



Welcome to the December edition of WHO-Jordan's monthly newsletter

Stay posted for an additional 'Christmas Special' newsletter coming next week!

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Come rain or shine

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A Thank You

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Come rain or shine

The Ministry of Health's free immunizations continue to be a success even in winter months



Umm Lu'ai, MoH nurse registering young children in Al Zaatari

"I am just so happy that my child gets as much help as she can."

Umm Sakher is happy despite the cold wind and splattering of rain. She is happy to be in the WHO compound. Her smile radiates the cold weather and she even assists in a focus group meeting to show her gratitude.

She is not the only one; the WHO caravan in the Al Zaatari refugee camp is visited by many mothers and fathers, all eagerly awaiting the arrival of the immunization nurse. Every Wednesday and Saturday the Ministry of Health with support from UNICEF and the WHO organize routine immunizations sessions for under-fives in Al Zaatari. These sessions, which are free of charge, are in conjunction with the already estab-

lished French Field Hospital measles immunization sessions for new arrivals under the age of 15 years that run 6 days per week. Similarly, an immunization campaign was concluded last week in Mafraq and Irbid for all children under the age of five years, both Jordanians and non-Jordanians. This was also supported by UNICEF and WHO.

The immunizations supplied at the WHO caravan are initial injections so most beneficiaries are young babies, some only a couple of months old. However some are a lot older.

"The problem is garnering all the information" says Umm Lu'ai, the immunization nurse for the Ministry of Health. "Some mothers cannot remember what injections their children have
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WHO-Jordan would like to say thank you!

WHO-Jordan would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the [Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Development Cooperation](#) for their financial support of the WHO project “Improving Syrian Refugees’ Access to Quality Health Services in Jordan”. The funding from Italian government has allowed WHO to continue to ensure that Syrian refugees are given access to health services! Thank you!

Come rain or shine

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had. Some are even three years old and have not had any at all! My job is not only to administer the injections but to also advise the parents, they are scared for their baby’s safety, they just want the best for them”. It is very difficult for the health workers as many mothers do not have the immunization cards from Syria, meaning a severely lack of information on previous immunizations received.

The cries that come out of the caravan are enough to melt even the coldest heart, the concern in each parent’s face as their own baby is pricked with a needle is the epitome of love. However, the crying almost always immediately stops, once the child has been briefly consoled by their parent. In turn the parents face changes from a face of concern, to a radiant smile. For they know their loved ones will be protected from some of the most common and harmful diseases.

“I’ve been giving immunizations to babies for 20 years now and you never get used to the crying.” Says Umm Lu’ai as she tidies away for the day. “But I know that these children will go back with their parents safe from afflictions.”

According to the statistics, the numbers of babies being immunized per session has dropped from an average of 50 per session to an average of 20. But Umm Lu’ai puts that down to the lack of promotion in the camp, rather than anything else. “Parents will do anything to protect their child; they know that this is for the best. We just need more help promoting this through the camp, this is the challenge we face now”.

As crying babies are consoled by mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters – and are wrapped up tight for the journey back to their tents or caravans, you can really see the true value of these sessions. The small jab, whose pain can be kissed away by a loving family member, has protected these children from diseases that could have a catastrophic effect on their lives. No amount of rain will stop a parent from attaining this.

WHO celebrates World Diabetes Day

Under the title: “Diabetes; Let’s protect our future”

[Led by the Jordanian Society for the Care of Diabetes](#), and in participation with the Ministry of Health and the National Center for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Genetics, WHO-Jordan was pleased to celebrate ‘World Diabetes Day’. On November 13 2012 health institutions, agencies, and organizations came together to celebrate the advocacy and promotion of diabetes prevention. Diabetes continues to be a major global health issue, affecting 347 million people worldwide.

However, what is most startling both in Jordan and around the world is the increase number of children and young adults that have developed the disease. Therefore it was only fitting that this year’s title was “Diabetes: let’s protect our future”. Early weight increase is one of the leading causes of diabetes at younger ages. Persons living with diabetes have an increased probability of developing a number of cardiovascular conditions which can force them to be on chronic medication for the rest of their lives.

The seriousness of the disease clearly justifies intense efforts for education and prevention as early as possible, to protect children from entering a vicious circle which disrupts and shortens life. Around the world WHO country offices are advocating the need for regulatory policies and to establish life-skills programmes to protect children, improve their knowledge and awareness and train them to acquire habits that will allow them to successfully avoid diabetes and several other serious noncommunicable diseases.

November 13 saw leading healthcare officials from all over Jordan promote and advocate the need for the education of the youth of Jordan on the causes of diabetes. Together they discussed their plans for diabetes prevention, including futures events, activities, and initiatives. All partners stressed the notion of a healthier lifestyle; including regular exercise, stopping smoking, and eating healthier (including reducing fatty food and sugar intake). WHO believes that prevention is better than the cure; and that the youth hold the key to a healthier Jordan. Through their tireless advocacy and promotion they can help all demographics of society become aware of the causes of diabetes.

World AIDS Day 2012

WHO Jordan is committed to reducing stigma in the Kingdom



Dr Akram speaking at the World AIDS Day 2012

youth volunteers. While Jordanian youth have low level of awareness about HIV, they are also seen as agent for change and, hence a key asset to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV in Jordan.

World AIDS Day 2012 hopes to end all stigmas associated with AIDS in society. WHO-Jordan believes that for too long there have been many misconceptions regarding the spread of the virus and the affected individuals themselves. The treatment of these individuals remains a top priority for WHO and for all organizations working with AIDS. Many people with AIDS or HIV find that they are badly treated both socially and in the workplace. Access to testing is difficult, thus preventing many Jordanians from seeking to know their status, and therefore ultimately protecting themselves and their partners from HIV. WHO Jordan will strive to work collaboratively with national and international partners in order to educate the general public on the true facts of the AIDS virus, with a particular focus on eradicating the fallacies and stigmas.

Dr Akram Eltom, WHO Representative for Jordan was pleased to be invited to speak at the conference. He stated that the declining prevalence and mortality worldwide is encouraging and demonstrates that the message of preventing and treating HIV/AIDS is getting through. It also shows that most of the world have emerged from their culturally-constructed views about HIV/AIDS and became pragmatic to safeguarding their own societies and communities. However, he noted, "the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region in which Jordan falls has actually deteriorated. The region has the lowest AIDS antiretroviral treatments per person in the world. Around the world, for every one person who access treatment for AIDS, two more are infected signifying how much more urgently our global prevention efforts must go forward if we are to stem the tide of the pandemic. But in the Eastern Mediterranean region, the situation is much worse than it is on a global level. So, yes, today we can celebrate that the overall global figure for people who contract the virus per year has reduced. But today we must wake up when we hear that, in the Middle East and North Africa region HIV prevalence has actually increased in the past 10 years by 35% (from 27,000 reported cases in 2001 to 35,000 in 2011). For a region as endowed with resources and good levels of education and access to general health care, this is unacceptable. I commend the work carried out by these organizations, and strongly support this campaign, but we must understand that we as a region and a nation have still so much to do. We need to see results on the ground and WHO will work hard with its partners to celebrate the World AIDS Day in 2013 I hope we can have at least one national Jordanian group of people living with HIV/AIDS come join us in this hall to show us whether we have all collectively succeeded or failed once again to protect such a brave act from the stigma and discrimination it often attracts in various societies."

WHO-Jordan was very honored to be a part of the celebration of World AIDS day 2012. It is also proud to be associated with the new Red Ribbon Campaign. WHO-Jordan believes that this is an excellent initiative and one that would hopefully become a first step in eradicating both the stigma of AIDS. As Dr Akram had put it in his speech, "it can now be said that these days it is now the stigma that kills people, not the disease as treatment is a lot more accessible."

On December 3, 2012 WHO participated in the global celebration of World AIDS Day. Hosted at the UN country office and organized by UNESCO, the day consisted of a number of speeches and presentations from some of Jordan's leading local and international organizations including UNFPA, ILO, Ministry of Health's National AIDS Program and labor union representatives. The key national counterpart was the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

UNESCO presented a review of progress in Jordan's journey to address HIV/AIDS challenges in its society, highlighting a low level of awareness about HIV and how it is transmitted, as well as deep-seated stigma even among educated segments of Jordanian society. Ms Ana Paolini, UNESCO Country Director for Jordan highlighted the upcoming UNESCO initiative called 'the Red Ribbon' campaign. The red ribbon campaign is an advocacy initiative based on a series of short films that will be shown at regular intervals on the local television station - Ro'ya. It also incorporates key social media techniques which will be monitored and managed by

It can now be said that it is the stigma that kills people...

WHO Representative visits the King Hussein Cancer Center

Dr Akram had the pleasure of meeting with HRH Princess Dina Mired, the director of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation

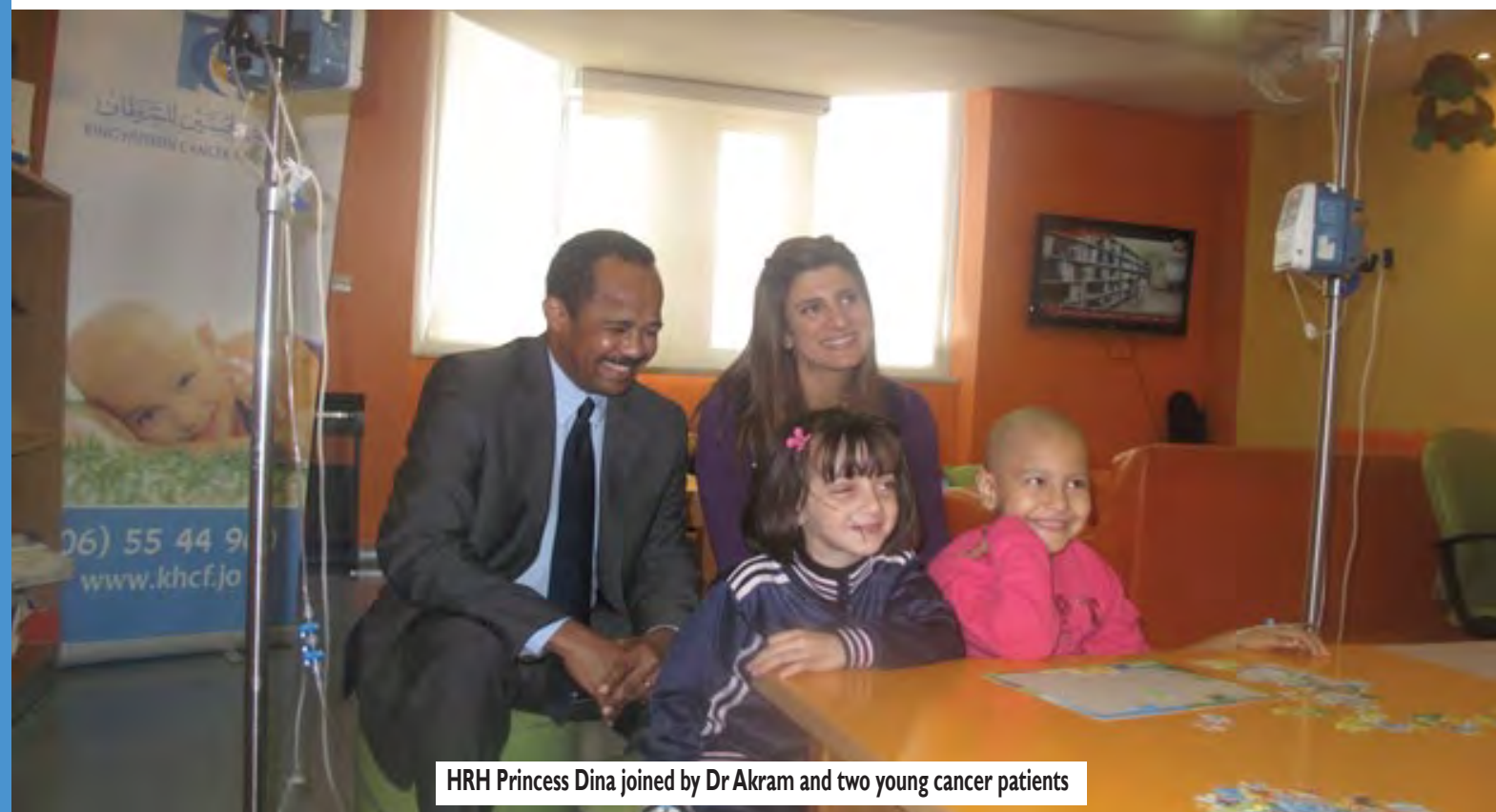
Dr Akram Eltom, the WHO Representative for Jordan visited the King Hussein Cancer Center in Amman recently. As a principle WHO collaborating center, the King Hussein Cancer Center has become one of the leading institutions for the treatment and research of all forms of cancer in Jordan. Ran by the King Hussein Cancer Foundation, the center has become an important institution for many of Jordan's cancer sufferers. Its up to date facilities has meant that many Jordanians, of all ages and backgrounds are privy to life-changing, and in many cases, life-saving treatment.

On his visit Dr Akram was greeted by HRH Princess Dina Mired, the director of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation, who thanked the WHO Representative for giving his time to come to the center. HRH Princess Dina led Dr Akram around the many facilities the center has to offer. This included the intensive care unit (which is only of one a small handful in the whole of Jordan), emergency wards, laboratories, children's play area, and much more. HRH Princess Dina also introduced Dr Akram to some of the beneficiaries of the center, who talked to him about their experiences of the center. Afterwards Dr Akram was given a presentation on the history of the center, where they discussed the positives and challenges of both the centers work, and the partnership with WHO.

"Centers like the King Hussein Cancer Center, really warm my heart" Stated Dr Akram. "Cancer is such a horrible infliction, so when a person, particularly a child, is at their most vulnerable, it is crucial to give them as much help and support as possible. This center has opened my eyes to the dedication and drive of all staff here, particularly HRH Princess Dina, and I am thrilled that WHO is a collaborating partner. What has really humbled me however, is the determination of the beneficiaries. They have shown that no matter what obstacle is put in front of you, with a strong will and presence of mind, you can overcome almost anything. And what is more, especially the children, you can do it with a smile on your face."

As a collaborating center, the WHO and the King Hussein Cancer center will continue to work together to research and treat cancer victims in Jordan.

For more information on the King Hussein Cancer Center please visit their website at: www.khcc.jo



HRH Princess Dina joined by Dr Akram and two young cancer patients

WHO launches its social media initiatives

Social media aims to promote and advocate health related issues in Jordan, and WHO-Jordan's work in general



November has seen WHO Jordan take great steps in the continued promotion of health issues in the country. Social media has become a critical tool in the modern dissemination and communication of information. WHO is pleased to announce the creation of a number of social media accounts. Newly established WHO Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter accounts have been created to complement our already established website and intranet page.

These pages give up to date information on all WHO programmes, events, and initiatives. They also promote and advocate general health issues around Jordan, and the world as a whole. WHO-Jordan hopes to continue to initiate new communication techniques, including online videos, and radio podcasts.

Social media allows WHO-Jordan to reach all corners of the globe, stories that may be local can also have international consequences (such as the Syrian refugee crisis), it is important for WHO Jordan to continue to promote, communicate, and advocate

health issues; locally, nationally, and internationally

For more information please go to our:

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/whojordan

Twitter account: @WHOJordan

YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/officialWHOJordan

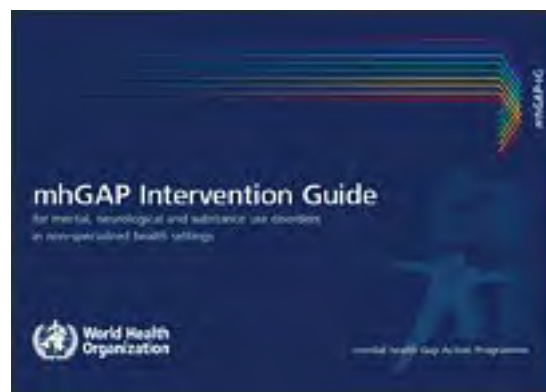
Mental health care training targets primary health care workers

WHO's Mental Health Gap Action Plan implemented in Jordan

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Jordanian Nursing Council, WHO-Jordan has recently conducted a training for primary health care workers from Mafraq and Irbid governorates, north of Jordan. This activity is part of a series of trainings provided on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP), and has been specifically designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of general health workers on the mhGAP Intervention Guidelines; a treatment guide outlining 11 mental health conditions.

Training participants included general practitioners, family doctors, nurses and midwives,

mainly recruited from the Ministry of Health primary health care centers in Ramtha and Mafraq. Other attendees included professionals from the Jordan Health Aid Society/ International Medical Corps, Medicins Du Monde, and the Hashemite University. All participants were healthcare staff working with Jordanians, Syrians, or Iraqis.



Currently... the mhGAP is taking place in over 6 countries worldwide

A consultant psychiatrist from Lebanon, Dr Rabih El Chammy, delivered the training for the third time in Jordan. He focused on four priority conditions that were identified for Jordan: depression, suicide, developmental disorders, and other somatic complaints. He also addressed other modules including behavioral disorders, psychosis, and alcohol use disorders.

The mhGAP was launched in 2008 by WHO's Director General, Dr Margaret Chan, to address the lack of care and large treatment gap for mental, neurological and substance use disorders, especially in low and middle income countries. It aims to scale up mental health services and systems, and focuses on the integration of mental health care within primary health care services. Currently, implementation of the mhGAP is taking place in over 6 countries worldwide.

From WHO.....

Welcome to a new section of our newsletter called 'From WHO'. Every week a different member of the WHO staff will discuss their work, their hobbies and interests, and their experiences here at WHO.

This week: **Sayed Abed Rabbo**

"I always wanted to better myself" said Sayed almost immediately into his interview. "You see Jordan has welcomed me with open arms, and so has the WHO. With this foundation I knew I could achieve many things".

Leaving your home country is tough for anyone, but when you have two young children, it is particularly heart-wrenching. "Finding a job in Egypt is very hard right now, I know people who have bachelor's degrees who are working as blacksmiths or in supermarkets."

Sayed has been at WHO for just over 2 years, and has already firmly established himself as a key member of staff. Though the 31 year old was originally hired as a cleaner, his determination, trustworthiness and hard work has meant that he is often seen to be assisting in a number of different tasks. "I love it here at WHO, it is such an amazing organization, I am continually amazed with the work WHO carries out, and I am proud to be associated with it."

What is really impressive about Sayed is his determination to better himself. "I am studying for a bachelor's degree in Trading. I study here and then travel to the Ain Shams University in Cairo every semester to take the exams". When asked why trading degree he modestly stated "I am at university not for a career, not for certificates, but to better myself, to learn more, and to become more knowledgeable, I do not want to become a trader, the subject just interested me greatly so I applied for it." Sayed juggles a full time job, a University degree and English language courses. He is determined to be the best he can at all.

And what about his lifestyle? Has WHO influenced him? "Oh yes" He states. "WHO has taught me the benefits of a healthy lifestyle! I do not smoke, drink, and I love to play football. I also walk everywhere. Walking is not only good for you, but it gives you a chance to get some fresh air and be alone with your thoughts. I couldn't imagine commuting to work every day".

Sayed continues to be an integral part to WHO-Jordan's team, it is a pleasure to work with him.



Sayed outside the WHO Jordan country office

Useful Links

WHO Jordan / www.emro.who.int/countries/jor

WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean / www.emro.who.int

WHO Headquarters / www.who.int

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