

**IEA EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION
REPORT TO COUNCIL
(April 2019)**

Dear Council members

Greetings and apologies for not being able to attend in person the Council meeting in Maputo, which I hope will be fruitful and rewarding. I am sending a brief report on the main activity that I have covered in 2018 and implemented in early 2019, which is the holding of the XIth scientific meeting of the EM region.

THE XITH REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

The scientific meeting of the EMR was held in Beirut on February 21-23, 2019. Nine years separated this regional event from the last one. Holding such an event had been a major goal for me since being elected as regional Councilor in 2014. In 2016, we almost reached an agreement for a common event with the Higher Institute of Public Health in Alexandria, but the agreement could not be signed, and a very successful event to which I was invited was held, but it had mostly a national focus. In the following years, it became clear that the amount of political distrust between the various nations of the ME was going to make such events impossible. It was then that the Lebanese Epidemiological Association (LEA) proposed to hold the meeting in Lebanon again despite the enormity of the cost, which would have to be carried over by the association into the upcoming years. LEA had previously organized two regional meetings, in 1997 and 2010.

Dr. Mary Deeb, LEA president, chaired the organizing committee and worked with a group of dedicated persons to ensure a smooth and rewarding event. In addition to a large contribution from LEA, the event was financially supported by IEA HQ and regional funds, WHO-EMRO and several other local sponsors. The event was supervised by a Regional Advisory Board from various areas of the EMR. Details on committee participants' are found below. One session of the event was co-organized with the Faculty of Health Sciences (AUB) and another with the Association des Epidemiologistes de Langue Française (ADELF). A brief summary of the event's schedule is also provided below. The scientific meeting included a general assembly for members of IEA-EMR, during which a change of designation of the region to MENA was adopted (see minutes below).

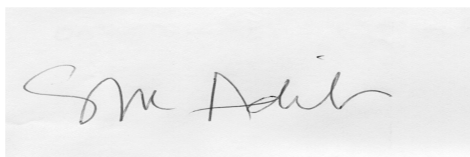
The meeting was attended by 325 persons coming from 28 countries, from as far as Brasil and India. The largest two groups were from North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) with 19 participants and Iran with 15. Several participants had to overcome logistical, financial and administrative hurdles to

make it to Beirut. Special efforts were done by the organizers to accelerate the process of visa obtaining for participants from Yemen, Palestine and Pakistan. The two workshops at the start of the conference were also well attended. A workshop on scientific writing was organized by Dr. Ahmad Mandil (EMRO) seconded by Dr. Rachid Salmi (Bordeaux University), and attended by 25 participants. Another one on Health issues among refugees was organized by Medecins Sans Frontieres, and attended by 15 participants.

Of almost 400 oral/poster presentations submitted, 72 oral were actually selected for presentation over 7 sessions, and 120 posters over three daily rotations. The selection process required thorough efforts from members of the Scientific committee chaired by Dr. Ahmad Mandil, and seconded by Dr. Abla Sibai. The Asia-Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention, through the agency of its president Dr. Alireza Moussavi-Jarrahi, offered two full scholarships to presentation related to cancer epidemiology, one from Tunisia and one from Iran. Financial prizes, favoring young colleagues, were also presented to twelve posters.

Overall, the event was heavily attended, and provided participants with a highly needed avenue to meet, network and prepare future plans for IEA collaboration in the MENA region.

Best regards to all Council members, and see you in Melbourne in 2020, inshAllah.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salim Adib", on a light-colored background.

Salim M. Adib, MD, DrPH
MENA Councilor
11-4-2019



XIIth INTERNATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

FEBRUARY 21 - 23, 2019 | BRISTOL HOTEL - BEIRUT, LEBANON



For practical information and registration details
consult the website of the conference at www.lea-lb.org



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XIth INTERNATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

FEBRUARY 21 - 23, 2019 | BRISTOL HOTEL - BEIRUT, LEBANON



This event is smoke-free. Participants who desire to smoke are kindly asked to do so outside the hotel where the meeting is being held

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Salim Adib (IEA co-chair)	John Fayyad (<i>In Memoriam</i>)
Ibrahim Bou-Orm	Rasha Hamra
Rachel Btaiche	Ghinwa El Hayek
Mary Deeb (LEA co-chair)	Aziza Khalidi

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jawad Al-Diwan (Iraq)	Fahmy Charl (Egypt)
Mohannad Al-Nsour (Jordan)	Rana Hajjeh (EMRO)
Ahmad Al Shatti (Kuwait)	Mohamed Hsairi (Tunisia)
Ali Saeed Al Zahrani (KSA)	Kourosh Holakouie-Naieni (Iran)
Henrique Barros (IEA President)	Alireza Mosavi Jarrahi (Iran)
Habiba Ben-Romdhane (Tunisia)	Arash Rashidian (EMRO)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Samira Abdelrahman (Sudan)	Ghina Mumtaz (Lebanon)
Rafic Baddoura (Lebanon)	Randa Nooh (KSA)
Hyam N. Bashour (Syria)	Pascale Salameh (Lebanon)
Oona Campbell (UK)	Rachid Salmi (France)
Hani Dimassi (Lebanon)	Nagah Selim (Qatar)
Randah Hamadeh (Bahrain)	Abla Sibai (Co-Chair)
Georges Karam (Lebanon)	Loubna Tayyara (Lebanon)
Ahmad Mandil (Chairman)	Nelly Ziadeh (Lebanon)
Ehsan Mostafavi (Iran)	

Detailed information regarding registration, accommodations, abstract submission and the meeting's program can be found on <https://www.lea-lb.org/iea-regional-meeting/homepage/>

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DAY I: Thursday February 21, 2019	DAY II: Friday February 22, 2019	DAY III: Saturday February 23, 2019
08:00 Registration	09:00 - 11:00 Plenary Session	09:00 - 11:00 Plenary Session
09:00 - 16:30 Pre-Meeting Workshops	11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break & Poster Session	11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break & Poster Session
11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break	11:30 - 13:00 Session II (B1): Alertes épidémiologiques sur le pourtour méditerranéen.	12:00 - 13:00 Session II (B2): Generating and Implementing Health Policies
13:30 - 14:30 Lunch Break	Session II (B2): Monitoring and surveillance: National Surveys	Session II (B3): Disease prevention and management: Cancer
14:30 - 16:30 Poster Session	Session II (B3): Disease prevention and management: Cancer	13:30 - 14:30 Closing Remarks
16:30 - 18:00 Session I (A1): Disease Prevention and Management: Maternal and Child Adolescent Health	13:00 - 14:30 Lunch & Poster Session	
Session I (A2): Emergencies and Outbreaks	14:30 - 16:00 Session III (C1): Epidemiology in Health Systems	
Session I (A3): Responding to Challenges of Conflict and Displacement: Institutional, Regional and Global Perspectives	Session III (C2): Disease Prevention and Management: Chronic conditions/Injuries/Mental Health	
18:30 - 20:30 Official Opening	Session III (C3): Monitoring and surveillance: Morbidity/Mortality	
	17:00 - 19:00 Monitoring and surveillance: Morbidity/Mortality	

IEA-EMR 2019 regional assembly

A regional assembly was convened in Beirut (Lebanon) on Friday February 22, 2019, at 17:00, in parallel with the XIth scientific meeting. It was co-chaired by Drs. Henrique Barros (IEA President) and Salim Adib (IEA-EMR Councilor). The meeting was attended by 20 IEA-EMR members. The following items were discussed:

1. Regional scientific meetings: The Councilor presented the geo-political problems that had faced him in organizing a regional meeting since the last one had been held in Beirut in 2010. He thanked the Lebanese Epidemiological Association (LEA) for accepting the challenge again in 2019 of organizing an XIth meeting. The event had drawn participants from almost all parts of the EMR, which by itself was a major realization. The Iranian delegates proposed to send a concept for the next meeting to be organized in the off-shore Kish island. Similarly, the Iraqi delegates expressed interest in sending a proposal. The Councilor welcomed both offers. Participants proposed Jordan or Dubai, but the problem in those two venues is that there are currently no IEA-affiliated group or related academic/institutional related entity ready to organize and host such an event.
2. The Councilor reminded attendees of the upcoming international conference in Melbourne in the summer of 2020, and encouraged the largest possible participation from the Region. He also encouraged all members to call upon their colleagues in their national circles to renew their membership to IEA, which will give them the right to participate in the upcoming elections for a new Council in 2020. The position of EMR Councilor will be up for election as the current Councilor's rotation would be ending. Nominations for candidates to the position of Councilor are therefore needed.
3. The President mentioned that "early career" epidemiologists who have been in the field for less than 10 years, from LMIC, can join IEA for a low fee of 5 USD. An EMR "Early Career" epidemiologist will have to be elected as part of the overall governing body of IEA.
4. The issue of activating national associations was brought up. Dr. Houlakoie informed the audience that the Iranian Epidemiological Association was quite active and included about 700 members. Dr. Deeb mentioned that the Lebanese Epidemiological Association had a roster of about 50 names, and was also quite active. Participants from Tunisia vouched to reactivate their own association. The low participation of GCC colleagues in general, and of Saudi colleagues in particular in the 2019 regional meeting was noted by the Councilor, with the hope that their own associations will also be created and/or re-activated. Finally, the presence for the first time in our meetings of colleagues from Algeria was saluted, along with wishes for a great future collaboration.

5. The Councilor brought up the issue of changing the name of our region from “East Mediterranean” to “Middle-East and North-Africa”. The argument was that the latter is more accurate geographically, and opened the door to officially welcoming Algeria now, and may be working on bringing Turkey to this region also in the future. The issue had been debated in previous Councils, and the African region expressed no objections about considering Algeria as part of EMR rather than AFR. However, Council had requested that any change should be agreed upon by the regional general assembly. Consequently, and with IEA President as a witness, the motion was put to the assembly. The vote was with 15 yes, and 2 abstentions. Three Algerian participants not yet officially members of the EMR were not counted in the vote. As a result, the vote in the regional assembly was overwhelmingly for changing the name from EMR to MENA.
6. The Councilor will notify Council officially of the decision of the regional assembly to change its designation, at the next Council meeting. Hopefully, this would be the final step to start implementing relevant administrative and logistical changes at all levels of IEA.

The meeting adjourned at 18:30