 6 M cases of severe illness and about 290,000 - 650,000 deaths. Specifically, in the EMR, 2,035 - 12,114 estimated annual influenza deaths per region. Influenza is of great concern to health systems because of its severe illness especially in high risk-groups.

Watch the full webinar on: https://mena-isn.org/blog/cate-gory/scientific-events/













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

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