

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
Sixty-fifth Session  
Khartoum, Sudan, 15–18 October 2018**

**October 2018**

**Side event**

**Unified Medical Dictionary new edition 2018**

**Objectives of the event**

The objectives of this side event are to launch the 2018 edition of the online multilingual Unified Medical Dictionary (UMD) and present the dictionary's new online platform.

**Background**

The UMD was first issued in Baghdad, Iraq, in the 1960s by the Arab Medical Union to meet the urgent need in Arabic-speaking countries for unified medical terms. In 1973, at the request of the Arab Medical Union and Council of Arab Ministers of Health, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean assumed responsibility for developing and updating the dictionary and a specialized committee of experts in medical terminology was established for this purpose. Previous editions of this dictionary have been produced in collaboration with the Arab Medical Union, Council of Arab Ministers of Health and the League of Arab State's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, with valuable contributions from scholars in Arab academies and experts and health professionals from ministries of health and universities in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Following a recommendation of the consultative meeting organized by the Global Arabic Programme in 2016, an expert committee was established to review the dictionary and update its content. A comprehensive plan for its development and enhanced use was created and terminologists were recruited to:

- update the structure of the old UMD TermBase, which involved establishing/recognizing/revising the subcomponents of medicine (in light of common practices for other medical dictionaries), and adding the necessary data categories (parts of speech) to the database;
- delimit new medical terms not included in the online version of the dictionary and equate each foreign medical term with its Arabic equivalent using terminology research methodologies;
- tag obsolete terms and add new proposed Arabic terms;
- identify Arabic terms that are used differently in different countries/regions and add all the variants to relevant fields;
- identify irregular Arabic plural nouns by adding their plural form in the relevant field;
- identify parts of speech when needed for clarification;
- delimit medical terms that are in the International Classification of Diseases 10 and are not included in the online version of the dictionary.

In the final phase of development, a terminology management system was purchased and the old database was migrated to the new system. Once the migration was complete, a new user-friendly website was developed offering users advanced search options, including tools to refine and customize searches and view live searches, and other features, including proposing new terms and providing user feedback.

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### **Expected outcomes**

- Recognition of the latest edition of the UMD as an invaluable tool whose use should be promoted to health professionals, academic institutes and medical students across the Region and beyond.